



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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

**A hybrid meeting of the CABINET will be held on
Tuesday, 28th February, 2023 at 11.30 am**

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

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Friday, 24 February 2023 Councillors and Members of the public should stipulate if this address will be in the medium of English or Welsh.

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

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

Note:

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

2. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the Cabinet Committee held on the 23rd January 2023 as an accurate record.

(Pages 5 - 14)

3. RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

To receive the report of the Interim Director of Social Services, which provides Cabinet with the opportunity to consider the outcome of the consultation on the preferred options on the future provision of accommodation for older people in each of the Council's nine residential care homes.

(Pages 15 - 174)

4. CHILDREN'S SERVICES RESIDENTIAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

To receive the report of the Interim Director of Social Services which provides information about children's services plans for developing residential care services in line with the Council's duties, and in the context of the Welsh Government Policy ambition to remove profit from the provision of care for looked after young people, and seek Cabinet's agreement to approve and adopt the proposed Looked After Children: Residential Care Transformation Strategy 2022-2027.

(Pages 175 - 212)

5. CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

To receive the report of the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication, which provides Members with an update on the Cabinet Work Programme on the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the 2022-23 Municipal Year.

(Pages 213 - 238)

6. FREE BUS TRAVEL THROUGHOUT RHONDDA CYNON TAF FOR MARCH 2023

To receive the report of the Director of Frontline Services, which seeks Cabinet approval to provide free bus travel for the period of 1st – 31st March 2023 for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary. This would apply to all operators currently operating a scheduled service.

(Pages 239 - 244)

7. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME - NAMING OF THREE NEW SCHOOLS IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

To receive the report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, which provides the opportunity for Cabinet to consider the recommendations made by the relevant temporary governing bodies as to the proposed naming of the three new schools in the Greater Pontypridd area.

(Pages 245 - 254)

8. NON-DOMESTIC RATE (NDR) RELIEF SCHEMES & REVALUATION UPDATE

To receive the report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services, which provides the Cabinet with details of the Welsh Government Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) – Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief (RLH) Scheme for 2023/24; details of a proposed local business rate reduction scheme; and details of the NDR Revaluation which comes into effect from 1st April 2023.

(Pages 255 - 264)

9. THE COUNCIL'S 2023-2024 REVENUE BUDGET

To receive the report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services, which provides Cabinet with the results of the second phase of the budget consultation and the draft Budget Strategy to amend as necessary to recommend to Council.

(Pages 265 - 328)

10. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

To receive the report of the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services, which provides Cabinet with a proposed three year Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 that if acceptable, will be presented to Council for approval.

(Pages 329 - 352)

11. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.



Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

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

Officers: Paul Mee, Chief Executive
Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services
David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Louise Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Roger Waters, Director – Frontline Services
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Derek James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the Hybrid.meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 23 January 2023 at 4.00 pm.

This meeting was live streamed, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present in the Council Chamber:-

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

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

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms L Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services
Mr N Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services
Ms A Richards, Temporary Service Director - 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Mr A Critchlow, Parking Services and Streetworks Manager
Mr C Davies, Corporate Policy & Consultation Manager
Mrs D Hughes, Head Of Organisational Development
Ms Z Lancelott, Head of Community Wellbeing & Resilience
Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager
Ms C Harvard, Senior Workforce Development Officer

98 Declaration of Interest

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

99 Minutes

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 5th December 2022 and 12th December 2022 as an accurate reflection.

100 UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund: Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Grant

The Head of Arts, Culture and Libraries provided a proposal for the establishment and delivery of a Community Grant for Rhondda Cynon Taf, via allocation from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund.

With the intention to strengthen the social fabric of communities, support community engagement, and build a sense of local pride and belonging in local community places, it was explained that the Council has allocated £4.3 million of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund to build capacity and infrastructure to restore community places, thus creating the foundations for social, environmental, economic & cultural development, building relationships at a local neighbourhood-level.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities welcomed the recommendations to establish a Community Grant and invited applications from organisations within the Third Sector and Community Groups, Community Interest Companies, and Companies to apply, via a competitive process, that would ensure an open and transparent approach.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank officers and commented that the grants would be at a larger scale in phase two of the programme. The Leader believed that it would be welcomed by the Third Sector and explained that the money could be used to lever in additional funding. The Leader added the other Local Authorities had followed a similar approach to RCT.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the content of the report;
2. To the establishment and delivery of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund – Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Grant, as set out in the report; and
3. To agree that ensuring the Community Grant operates within the terms and conditions of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund be delegated to the designated Senior Responsible Officer, the Director of Prosperity and Development.

101 Human Resources Strategy and Council Workforce Plan 2023-2028

The Senior Workforce Development Officer provided the Cabinet with the Human Resources Strategy 2023-28 and the Council Workforce Plan 2023-28.

The strategy and workforce plan set out a strategic and operational direction in terms of how the Council will utilise and develop the workforce to achieve the Councils' vision and priorities in a climate of change and financial uncertainty.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to thank the officer for the comprehensive report and commented that final position statement demonstrated flexibility of the workforce and ensures that staff have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of residence, which was highlighted during Storm Dennis and Covid pandemic.

The Deputy Leader was of the view that the Plan cited cautious ambition, in light of the financial challenges faced by the Local Authority and stated that it would assist with a diverse workforce, support performance and ensure staff wellbeing.

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The Deputy Leader added that the Plan reflected the positive working relationship with Trade Unions and encouraged all staff to become members.

Upon conclusion, the Deputy Leader emphasised the importance of the positive relationship with the Armed Forces and was pleased to note that the Gold Award had been retained.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Human Resources Strategy 2023-28;
2. To approve the Council's Workforce Plan 2023-28;
3. To agree that outcomes will be delivered through related plans and strategies such as departmental Delivery and Workforce Plans, the Council's Strategic Equality Plan, Digital Strategy and Office Accommodation Strategy; and
4. To agree that monitoring will be in the form of an annual position statement providing data regarding progress towards meeting the Human Resources Strategy and Council Workforce Plan aims.

102 Waste Services - Revised Waste Management Strategy

The Head of Streetcare Services provided the Cabinet with feedback from the 5-week public consultation period during December 2022 – January 2023 with respect to proposed revisions to the Council's operational waste management processes regarding future arrangements for the collection of refuse and recycling designed to aid an increase in the rate of recycling across RCT, whilst also offering financial efficiencies and to help inform a Cabinet decision on the way forward.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure took the opportunity to thank the officer for the detailed report, the consultation team for the work undertaken and the residents for engaging with the process.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged Wales' ambition to achieving a 70% recycling target of household waste by 2025 and was pleased to note that Rhondda Cynon Taf was striving to meet the target, with a current recycling figure of 67.48%, to avoid facing heavy penalties.

The Cabinet Member was in support of the proposals outlined within the report, which would see an improvement in recycling rates, a reduction in the Council's Carbon footprint and potential financial savings of almost £1.5M. The Cabinet Member agreed with officers that clear communication and engagement with residents would be key to the success and implementation of any changes.

In respect of the 4000+ consultation responses received, the Cabinet Member was pleased to note that concerns of residents with the standard 120L wheelie bins, had been addressed and that an additional side waste bag would be permitted. In terms of the trial of the reusable recycling sacks for dry mixed recycling, the Cabinet Member noted that a high percentage of residents were in support of the change but acknowledged that some streets lend themselves better than other, hence the need for a trial.

The Cabinet Member questioned what mitigations were in place to alleviate the concerns of residents with larger families, young families or for those living in smaller houses with a limited amount of space, should the Cabinet be minded to approval the proposals. The officer thanked the Cabinet Member for the question

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and emphasised that in terms of the refuse collection, the service would remain the same as there would be three black bags collected every three weeks. In terms of larger families, the officer explained that an additional side waste bag would be permitted for those with the standard 120L wheelie bins to help mitigate the impact. In terms of the storage of the reusable recycling bags, the officer emphasised that it would be a trial and as such, any views of residents, positive or negative, would be fed back to the Cabinet to determine a way forward. In terms of the storage of black bags, the officer emphasised that most household waste would continue to be collected weekly, such as nappies, food and recycling and therefore, black bag waste should be minimal. The officer explained that a comprehensive media campaign would be undertaken with regards to the importance of recycling to better inform and educate residents and benefit those with concerns about a greater volume of waste and limit the adverse impact. The officer added that the Council offer an additional black bag allowance to residents who are struggling with the waste allowance, a process which was under review.

In respect of the point made about large families, the Leader clarified that officers would work with families and ask them to contact the Council with any problems. Officers would then be able to support the families with recycling and to ensure the absolute minimum is going in the black bag waste but if they were to still struggle due to having a large family or increased pet waste, officers can verify and offer an additional black bag. The Leader also emphasised the need to work with housing providers in respect of collection points going forward.

The Leader sought to address the potential financial aspect of the proposals, which would save over £1M and explained that it would be the equivalent of closing three sport centres. The Leader advised that a number of areas operate this way and that it was important to learn from their findings. It was explained that several Local Authorities in Wales had also announced similar reviews of waste services as part of their Budget Strategies and if they were all to approve the proposals, approximately 2/3 of Local Authorities in Wales would be undertaking similar service changes.

The Deputy Leader echoed previous comments around the importance of communication and education to improve recycling figures in RCT and engagement with social landlords and tenants. In terms of the Local Authorities already undertaking waste collection on a three-weekly basis, the Deputy Leader questioned if any issues had arisen and if so, how they had been dealt with. A concern raised by residents was in relation to the disposal of women's sanitary products, the Deputy Leader requested further information from the officer in respect of those concerns. The officer advised that, at present, the only method of sanitary products disposal was via refuse collection, which had been noted as a negative equality impact. However, the officer explained that of those Local Authorities across the country, with three or four weekly refuse collections, all had faced the same issue but none, to the officer's knowledge, had had to revert to weekly or fortnightly refuse collection. The officer assured Members that all aspects of the consultation would be kept under review and mitigations would be put in place, where possible and when required.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services noted the environmental benefits of the proposal. The Cabinet Member noted that the concerns raised from residents with disabilities and those without access to a vehicle. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that an additional bag could be problematic and potentially heavier, if filled with cat litter and animal waste etc

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and asked what mitigations were in place. In terms of cat litter, the officer advised that consideration was being given to taking it to the community recycling centres on a controlled basis, which should mitigate concerns. In terms of the additional bag and any difficulties moving it to the curb side or collection point, the officer emphasised that the Council would continue to assist those residents. The Leader added that, residents who obtain a lot of animal waste in their refuse, would have the opportunity to speak with officers and acquire an additional waste bag to spread the weight of the litter.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the report and duly resolve to approve the introduction of the following revisions to the Council's Waste Management Strategy:
 - (i) The collection of residual household waste on a 3-weekly basis for all domestic waste collections.
 - (ii) The presentation of waste on a 3-weekly basis will be as follows; strict volume control measures will apply to all domestic waste, namely:
 - (a) A maximum of 3 black bags per household, (for those properties with existing black bag waste collections),
 - (b) The "no side waste" rule continues for those households with large 240L wheelie bin collections, (but 1 bag of side waste, no larger than 70L, is allowed for the standard 120L bins).
 - (iii) The initiation of a trial of the use of reusable recycling sacks for the collection of dry mixed recycling, (DMR).

103 Community Meals Service Review

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services advised the Cabinet of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposals for the future of the Council's Community Meals Service.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language expressed his gratitude to officers in both the Education service area and the consultation team for conducting the consultation; and to those who engaged during the consultation period.

The Cabinet Member spoke of the challenging financial climate and the rise in inflation, which had prompted the review and subsequent consultation. The Cabinet Member went on to emphasise the challenge of delivering the service in its current form with the increase in costs and fall in numbers of users.

In response to the consultation responses, the Cabinet Member explained that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council was one of few Local Authorities in Wales to offer a community meals service and noted that the responses had emphasised the importance of maintaining it. Although regrettably, the Cabinet Member was of the view that Option 3 would be the best way forward to ensure

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a sustainable service. The Cabinet Member stated that the 50p compared favourably to other providers, particularly private providers.

In response to concerns raised from members of the public in respect of the hot or frozen meal option, the Cabinet Member emphasised that the users currently in receipt of a hot meal would see no change in the service; and explained that those who opt for a frozen meal would have the flexibility of when they wish to have their meal. The Cabinet Member added that Members recognise the importance of maintaining the welfare checks, which is a positive step to tackling loneliness.

The Cabinet Member concluded and requested that, should Members be minded to choose Option 3, officers conduct a review of the service users, to ensure they have the necessary equipment in their homes to warm the meals, should they wish to choose the frozen option.

The Deputy Leader was in support of Option 3 and emphasised the importance of the welfare checks and praised the staff for their work. The Deputy Leader noted the comments of the Scrutiny Committee, which were also of the view that Option 3 was the preferred way forward.

The Leader pointed out that the Community Meals Service was not statutory but explained that the administration had endeared to protect it throughout the years of austerity. The Leader explained that the budget gap was much larger than previous years and as such, all areas of the Council had to be reviewed.

The Leader noted that one option was to remove the service but felt it important to maintain an in-house service, where possible. The Leader echoed the Cabinet Member's comments around the need for a vulnerability assessment to ensure users have the correct, working equipment, should Cabinet agree the way forward; and recognised that the 50p increase could seem a lot, but noted that a neighbouring Local Authority currently charged £6 for the service, which would likely increase as part of its budget.

The Leader also referred to comments within the consultation regarding the quality of the meals procured and asked the Director for a further explanation. Members were assured that the higher quality meals would be offered to service users, with a combination of both meal and dessert. It was explained that officers would conduct taste testing to ensure the best meals are chosen and offered to the service users.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information contained within the Consultation Report, which included feedback received from the online survey, emails and telephone calls, the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 14th December 2022 and the frequently asked questions posted out to service users;
2. To agree the preferred service change option moving forward, in respect of the Community Meals Service:
Option 3: to reorganise the existing internal service and provide a hot/frozen Community Meal Home Delivery Service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal; and
3. To delegate authority to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources, to undertake and conclude necessary actions to implement the preferred option.

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104 Council Run Nursery Provision - Revised Service Delivery Arrangements

The Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience provided the Cabinet with details of the current arrangements for the delivery of childcare provision at Council run nurseries and to set out revised service delivery options for consideration to further improve the local childcare offer available to families, informed by a recent market testing exercise.

The officer set out the preferred option for Cabinet's consideration, which was Option 4 – to transfer the running of all four Council run nursery settings to alternative experienced registered childcare providers, which had been informed by a recent market testing exercise.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language thanked the officers for preparing the detailed report and for carrying out the review. The Cabinet Member was in support of Option 4 as the way forward and stated that within RCT, there were many Third Sector providers that have access to large pots of funding, that were able to offer a greater range of services with more flexibility. The Cabinet Member was in support of transferring the service as it meant little to no impact on service users, families, and staff and was pleased to note that Expressions of Interest had been received from Third Sector providers within the four settings.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care echoed previous comments and it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To consider:
 - the current service delivery arrangements and associated resources as set out in Section 5 of the report;
 - the proposed service delivery options as set out in Section 6 of the report; and
 - the findings of the market testing exercise as set out in paragraphs 6.5 to 6.7 of the report.
2. To implement the preferred option (Option 4) to transfer the running of all four Council run nursery settings to experienced registered childcare providers as set out in paragraph 6.4 of the report;
3. To agree to the formal procurement of experienced registered childcare providers as set out in paragraphs 6.7 to 6.9 of the report; and
4. To delegate authority to the Interim Director of Social Services, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to award contracts following completion of the procurement process and to make all necessary arrangements for the subsequent transfer.

105 The Council's Fees and Charges Policy 2023-2024

The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services provided the Cabinet with the proposed revisions to Council fees and charges levels for the 2023/24 financial year to be consulted on as part of phase 2 of the 2023/24 budget consultation process (with the proposed revisions to be effective from 1st April 2023 or as soon as is practicable thereafter); and the details of fees and charges decisions previously approved and to be included in the 2023/24 proposed Budget Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services acknowledged

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that fees and charges income is a critical part of the Council's funding arrangements for many services. The Cabinet Member explained that at a local level, the proposals intend to ensure a continued provision of a comprehensive range of quality of services at affordable prices for residents. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that the proposals compliment the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in helping to provide a much-needed resource and services which are adequate and fit for future.

The Leader was in support of the report and explained that in several areas, the Council would be picking up the shortfall to ensure residents aren't left with all of the increased costs during the cost-of-living crisis. The Leader felt that the proposals were balanced and explained that inflation was around over 10%, but many of the fees and charges were increased by approximately 5%, to absorb some of the pressure from residents. The Leader added that many of the prices were competitive to other Local Authorities, which would be undergoing a similar budget review.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To consider proposed revisions to Council fees and charges for the 2023/24 financial year;
2. To agree for fees and charges proposals (as set out at paragraphs 5.2.1 to 5.2.29 of the report) to be consulted on through phase 2 of the Council's 2023/24 Budget Consultation process and reported back to Cabinet for consideration as part of formulating a recommended Budget Strategy for 2023/24; and
3. To note the fees and charges decisions previously approved and to be included in the 2023/24 proposed Budget Strategy.

(Note: The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication advised that the approval of the Council's Presiding Officer would be sought to exempt this item from Call-In, to enable the consultation to commence with immediate effect.)

106 The Council's 2023-2024 Revenue Budget

The Director of Finance and Digital Services provided the Cabinet with information in respect of the 2023/24 local government settlement and the outcomes of the budget consultation phase 1 exercise, to assist with its deliberations in formulating the revenue budget strategy for the financial year 2023/24, which it would recommend to Council, for approval.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services thanked the Director for the report and recognised the incredibly challenging times for all Local Authorities in Wales making financial decisions. The Cabinet Member stated that the report had demonstrated how a balanced budget could be delivered in 2023-2024, without the need for compulsory redundancies and with only marginal service delivery changes in comparison to other Local Authorities. The Cabinet Member was pleased to note that the proposed Council Tax increase would likely be one of the lowest in Wales, whilst fees and charges increases would be well below inflation.

The Deputy Leader emphasised the importance of the Budget consultation and spoke of the numerous areas consulted to form the budget strategy. In respect of the consultation responses, the Deputy Leader noted that a high percentage

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of people were in favour and supportive of how the Council manage finances in current climate.

The Leader spoke of the substantial uplift for schools, which was outlined within the report and explained that there was a £13.7M increase in Council resources. The Leader explained that even with the proposed service changes, savings identified and the increased provisional settlement by the Welsh Government, there would still be a £9.1M budget gap, £5M of which would be covered by the energy reserves and £4.1M covered by transitional reserve funding.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note that the procedures relating to revenue budget construction, the budget consultation process, and reporting to Council, are set out in the “Budget and Policy Framework” within the Council’s Constitution;
2. To note and consider the outcomes of the budget consultation phase 1 process.
3. To review and consider the draft 2023/24 Revenue Budget Strategy, detailed in the attached Discussion Paper ‘Appendix A’ of the report;
4. To consider and determine the level of Council Tax increase for 2023/24 which it would wish to build into the strategy to form the basis upon which a second phase of consultation will take place.
5. To agree the draft timetable for setting the 2023/24 revenue budget as set out at Appendix A2 of the report;
6. To receive feedback from the second phase of budget consultation in order to consider and determine the final budget strategy for submission to Council; and
7. That the Council continues to support the medium term financial strategy aimed at maximising ongoing efficiency in service delivery, targeted service transformation and other changes that maintain the financial integrity of the Council whilst still aiming as much as possible to protect jobs and key services.

(Note: The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication advised that the approval of the Council’s Presiding Officer would be sought to exempt this item from Call-In, to enable the consultation to commence with immediate effect.)

This meeting closed at 5.35 pm

**Councillor A Morgan
Chair.**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

REPORT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH CLLR G CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Author(s): Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider the outcome of the consultation on the preferred options on the future provision of accommodation for older people in each of the Council's nine residential care homes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1 Considers:

- the responses to the consultation on the modernisation of the Council's nine residential care homes for older people;
- the information provided in this report;
- the Equality Impact Assessment (including Socio-Economic Duty) and Welsh Language Impact Assessment; and
- the recommendations and comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, following its meeting held on the 27th February 2023, where the Committee undertook pre-scrutiny of the preferred options on the future provision of the Council's accommodation for older people following the consultation [NOTE: this will be reported orally at the Cabinet Meeting].

2.2 Determines whether to proceed with the preferred option to retain the current service provision at the five Council residential care homes listed below:

- Clydach Court, Trealaw
- Pentre House, Pentre
- Tegfan, Trecynon
- Cae Glas, Hawthorn

- Parc Newydd, Talbot Green

- 2.3 Determines whether the Council should proceed with the preferred option to permanently decommission Ystrad Fechan residential care home and continue to explore with Linc Cymru and the Health Board the development of land near the existing care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 40 extra care apartments and 20 residential dementia care beds, along with other health and social care accommodation options depending on available development space and need, as set out in Section 7 of this report. Following a previous Cabinet decision Ystrad Fechan residential care home is currently temporarily closed and has no residents living there.
- 2.4 Subject to 2.3 above, agrees to a further report being presented to Cabinet setting out the investment proposals to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 40 extra care apartments and 20 residential dementia care beds in Treorchy.
- 2.5 Determines whether the Council should proceed with the preferred option to develop land near the existing Ferndale House residential care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds and decommission Ferndale House residential care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed, as set out in Section 7 of this report. NOTE: This would be an amendment to the preferred option consulted upon which was to provide new accommodation with care with 20 extra care apartments and 10 residential dementia care beds and would increase the care provision in the Rhondda Fach.
- 2.6 Subject to 2.5 above, agrees to a further report being presented to Cabinet setting out the investment proposal to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds in Ferndale.
- 2.7 Determines whether the Council should proceed with the preferred option to work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Troedyrhiw residential care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds and decommission the Troedyrhiw care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed, as set out in Section 7 of this report.
- 2.8 Subject to 2.7 above, agrees to a further report being presented to Cabinet setting out the investment proposal to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds in Mountain Ash.

- 2.9 Determines whether the Council should proceed with the preferred option to redevelop Garth Olwg residential care home to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood and decommission Garth Olwg care home for older people when suitable alternative placements are found for existing residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs, as set out in Section 7 of this report.
- 2.10 Subject to 2.9 above, agrees that the decommissioning of Garth Olwg residential care home be concluded by the end of May 2023 and will follow the good practice principles detailed below in paragraph 7.7 of this report and ensure comprehensive support is provided to residents, their families, and staff.
- 2.11 Subject to 2.9 above, agrees to a further report being presented to Cabinet setting out the investment proposal to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood on the Garth Olwg residential care home site.
- 2.12 Agrees that the Interim Director of Social Services and Director of Human Resources produce a workforce development plan to address the workforce issues raised by staff during the consultation in order to attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce to support the delivery of Council's residential care service. The workforce development plan would be shared with the recognised Trade Unions for views prior to any implementation.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 imposes market shaping duties upon the Council and guidance provides that local authorities are required to ensure that there are sufficient, quality services available in the area and that these services are sustainable.
- 3.2 In line with these duties, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council continues to review the residential care home provision that it delivers internally and has consulted on preferred options for a future service delivery model. Officers consider that doing nothing is not a viable option and without re-designing the way that the service is provided, it will not be possible to meet people's changing expectations and needs within the resources available.
- 3.3 The Council is committed to investing in adult social care services and is already investing significantly in care accommodation for older and vulnerable people, making sure that investment is made in the best possible way.

3.4 The consultation undertaken on the preferred options together with the information provided in this report and associated impact assessments will assist Cabinet when considering the future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes in accordance with the recommendations set out above.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The need to modernise and continually improve adult social care services is a key priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf and over the last six years the Council has transformed the way in which it delivers adult social care; with the focus shifting to supporting independence so that people are supported to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

4.2 In [September 2017](#), Cabinet approved a £50m investment plan to develop, in total, 300 extra care apartments across Rhondda Cynon Taf and to deliver modern accommodation options to meet the needs and changing expectations of the growing older population. At this meeting, Cabinet also approved a comprehensive review of residential care homes (and day care services) for older people to determine future improvement opportunities for service delivery in line with the Council's strategy for accommodation for older people.

4.3 The future of the Council's residential care homes for older people has been subject to ongoing review since September 2017. In [December 2020](#), Cabinet agreed, following consideration of three separate stakeholder consultations, the future provision of the Council's residential care homes and to receive a further report setting out a comprehensive modernisation programme.

4.4 In making their decision, the Cabinet considered the outcomes of the three stakeholder consultations, the rationale and drivers shaping the preferred options for the future provision of the Council's residential care homes for older people, and information relating to the capacity and demand. These are summarised below:

- The Council's residential care homes have served their communities well and are popular homes with good standards of care, provided by committed staff.
- There is a need to retain Council residential care homes to ensure that the Council meets its commitment to maintaining an in-house offer of provision in the local residential care home market.
- The difficulty of existing Council's residential care homes to accept the range of referrals and complexity of need being presented

unless the current facilities are upgraded to the modern standards identified for dignified care delivery.

- The demand for traditional residential care is decreasing and less residential care will be needed in the future, as more people will receive care in their own homes, including extra care housing and other supported housing schemes. This is consistent with national and regional priorities and the Council's aim of providing care and support to people in their own homes wherever possible.
- The over provision of residential care beds and sufficient alternative provision of the required type and quality in Rhondda Cynon Taf to meet current and forecast demands - less residential care will be needed in the future geographical market share across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas.
- The current and forecasted need is for more complex care (including dementia care), reablement, respite care or short breaks for carers and nursing care.
- The impact of older people exercising choice now on the occupancy levels in our care homes.

4.5 In [July 2022](#), Cabinet agreed, following a further review of the Council's residential care home provision to address ongoing pandemic related issues and challenges, including reduced demand and low occupancy, staffing shortages and quality of care issues, to:

- temporarily close Ystrad Fechan (Treorchy) and transfer the eight residents to Pentre House (Pentre) or another home of their choosing which meets their needs; and,
- temporarily provide up to 10 new step up step down beds at Parc Newydd (Talbot Green), in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, to support hospital discharge.

4.6 In [July 2022](#), a copy of The Regional Market Stability Report (2022) was presented to Council. The report, which is based on regional analysis of current data and trends and the feedback from resident and stakeholder engagement carried out in 2021/22, highlighted that:

- people are continuing to choose to live at home for longer and that people are entering care homes later in life and with more acute needs, which has resulted in a reduction in the demand for traditional residential care and an increased demand for nursing care and homecare.

- residential care home providers are reporting that they are now supporting people with more complex needs who would have previously had their needs met in a nursing home.
 - current provision is unable to meet the increasing need for nursing with dementia care and respite care, particularly dementia care.
- 4.7 The above highlights from the Market Stability report reinforces the recent trends seen within Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Council's residential care home service and reflects on the trends in the national picture.
- 4.8 On [5th December 2022](#), Cabinet approved the following:
- 4.8.1 To initiate a public consultation, including consultation with current residents and their families and staff, on the preferred options set out below:
- Option 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council residential care homes. This includes - Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.
 - Option 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan residential care home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.
 - Option 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House residential care home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.
 - Option 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw residential care home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.
 - Option 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village. This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg residential care

home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

- 4.8.2 To receive a further report following conclusion of the proposed consultation, including an updated full Equality Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment prior to any final decision being made in relation to the preferred options on the future provision of accommodation for older people in the Council's residential care homes.

5. CURRENT RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME PROVISION IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

- 5.1 There are currently 34 care homes for older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf, offering a total of 1308 registered beds. Of these, the Council operates 9 residential care homes offering 267 registered residential beds, which makes it one of the largest local authority providers of residential care in the country. The remaining 25 care homes are provided by independent providers contracted by the Council, offering 1041 registered residential and nursing beds.

- 5.2 As previously reported, Rhondda Cynon Taf has had a surplus of care home beds for several years, across the Council's care homes and those in the Independent Sector, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Care home occupancy and vacancies

	Council care homes		Independent care homes	
	% Occupied	Vacancies	% Occupied	Vacancies
Nov 2022	60%	103	91%	81
May 2022	50%	145	86%	159
Sep 2021	55%	131	81%	206
Sep 2020	53%	157	79%	206
Feb 2020	69%	102	94%	63
Aug 2019	77%	71	96%	46
Mar 2019	79%	76	93%	81
Mar 2018	83%	57	88%	135
Mar 2017	89%	27	88%	67
Mar 2016	98%	8	95%	75

- 5.3 Whilst occupancy in the Council's residential care homes increased in November 2022, this was due to the previous Cabinet decision, mentioned in paragraph 4.5, to temporarily close Ystrad Fechan and temporarily provide up to 10 new step up step down beds at Parc Newydd, which reduced the overall number of beds available. Table 1 above shows that local demand is following national trends with a

period of decline in residential care home placements prior to the pandemic and thereafter. Occupancy across the independent sector, whilst still below pre-pandemic levels, has now started rising, primarily due to increased placements in nursing and dementia and the Council's decision in September 2022 to stop contracting with Pontypridd Nursing Home.

- 5.4 Lower levels of demand are expected to continue for an extended period. Research by the Institute for Public Policy Research found that there is a lower demand for residential care and that 1/3 of people are now less likely to seek residential care for an elderly relative, while 40% of over 65's are less likely to consider it for themselves.
- 5.5 Over recent years, long term admissions to care homes has fallen in Rhondda Cynon Taf despite an expanding population. Conversely, demand for homecare services for people who live in their own homes and are aged 65 and over has been increasing.
- 5.6 Current vacancies, as of 1st November 2022, broken down by geographical area, market sector and care category are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Current care home vacancies, as of 1st November 2022, by geographical area, market sector and care category.

Area	Sector	Res	Res Dementia	Nursing	Nursing Dementia	Total
Rhondda	Independent	0	10	2	4	16 (5%)
	In-house	20	11	-	-	31 (34%)
	Sub Total	20 (21%)	21 (13%)	2 (2%)	4 (22%)	47 (12%)
Cynon	Independent	23	11	8	3	45 (12%)
	In-house	29	0	-	-	29 (40%)
	Sub Total	52 (37%)	11 (13%)	8 (6%)	3 (4%)	74 (17%)
Taf	Independent	6	2	11	1	20 (6%)
	In-house	24	19	-	-	43 (45%)
	Sub Total	30 (18%)	21 (19%)	11 (7%)	1 (8%)	63 (14%)
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Independent	29	23	21	8	81 (8%)
	In-house	73	30	-	-	103 (40%)
	Total	102 (25%)	53 (15%)	21 (5%)	8 (7%)	184 (14%)

5.7 As shown in Table 2 above, there are still 184 bed vacancies as of 1st November 2022 in Rhondda Cynon Taf, despite previous decisions to temporarily reduce the Council's care home provision at Ystrad Fechan and Parc Newydd and stop contracting with Pontypridd Nursing Home, which resulted in several residents relocating into Council homes, - amounting to 14% of total registered care home beds. This represents a significant oversupply of beds, especially in residential care - 155 bed vacancies (20%) in all three geographical areas, as follows:

- 41 bed vacancies (16%) Rhondda
- 63 bed vacancies (28%) Cynon
- 51 bed vacancies (18%) Taf

5.8 As a result, some care homes are carrying a high number of vacancies and in November 2022, 100% of the Council's Care Homes and 14% of the independent providers reported occupancy rates below 85%.

5.9 The Council's nine residential care homes have the potential to offer 257 care home beds and currently 103 of these are vacant, this excludes the 24 beds from the temporary closure of Ystrad Fechan and new 10 bed step up step down facility at Parc Newydd. This represents a current occupancy level for the Council's Care Homes of still just 60%. Half of the Council's Residential Care Homes still have occupancy below 60% as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Current occupancy, as of 1st November 2022, in each of the Council's nine residential care homes

Area	Care Home	Location	Bed Nos	Permanent Residents Numbers	Temporary Resident Numbers	Overall Occupancy %
Rhondda	Clydach Court	Trealaw	35	22	4	74%
	Ferndale House	Ferndale	26	11	1	46%
	Pentre House	Pentre	29	20	1	72%
	Ystrad Fechan	Treorchy		Temporarily closed		
Cynon	Tegfan	Trecynon	46	25	4	63%
	Troedyrhiw	Mountain Ash	26	14	0	54%
Taf	Cae Glas	Hawthorn	39	17	3	51%
	Garth Olwg	Church Village	30	14	2	53%
	Parc Newydd	Talbot Green	26	14	2	62%
	Total		257	137	17	60%

- 5.10 The pandemic has had a profound impact on the market, in particular the Council's residential care homes and has increased the vacancy rate in the Council's homes. Inevitably, the prolonged high number of vacancies has affected the living environment and experience for residents, increasing the risk of a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.
- 5.11 While the pandemic has created considerable uncertainty about future demand for care home placements, there is still a lot more capacity available in the Council's residential care home market, and in addition to the extra care developments, there are sufficient residential care home places for people. As previously reported, there remains clear evidence that there is an over provision of care home beds in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.12 It is therefore important that the Council continues to review its current residential care home provision to ensure it addresses the ongoing challenges resulting from the recovery from the pandemic, including the greater demand for nursing and specialist care home placements and domiciliary care for people who wish to continue to live in their own homes.
- 5.13 As Cabinet will be aware from previous reports, the Council's residential care homes are in dated buildings, and whilst the quality of the care provided by staff is very good, they were mostly built over 40 years ago and were not designed to meet the current expectations of care accommodation. However, the Council continues to maintain each home in accordance with normal industry practice and requirements and each home is routinely inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales who independently validate ongoing compliance with requirements.
- 5.14 As previously reported, modern purpose built care homes are designed to be dementia friendly and have a larger space standard to support mobility and hoisting needs. They also have en-suite facilities, so people are more able to toilet themselves or with support.
- 5.15 The Council's long term aim, subject to available funding, is to provide an environment where people living in a Council residential care home live in comfort and in a home where the design of the building, with support from staff, maintains someone's sense of dignity and independence.
- 5.16 As Cabinet will be aware, the Council commissioned Quattro Design Architects "Quattro" to undertake an independent review of each of the Council's nine residential care homes to explore options for the refurbishment and new build of each home at their current location in line with modern fit for purpose standards.

5.17 In terms of design, Quattro were commissioned to create plans for the provision of high quality modern residential care homes, with up to 60 beds, to support people with dementia, including those requiring respite care by refurbishing or rebuilding each of the Council's nine care homes.

5.18 The Quattro review outcomes for the refurbishment of each of the Council's residential care homes concluded that none could be refurbished to meet the modern-day standards required of residential care in a way that represents value for money and this would leave the homes financially unsustainable in the longer term, because:

- due to the age, size, and design of the Council's residential care homes, significant investment (at least approx. £30M) would be required to make each home fit for the future and in line with CIW new home standards
- making the Council's residential care homes fit for the future reduce the number of places available due to different facility requirements, such as en-suites - six of the Council's nine residential care homes would have a new occupancy of below 20 registered beds.
- reduced capacity would mean the Council's residential care homes would be more expensive to run. Good provision is already available which would not result in these additional on-going costs.
- the Council's residential care homes would require major alternations resulting in residents and staff having to move to alternative accommodation for a considerable period while the refurbishment is completed.

5.19 The Quattro review outcomes for a new build option on the sites of the Council's existing residential care homes concluded that:

- 3 of the 9 Council's care homes have the potential to be redeveloped to provide purpose-built care home facilities for older people with dementia - with one in each geographical area of Rhondda Cynon Taf, namely
 - Clydach Court in Trealaw (Rhondda)
 - Tegfan in Trecynon (Cynon)
 - Parc Newydd in Talbot Green (Taf)
- In all the above options, it would be necessary for the current residents living in these homes to move to alternative accommodation on a temporary basis for a period of at least up to 18 months, whilst the building work was undertaken.

- Redevelopment of the above care homes will require significant capital investment to achieve the standard of care expected. There will also be a need for additional revenue funding to provide the day to day management and running of these larger home options.
- Whilst Garth Olwg in Church Village does not have the potential to be redeveloped as a sustainable residential care home in the longer term, the site has potential to be redeveloped into supported accommodation for working age vulnerable adults requiring care. This option would need to be further developed in a feasibility study, including potential opportunities to work in partnership with housing associations and service care providers.
- In terms of Ferndale House, Pentre House, and Troedyrhiw the existing locations and sites do not lend themselves to new purpose built care homes in a way that leaves any of those homes financially sustainable and fit for purpose in the longer term.
- Both Ystrad Fechan and Cae Glas care homes are in flood zones and any new care home development for vulnerable people would not be permitted.

5.20 As needs change the Council will need to continue to work with partners to ensure the development of accommodation with care and services that will meet these changing needs and the demands of the integrated health and social care system.

6. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 6.1 The Let's Talk public consultation conducted in part by the Council's Consultation Team took place from 12th December 2022 to 27th January 2023 in order obtain as many views as possible from interested stakeholders to enable the Cabinet to make informed decisions on the preferred options for each home.
- 6.2 Practice Solutions Ltd, based in Abercynon, were commissioned to undertake an independent consultation on the preferred options with residents, their families and staff from each of the Council's residential care homes that are the subject of this report.
- 6.3 In addition, through co-production and support of Cwm Taf People First, an online information session and 15 face to face sessions were held across Rhondda Cynon Taf to gain views from people with a learning disability. Overall, there were a total of 74 easy read surveys completed.

- 6.4 Detailed information about the consultation and feedback received, including key themes on the preferred options for change are set out in the consultation reports at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 6.5 In total 329 survey responses, 7 emails and 1 telephone call were received as part of the Let's Talk public consultation. This total includes those responses received through Cwm Taf People First. 2 petitions were also received relating to Garth Olwg Residential Care Home. 3 public "drop in" sessions were also held in Church Village, Ferndale, and Mountain Ash. In summary:
- 43.6% of respondents to the questionnaire were members of the public, 22.6% were respondents to the Cwm Taf People First survey, 11.3% were relatives of the residents, 10.4% were staff, 7.6% were residents and 6.1% classified as others.
 - 42.3% responses relate to Garth Olwg, 20.2% to Ferndale House and 27.8% were not related to any home in particular.
- 6.6 Table 4 summarises respondents' views on the preferred options using the 329 survey responses received. However, not all respondents provided answers on all options presented.

Table 4: Respondents' Views on the 5 preferred options

Option	Number of respondents	Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Did not know
1	288	200 (69.4%)	63 (21.9%)	25 (8.7%)
2	277	147 (53.1%)	71 (25.6%)	59 (21.3%)
3	298	137 (46.0%)	88 (29.5%)	73 (24.5%)
4	273	127 (46.5%)	82 (30.0%)	47 (23.5%)
5	293	101 (34.5%)	148 (50.5%)	44 (15.0%)

Note: a common theme throughout the feedback analysis were views relating to Garth Olwg care home and disagreement with that proposal (preferred option 5). This continued through the other options in the comments provided.

- 6.7 The feedback received, which has been reviewed and analysed, has been summarised into key themes as set out at Appendix 2. The consultation responses have not identified any other viable options officers had not considered or otherwise discounted, such as doing nothing. Having considered the feedback, the response to each key theme is also set out at Appendix 2, alongside specific responses relating to the feedback and considerations for each preferred option below.

- 6.8 **Preferred Option 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes. This includes: Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.**
- 6.8.1 The majority of respondents (69.4%) agreed with preferred option 1, whereas 21.9% of respondents disagreed. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.
- 6.8.2 Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 1, mainly related to the Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made.
- 6.8.3 Overall, through the consultation processes most people indicated broad support for the proposals set out in preferred option 1, subject to comments and themes raised above.
- 6.8.4 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.
- 6.8.5 The recommendation is to proceed with the preferred option to the retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes, namely: Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.
- 6.9 **Preferred Option 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy.** This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.
- 6.9.1 The majority of respondents (53.1%) agreed with preferred option 2, whereas 25.7% of respondents disagreed. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.
- 6.9.2 Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 2, mainly related to the:
- Rationale for the closure of Ystrad Fechan Care Home
 - Impact on staff who may be affected by the proposed changes

- Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made
- 6.9.3 The Council is satisfied that there is sound rationale supporting the proposals relating to the temporary closure of Ystrad Fechan set out in the [Residential Services report to Cabinet on 18th July 2022](#) and proposed permanent closure set out in Section 5 of this report.
- 6.9.4 Whilst Ystrad Fechan Care Home is currently being used to provide emergency short term accommodation for young people, this has had, nor should have, any bearing on the decision to temporary close or the current preferred option to close permanently. The decision to consult on the preferred option is about making sure the Council invests its resources in the right way so that people get the right level of care for their needs, which is what the preferred option is recommending.
- 6.9.5 In addition, engagement with two of the residents who were relocated from Ystrad Fechan Care Home to Pentre House Care Home when it was temporary decommissioned in August 2022, indicated they were very happy with the care and support that they have received in Pentre House. Both residents explained they were happy to stay at Pentre House and wanted reassurance that whatever the decision made by Cabinet they could remain at Pentre House.
- 6.9.6 Overall, through the consultation processes most people indicated broad support for the new care accommodation proposals in Treorchy as set out in preferred option 2, subject to comments and themes raised above. The investment in the proposed new care accommodation in the local community was welcomed.
- 6.9.7 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.
- 6.9.8 The recommendation is to proceed with the preferred option to develop new accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy and permanently close Ystrad Fechan, which is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there.
- 6.10 **Preferred Option 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale.** This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

- 6.10.1 The majority of respondents (46.0%) agreed with the preferred option 3, whereas 29.5% of respondents disagreed. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.
- 6.10.2 Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 3, mainly related to the:
- Impact on staff who may be affected by the proposed changes
 - Impact on residents and their families who may be affected by the proposed changes
 - Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made
- 6.10.3 There was strong preference from all stakeholder groups that any new provision proposed should be:
- run by the local authority and
 - bigger, offering more capacity than currently provided at Ferndale House, in particular residential dementia provision in order to meet future demand
- 6.10.4 During the consultation, Officers explained that the preferred site for the proposed development of the new care accommodation in Ferndale is the former Ysgol Gymraeg Llyn-y-Forwyn School site, although a final decision to progress this site would be subject to Cabinet approval following consideration of a detailed investment development proposal and then planning approval. The school is planned to move to its new site in Summer 2024 and it is estimated that construction of new care accommodation would take around 24 months to complete, subject to site surveys, tender and planning approval. Any decision to decommission Ferndale House, subject to agreement by Cabinet, would not commence, as proposed in the preferred option, until after the completion of the new care accommodation, estimated to be around Summer 2026 at the earliest.
- 6.10.5 Overall, through the consultation processes most people indicated broad support for the new care accommodation proposals for Ferndale set out in preferred option 3, subject to the comments and themes raised above. The investment in the proposed new care accommodation in the local community was welcomed.
- 6.10.6 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where

possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.

6.10.7 Taking into account the consultation feedback and a further needs analysis, the recommendation, subject to Cabinet agreement, is to amend the original preferred option proposal and increase the number of extra care apartments from 20 to 25 and the residential dementia beds from 10 to 15 at the proposed new care accommodation in Ferndale. Ferndale House care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

6.11 **Preferred Option 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash.** This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

6.11.1 The majority of respondents (46.5%) agreed with the preferred option 4, whereas 30% of respondents disagreed. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.

6.11.2 Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 4, mainly related to the:

- Impact on staff who may be affected by the proposed changes
- Impact on residents and their families who may be affected by the proposed changes
- Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made

6.11.3 There was strong preference, from staff, residents, and their families that any new provision should be run by the local authority.

6.11.4 During the consultation, Officers explained that the preferred site for the proposed development of the new care accommodation is land on Darren Road in Mountain Ash, owned by Linc Cymru, the Council's Development Partner, although a final decision to progress this site is subject to Cabinet approval following consideration of a detailed investment development proposal and then planning approval. It is estimated that construction of new care accommodation would take around 36 months to complete, subject to site surveys, tender and planning approval. Any decision to decommission Troedyrhiw, subject to agreement by Cabinet, would not commence, as proposed in the

preferred option, until after the completion of the new care accommodation, estimated to be around Summer 2026 at the earliest.

6.11.5 Overall, through the consultation processes most people indicated broad support for the new care accommodation proposals in Mountain Ash set out in preferred option 4, subject to comments and themes raised above. The investment in the proposed new care accommodation in the local community was welcomed.

6.11.6 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.

6.11.7 The recommendation is to proceed with the preferred option to develop new accommodation with 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash. Troedyrhiw care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

6.12 **Preferred option 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village.** This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

6.12.1 The majority of respondents (50.5%) disagreed with the preferred option 5, whereas 34.8% of respondents agreed. 52.2% of respondents with a learning disability agreed with the preferred option. In addition, feedback from the Practice Solutions consultation event with residents and their families at Garth Olwg on 19th January 2023, also supported disagreement to this proposal. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.

6.12.2 The overwhelming message from older people and their families can be simply summarised as wanting Garth Olwg care home to remain open. Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 5, can be themed as:

- Impact on residents who may be affected by the proposed changes, in particular concern about the stress of moving to another home.
- Loss of local service to meet local need, allowing people now and in the future to maintain social connections with local friends and family and the impact on families in having to travel further to visit their relatives.

- Council's Strategy in terms of future need and perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made
- Quality of care now and in future / concern regarding independent care home market.
- Rational for replacing current provision for older people with accommodation for people with learning disabilities / concern regarding closeness to school.

6.12.3 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.

6.12.4 Whilst it is acknowledged that the majority of respondents to the consultation, and, in particular those directly impacted by the proposals, are not in favour of Garth Olwg care home decommissioning to create new supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities, the Council has to balance these views with other competing factors, highlighted in this report in order to make sure the Council invests its resources in the right way so that all residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf can get the right level of care to meet their needs now and the future.

6.12.5 The recommendation therefore is to proceed with the preferred option to redevelop Garth Olwg care home to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood and decommission Garth Olwg care home for older people when suitable alternative placements are found for existing residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

6.13 In addition, staff expressed their concerns about job losses and their considerable anxieties raised about job security due to the on-going review of the Council's Residential Care Homes and there was a strong belief these concerns needed to be considered by Cabinet alongside the preferred options for a future service model for the Council's Residential Care Homes.

7. PREFERRED OPTION - FUTURE SERVICE MODEL FOR THE COUNCIL'S RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

7.1 As previously reported to Cabinet, Officers consider that doing nothing is not a viable option. Without continuing to explore the potential for re-designing the way in which adult care is provided, it will not be possible to meet people's changing expectations and increasing demand within the resources available. It is imperative, within the context of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014, that the Council continues to reduce reliance on traditional services such as residential care

homes and moves to a model that is sustainable for the future, and effectively meets the needs of an ageing population with more complex needs, whilst focusing on preventative services, which promote choice, independence, and wellbeing.

7.2 Cabinet will recall however that it has previously agreed to:

- retain a level of provision for residential care homes which were focused on providing complex care, short term residential reablement and respite; and
- base the level of provision retained on a determination of the market share and need required in each of the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf geographical areas.

7.3 Having regard to the outcome of previous consultations and Cabinet decisions, and the further updated supporting information included in this report, the preferred options for the revised future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes that were subject to the recent public consultation are outlined in Table 5 below, which is in line with current policy direction and current and future need in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Table 5: Recommended preferred options (pre and post consultation) for the Council's residential care homes

Care Home	Recommended Preferred Option (pre-consultation)	Recommended Preferred Option (post-consultation)	Rationale
Clydach Court Trealaw	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site redevelopment potential • Geographical presence • Larger care home • Higher level of current residents • Dedicated dementia capacity
Pentre House Pentre	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical presence • Higher level of current residents

Care Home	Recommended Preferred Option (pre-consultation)	Recommended Preferred Option (post-consultation)	Rationale
Cae Glas Hawthorn	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical presence • Larger care home • Higher level of current residents & dedicated dementia capacity
Tegfan Trecynon	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site redevelopment potential • Geographical presence • Larger care home • Higher level of current residents & dedicated dementia capacity
Parc Newydd Talbot Green	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site redevelopment potential • Step down to support hospital discharge • Larger care home
Troedyrhiw Mountain Ash	<p>Work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Troedyrhiw care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds.</p> <p>Decommission Troedyrhiw care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed near the existing care home.</p>	<p><u>No change.</u></p> <p>Work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Troedyrhiw care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds.</p> <p>Decommission Troedyrhiw care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed near the existing care home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building not of a standard of a modern care home • Quattro conclude due to age & condition, that refurbishment, or redevelopment to achieve accommodation that is fit for purpose is uneconomical. • New accommodation with care to be developed near existing home in lower Cynon, subject to approval • Over supply of residential care beds and lack of extra care beds in lower Cynon

Care Home	Recommended Preferred Option (pre-consultation)	Recommended Preferred Option (post-consultation)	Rationale
Ferndale House Ferndale	<p>Work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Ferndale House care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 20 extra care apartments and 10 residential dementia care beds.</p> <p>Decommission Ferndale House care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed near the existing care home.</p>	<p><u>Amended preferred option.</u></p> <p>Work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Ferndale House care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds.</p> <p>Decommission Ferndale House care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed near the existing care home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building not of a standard of a modern care home • Quattro conclude due to age & condition, refurbishment, or redevelopment of achieve fit for purpose accommodation that is uneconomical. • New accommodation with care to be developed near existing care home in Rhondda Fach, subject to approval • Residents & staff move once, once new accommodation developed. • Over supply of residential care beds & lack of extra care beds in Rhondda Fach
Ystrad Fechan Treorchy	<p>Permanently decommission care home.</p> <p>Continue to explore with Linc Cymru and the Health Board the development of land near the existing Ystrad Fechan care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 40 extra care apartments and 20 residential dementia care beds, along with other health and social care accommodation options depending on available development space and need.</p>	<p><u>No change.</u></p> <p>Permanently decommission care home.</p> <p>Continue to explore with Linc Cymru and the Health Board the development of land near the existing Ystrad Fechan care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 40 extra care apartments and 20 residential dementia care beds, along with other health and social care accommodation options depending on available space and need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently closed temporarily and has no residents living there • Quattro conclude due to age and condition of the home, extensive refurbishment to achieve modern fit accommodation is uneconomical • Home in flood zone • Current over supply of residential care home beds and therefore capacity to meet need

Care Home	Recommended Preferred Option (pre-consultation)	Recommended Preferred Option (post-consultation)	Rationale
Garth Olwg Church Village	<p>Redevelop Garth Olwg care home to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood.</p> <p>Decommission existing residential care home for older people when suitable alternative placements are found for existing residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.</p>	<p><u>No change.</u></p> <p>Redevelop Garth Olwg care home to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood.</p> <p>Decommission existing residential care home for older people when suitable alternative placements are found for existing residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building not of a standard of a modern care home • Quattro conclude due to age & condition, that refurbishment, or redevelopment to achieve fit for purpose accommodation is uneconomical. • Site size and location for development of supported accommodation • Over supply of residential care beds and lack of modern supported accommodation in Taf. • Increased need & demand for care accommodation for people with learning disabilities. • Residents would be offered to transfer to two nearby Council residential care homes or another home of their choosing, which meets their needs. • Staff will also be offered to transfer from the home to accompany residents and enhance staffing levels in other Council residential care homes.

7.4 Taking into account the outcome of the consultation, previous rationale to support the reported preferred options and the supporting information included in this report, it is recommended that the Cabinet agree the revised preferred model for the future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes, as outlined in Table 5 in paragraph 7.3 above.

- 7.5 This preferred model would allow the Council to deliver a model that is sustainable for the future and enables people to maximise their independence, remain in their own home for longer and effectively meet the needs of an ageing population with more complex needs and the need of vulnerable adults, which are consistent with the priorities set out in relevant strategic intent and in line with the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 7.6 There will be appropriate consultation and engagement with older people, people with a learning disability, carers, residents, and all other key stakeholders, subject to Cabinet approval, on the redevelopment proposals outlined in Section 2 above.

Next Steps

- 7.7 Any decisions taken by Cabinet will be communicated to all residents, their families, and staff. If a decision is taken to decommission one or more of the Council's care homes:
- Adult Services will initiate the Council's Care Home Closure Protocol in relation to each home, and decommissioning will be approached in a planned and carefully managed way, in line with national best practice guidance. This would include the involvement of residents, families, friends and staff from the Care Home.
 - Adult Services will use its experience of supporting residents, their families and staff when individuals have needed to move to a new care setting, for example from a care home to a nursing home or where services have closed in the past.
 - Residents and families will be at the centre of discussions.
 - Staff in Adult Services will make themselves available to support families and care home residents to make informed decisions. This would take into account specific issues such as long standing friendships and transport links to any alternative home and the ability of carers to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process. Where appropriate other care professionals including health staff and GPs would be involved. Staff will also work closely with residents, their families and, if relevant, any new care providers; facilitating visits to potential new homes where appropriate and developing up to date relevant information to support a seamless transition
 - Advocates will be arranged to support discussions were needed.
 - Discussions and decisions will be overseen by an Officer Group that will ensure a person-centred approach is taken with residents,

their families and advocates, if appropriate. Adult Services will also support people to move closer to their families, including those who may wish to move outside of Rhondda Cynon Taf or would like to consider any of the new developments in extra care that are being supported by the Council.

- 7.8 Staff in the Council's care homes will also have dedicated Human Resources support allocated to minimise the impact of any decisions in line with the Council's Management of Change Policy. Adult Services and Human Resources will also work closely with our Trade Union colleagues when implementing any decisions reached.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 8.1 The Council must satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations based on protected characteristics.
- 8.2 The Council's Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that due regard is paid to the above. It also ensures due regard is had to the Socio-Economic duty as it applies to public bodies in Wales.
- 8.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), informed by the consultation feedback, has been updated and has informed the final recommendations set out in this report. A copy of the EIA is included at Appendix 3. Cabinet should have regard to the assessment when reaching its final decision.
- 8.4 Subject to Cabinet's decision the Council would take account of the challenges people affected by the proposals, as highlighted in this report and EIA, may face and ensure that the impact of any changes are mitigated as detailed in the EIA, if they are to be implemented. Due to the nature of the people group, there would be a disproportionate impact on older people and people with a range of disabilities. The key potential impacts of the preferred options on people with protected characteristics particularly older people and carers are set out in the EIA. Alongside these, a number of mitigating actions have been proposed to address this.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) has been prepared and provides further detail in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh

Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The outcome of this assessment is provided in Appendix 4.

- 9.2 A possible negative impact on the Welsh Language was identified in Stage 2 of the WLIA, as the closure of Garth Olwg Care Home will directly impact two Welsh-speaking residents who reside there (amongst other residents). They would be required to move, possibly to different settings where they would no longer have the opportunity to speak Welsh with other residents as they do with each other at present.
- 9.3 Whilst that potential negative impact is acknowledged, it should also be noted that Garth Olwg currently has no Welsh-speaking staff who can converse fluently with these residents, whilst other settings across the County Borough do employ Welsh-speakers at this time. Short of ensuring Welsh-speaking staffing capacity at Garth Olwg in the interim period, moving from Garth Olwg could possibly have positive impacts in the longer term for these Welsh-speaking residents, were they to move to another setting where Welsh-speaking staff are employed. As with all Council services however its vision is to increase the use of the Welsh Language across its workforce.
- 9.4 If agreed, all recommended proposals will comply with Mwy Na Geiriau 2022-2027 ('More than Just Words'), Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposals set out in this report have the primary focus of delivering improved quality of care and support outcomes for Rhondda Cynon Taf residents.
- 10.2 Notwithstanding this, the pandemic has had a significant financial impact on the Council's residential care home provision and continues to result in overall increased cost pressures for Adult Services and these proposals would provide more cost-effective solutions to the current arrangements and reduce cost pressures. Any potential financial contribution these proposals would make to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan would be used to maintain these essential care and support services.
- 10.3 The capital funding requirements to deliver the proposals for investment in new facilities would be considered by Cabinet, if approved, in due course. This will include reviewing all opportunities to secure any available external (Welsh Government) sources of finance to support the timely delivery of the strategy.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 There is a requirement to publicly consult along with staff affected by proposals resulting in changes to current and future service provision.
- 11.2 Where consultation is undertaken it should be done when proposals are at a formative stage; give sufficient reasons for any proposal so that respondents can make an informed response and allow adequate time for consideration and response. Cabinet would then be required to give consideration to the outcome of the consultation process prior to any decision(s) being made on any proposals.
- 11.3 Any future provision of services would need to be considered in accordance with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Local Authorities have a general duty under the Act to promote wellbeing. This duty applies when considering decisions in respect of an individual but also when considering broader strategic issues that do not relate to an individual. In doing so, the overall purpose is to produce a sustainable and diverse range of care and support services to deliver better, innovative and cost-effective services and support and promote the wellbeing of every person, and carer, with the need of care and support. The recommendations made in Section 2 above and consideration of future options aims to deliver the highest standards of care and support and is consistent with the above duty.
- 11.4 In addition, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Part 4 Code of Practice sets out that where an Authority has carried out an assessment which has revealed that the person has needs for care and support then the local authority must decide if those needs meet the eligibility criteria, and if they do, it must meet those needs. The recommendations in this report will allow the Council to ensure that going forward the Council can meet all eligible needs.
- 11.5 Any employment issues that arise would need to be considered in conjunction with Human Resources and in accordance with the Council's Management of Change Policy when making changes that affect staff.

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

- 12.1 This report supports two of the Council's corporate priorities, namely:
- People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
 - Living within our means - where services are delivered efficiently to achieve value for money for the taxpayer.

12.2 The proposals in this report, subject to approval, would allow the Council to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. They meet the needs of an ageing population, including those with more complex needs, are more sustainable and increases focus on wellbeing and independence, resulting in the wellbeing goals of a healthier Wales and more equal Wales being supported.

13. ELECTORAL WARDS AFFECTED

13.1 Subject to approval, the recommended preferred options set out in this report would directly impact the following wards:

Care Home	Electoral Ward
Clydach Court	Trealaw
Ferndale House	Ferndale and Maerdy
Pentre House	Pentre
Ystrad Fechan	Treorchy
Tegfan	Aberdare West and Llwydcoed
Troedyrhiw	Mountain Ash
Cae Glas	Hawthorn and Lower Rhydyfelin
Garth Olwg	Church Village
Parc Newydd	Llantrisant and Talbot Green

13.2 Although, the proposals will also most likely impact on residents, families and staff from across the County Borough.

14. CONCLUSIONS

14.1 Officers consider that doing nothing in respect of each proposal is not a viable option. Without exploring the potential for re-designing the way that adult care is provided, it will not be possible to meet people's changing expectations and increasing demand within the resources available. It is imperative, within the context of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014, that the Council continues to reduce reliance on traditional services such as residential care homes and moves to a model that is sustainable for the future, and effectively meets the needs of an ageing population with more complex needs, whilst focusing on preventative services, which promote choice, independence and wellbeing.

14.2 The extensive consultation exercise undertaken by the Council has demonstrated the strength of feeling from a range of people. The Council's residential care homes are clearly highly significant for the people who live in them. There is mixed support for Cabinet's preferred options for the future of the Council's residential care homes and to retain a level of residential care home provision, as set out in Section 7 of this report. The overwhelming message from older people and their families

can be simply summarised as wanting all Council residential care homes to remain open. However, it has been possible to respond to all concerns raised during the consultation and put forward by way of appropriate mitigation.

- 14.3 Taking into account the feedback received from the consultation and the supporting information included in this report, officers consider that the recommendations put forward in this report for the revised future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes, as outlined in Section 7 of this report, alongside the ongoing successful delivery of the Council's extra care strategy would lead to the development of a more sustainable model of residential services providing the best possible care and support.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

**REPORT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION
WITH CLLR G CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

Background Papers

Cabinet: September 2017; November 2019; December 2020; July 2022

Officer to contact: Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services

Dewch i
siarad RhCT
Let's talk
RCT

THE MODERNISATION OF
RESIDENTIAL CARE
FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
January 2023



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the consultation on the modernisation of Residential Care for older people.
- The consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 12th December 2022 to the 27th January 2023.
- Views were sought on a number of proposed options for the future of Residential Care in Rhondda Cynon Taf as follows:

OPTION 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes. This includes - Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.

OPTION 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.

OPTION 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village. This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

- The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders;
 - An online and paper survey which was built using Snap XMP.
 - A consultation booklet was provided to all care home residents and their relatives, which included the survey, and an easy read document.
 - Promotion on the [Councils online consultation webpage](#) to encourage engagement.
 - An email was sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.
 - 3 public drop-in sessions were held.

- Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address residentialcare@rctcbc.gov.uk
- A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allowed people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address was available for postal responses.
- Through coproduction and with the support of RCT People First, 1 online information session and 15 in-person sessions were held across the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely areas to gain views from members of the public with a Learning Disability.

Summary of Feedback

- 255 responses were received to the survey, and a further 74 responses were received from the Easy Read surveys and accompanying sessions. A selection of comments are provided in the full report and the full list of the comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.
- Respondents were asked whether they were responding as a resident of a Council Residential Care Home, a relative/friend, an advocate, a staff member, or a member of the public. The largest proportion of respondents were members of the public (43.6%).
- Respondents to the primary survey were asked what Council Care Home their views related to. Most of the responses related to Garth Olwg Residential Care Home (42.3%) or were not related to any home in particular (27.8%).
- Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 1, to retain the current service provision at the 5 current care Council homes (69.4%).
- The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 1 were asked why they disagreed. A common theme throughout the analysis were views relating to Garth Olwg residential care home and disagreement with that proposal (proposal 5). This continued through the other options in the comments received.
- Finally on option 1, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families. In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included positive impacts, such as keeping a local service and providing a variety of options. The negative impacts are reported to be upheaval for families, a sense that that relatives will have further to travel and concerns for the residents themselves of any change. There is also continued mention of the Garth Olwg proposal, option 5.
- There were a number of concerns for the future impact of the proposals, with people seeing no impact now, but looking to the future for themselves and family, when they may need the care themselves.
- Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 2 (53.1%).
- Overall, 46.0% agreed with option 3 for Ferndale House Care Home, and 29.5% disagreed. There was a relatively high number of respondents who were unsure on this option, with 24.5% of respondents stating that they "didn't know".

- With option 3, a common theme were views relating to the Rhondda area, particularly in relation to the Ferndale residential care home and the perceived need for more dementia care in the area.
- Overall, 46.5% of respondents agreed with option 4, with 30.0% disagreeing and 23.4% stating that they “didn’t know”.
- The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 4 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received were similar to those already received for the other options, in terms of distance to travel from other care homes if relocated to Mountain Ash, and support for the new accommodation, including further suggestions that the old home should also be kept or that additional capacity is needed.
- Overall, the largest proportion of respondents did not agree with option 5 (50.5%). The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option were asked why they disagreed. The comments received were largely similar to other options, with additional concern about the location of the new accommodation being near a school. Many comments focused on there not being alternative provision in the locality and the perceived distress that residents would suffer if uprooted from their community. A lot of comments also praised the current staff and atmosphere at Garth Olwg and expressed worry that this would not be continued or recreated elsewhere.
- Finally on option 5, respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families. In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included travel barriers, distress to current and potential future residents and the impact on existing staff.
- When asked for other suggestions or alternative options, the following themes were identified and mainly mirrored the comments that had already been made.
 - Objections to option 5 Garth Olwg.
 - Keep everything the same, why change?
 - Perceived need for more capacity in care homes and to build new ones where appropriate.
 - Upsetting for the residents of the care homes.
 - Need for more dementia care in Ferndale.
- 3 public drop-in sessions provided an opportunity for the public to raise any concerns they may have regarding the consultation and to ask questions directed towards the Director of Adult Social Services and the Head of Service for Accommodation regarding the future of Care Homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Overall, those in attendance in Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre were concerned with the impact the closure would have on the residents as well as the local community. However, they agreed that modern facilities need to be built which will meet the care needs of the public in the future, including both Extra Care provision and accommodation with care for those with a learning disability. An acknowledgement was given that although the staff provide outstanding levels of care within our homes, there is now a need for more tailored facilities to meet different requirements of care into the future. Transportation issues were also

discussed during the meeting, with those in attendance raising concerns regarding the public transport accessibility to other homes within RCT.

- Overall, there was general support for the proposals outlined for Ferndale. Reassurance was provided to those in attendance that Ferndale House would be decommissioned when the new facility is developed. Those in attendance provided concern for current staff at the home regarding how they would be impacted by these proposals and the role of the housing association. Moreover, it was discussed that although the staff provide excellent quality of care at the home, the home itself is outdated to meet future need and modernisation of the facility is required, especially given change in care needs. The investment in the local community is welcomed.
- A total of 2 petitions were received in relation to option 5 and were against the proposed closure of the Garth Olwg Care home.
- **Overall, 329 survey responses and 7 emails were received to the consultation, along with 1 call to the customer services phone line and 2 petitions.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the consultation on the modernisation of Residential Care for older people.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines a brief background to the consultation process.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results of the survey.
- 1.5 Section 5 outlines the responses received from the public drop in sessions.
- 1.6 Section 6 presents the feedback from the written responses.
- 1.7 Section 7 outlines the petitions that were received.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Modernising and improving adult care provision is a key Council priority. This is important due to an ageing population, lower demand for ‘traditional’ care homes and changing expectations of people to remain at home in their local communities for as long as possible. The Council believes people should be able to access residential care accommodation which is modern and meets their needs. As a Council, we have a duty to reflect on our current model and ask ourselves whether we think it reflects the needs and aspirations of not only our current population, but the generations to come.
- 2.2 A Council commitment to modernise accommodation with care options, for older people, including residential care was approved in 2016, while a £50m investment plan to provide 300 Extra Care beds in Rhondda Cynon Taf was agreed in 2017. Extra Care delivers modern accommodation to meet the needs and changing expectations of the growing older population, allowing them to live as independently as possible in their own homes. They are modern, built-for-purpose buildings, catering for a range of needs.
- 2.3 Extra Care residents also receive targeted on-site support for their assessed needs, in an environment which provides an alternative to a care home. This care and support is available 24/7 for the residents. Extra Care facilities also offer dedicated day services for older people, as well as a community resource providing community opportunities. Two new modern, state of the art, Extra Care Housing schemes have been opened in partnership with Linc Cymru in Aberaman and Pontypridd in May 2020 and December 2021 respectively, delivering 100 new beds.
- 2.4 In July 2022, Ystrad Fechan Care Home was temporarily closed, and 10 new beds were provided at Parc Newydd Care Home, to support hospital discharge. This change, in response to falling occupancy rates and immediate pressures in the care sector, ensured residents continued to access quality support and care. As a direct result, occupancy levels at other Council care homes increased as the affected residents were supported to access suitable alternative provision.
- 2.5 [In December 2022, Cabinet considered](#) and determined to consult on major proposals to invest and modernise residential care services in Rhondda Cynon Taf– including three new facilities offering Extra Care and residential dementia care, a fourth new accommodation for adults with learning disabilities, and the retention of five Council care homes.

Current Position

- 2.6 The Council runs nine residential care homes, offering 267 beds, making it one of the largest Local Authority providers in Wales. It has had an increasing surplus of beds over many years – with 184 beds vacant as of November 2022, rising from just eight vacant beds in 2016. It is unlikely that demand for residential care will increase substantially in the near future. Overall, the Council currently has 60% of its residential care beds occupied, and a third of its care homes have at least one in two beds empty.

- 2.7 An independent review found that none of the nine Council care home buildings can be sufficiently refurbished to meet modern standards. It also found that only three of the nine Council's care home locations would be suitable for a new-build provision. In each of those three homes, it would be necessary for the current residents living in these homes to temporarily move to alternative accommodation on a temporary basis for a period at least up to 18 months, whilst the building work was undertaken.

Preferred Options

- 2.8 Following the review of the Council's Residential Care Homes for older people, five preferred options are being consulted upon. These preferred options focus on preventative services, choice, independence, well-being and future needs. The proposals would increase options for people who need accommodation and care and offer a viable alternative for those able to remain independent with support in their local communities.
- 2.9 The options on which Cabinet have determined to consult upon are set out below:

OPTION 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes. This includes- Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.

OPTION 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.

OPTION 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedryhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village. This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Residential Care consultation was conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from the 12th December 2022 and ended on the 27th January 2023. This section presents the methodology which was utilised to promote and collect the data.
- 3.2 The consultation used an online and paper survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.
- 3.3 A consultation booklet was provided to all care home residents and their relatives, which included the survey, and an easy read document.
- 3.4 To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the [Councils online consultation webpage](#) to encourage engagement. An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.
- 3.5 3 public drop-in sessions were held as follows:

Location	Date	Time
Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre	16 th January 2023	5-7PM
Mountain Ash Library	24 th January 2023	5-7PM
Ferndale Hub	25 th January 2023	5-7PM

- 3.6 Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address residentialcare@rctcbc.gov.uk, in order to allow them to share their views.
- 3.7 A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address was available for postal responses.
- 3.8 Overall, 255 survey responses and 7 emails were received to the consultation, along with 1 call to the customer services phone line and 2 petitions.
- 3.9. In addition, through coproduction and with the support of Cwm Taf People First, 1 online information session and 15 in-person sessions were held across the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely areas to gain views from members of the public with a learning disability. Overall, there were a total of 74 easy read surveys completed.

4 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the online and paper questionnaires, which received 255 survey responses and 74 easy read surveys through Cwm Taf People First.
- 4.2 A selection of comments are provided and the full list of the comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.
- 4.3 Respondents were asked whether they were responding as a resident of a Council residential care home, a relative/friend, an advocate, a staff member, or a member of the public. Table 1 shows that the largest proportion of respondents were members of the public (43.6%).

Note: tables including type of respondent do not add up to 100% as this was a multiple response question. The base is the total number of respondents, some of whom will have provided more than one response.

Base	329 100.0%
Are you a:	
Resident of a Residential Care Home	25 7.6%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council Residential Care Home	37 11.3%
Advocate for a resident	2 0.6%
Member of the public	143 43.6%
Staff member	34 10.4%
Other	20 6.1%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	74 22.6%

Table 1: Respondent Type

- 4.4 Respondents were asked what Council Care Home their views related to, and the results are shown in Table 2. Most of the responses related to Garth Olwg Residential Care Home (42.3%) or were not related to any home in particular (27.8%).
- 4.5 This question was not asked of the 74 respondents to the Easy Read survey.

Base	248 100.0%
Ystrad Fechan (currently staying at Pentre House)	4 1.6%
Pentre House	3 1.2%
Clydach Court	3 1.2%
Ferndale House	50 20.2%
Tegfan	4 1.6%
Troedyrhiw	12 4.8%
Cae Glas	5 2.0%
Garth Olwg	105 42.3%
Parc Newydd	6 2.4%
No home in particular	69 27.8%

Table 2: Care Homes

- 4.6 Respondents were asked whether they agreed with a number of options for service change.

4.7 **OPTION 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes.**

This includes:

- Clydach Court in Trealaw,
- Pentre House in Pentre,
- Tegfan in Trecynon,
- Cae Glas in Hawthorn
- Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.

	Total	Do you agree with option 1?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	288	200 69.4%	63 21.8%	25 8.7%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	12	9 75.0%	2 16.7%	1 8.3%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council residential care home	32	19 59.4%	11 34.4%	2 6.3%
Advocate for a resident	2	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	140	88 62.9%	35 25.0%	17 12.1%
Staff member	16	11 68.8%	5 31.3%	0 0.0%
Other	20	12 60.0%	7 35.0%	1 5.0%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	66	60 90.91%	2 3.03%	4 6.06%

Table 3: Agreement with Option 1

- 4.8 Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 1, to retain the current service provision at the 5 current Council Care Homes (69.4%), with 62.9% of the public agreeing with option 1.

If no, why do you disagree? - Option 1

- 4.9 The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 1 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received can be summarised as follows;

Perceived need for more care homes

“New, bigger and better accommodation is needed in the area”

“It would not provide extra facilities to meet growing demand”.

“The demographic of the population is getting older and more, not less places will be needed in the future.”

- 4.10 A common theme throughout the analysis were views relating to Garth Olwg residential care home and disagreement with that proposal (proposal 5).

Garth Olwg Views

“Garth Olwg should also be retained as a Council care home.”

“Garth Olwg is a local care home for local people where they can go and be near family and friends. They would probably know people there from the area which would help them in the long term.”

“Why shut Garth Olwg it has a brilliant reputation and all we have in our local community.”

- 4.11 Another common theme are views relating to the Rhondda area, particularly in relation to Ferndale residential care home. Later in the report, under option 3 (section 4.23), the views include the perceived need for further dementia care in the area.

Rhondda / Ferndale Views

“More supported care is required in the Rhondda to enable people to remain in the locality. we need to encourage older people to remain independent for as long as possible with some support rather than shut away in a home.”

“Your proposal to restructure care provision in the Rhondda Fach locality is inadequate and poorly informed. There is no competitor to absorb the residential care element.”

- 4.12 Finally on option 1, respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included:

Positive Impact

“Would maintain ongoing care for parent.”

“Keeping a local service.”

“Provides a variety of options.”

Negative Impact

- 4.13 The negative impacts are reported to be upheaval for families, a sense that this option means that relatives will have further to travel and concerns for the residents themselves of any change. There is also continued reference to the Garth Olwg proposal and the comments reflect this.

“Too far to visit residents.”

“Making residents and family having to be placed outside of the area they were born. Forced to move out of the place where they know so many people and have families faces.”

“It would have a dramatic implication on my mother’s health as visitors would be less. She is already stressed over the thought of being moved.”

Future Impact

- 4.14 There were a number of concerns for the future impact of the proposals, with people seeing no impact now, but were looking to the future for themselves and family when they may need the care themselves.

“At this time no impact but looking to the future could effect myself and my wife.”

“No impact at present but I am getting older and wish to stay as independent as possible for as long as is practical so some supported accommodation may help in future.”

- 4.15 Respondents to the Easy Read survey raised the following comments:

“One person’s mother is in a residential home, and she is going to be moved, it is very confusing and unfair. The home does need to be modernised but is difficult for people to adjust especially with dementia. The care she gets at the home is very good and people have access to health care services much quicker.”

“Older people should have freedom of choice. No one should be forced into homes older people with a learning disability may want to stay at home with their parents.”

4.16 **OPTION 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy.**

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.

	Total	Do you agree with option 2?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	277	147 53.1%	71 25.6%	59 21.3%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	6	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	3 50.0%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council Residential Care Home	31	13 41.9%	9 29.0%	9 29.0%
Advocate for a resident	2	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	135	72 53.3%	36 26.7%	27 20.0%
Staff member	14	7 50.0%	5 35.7%	2 14.3%
Other	20	10 50.0%	8 40.0%	2 10.0%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	69	41 59.4%	12 17.4%	16 23.2%

Table 4: Agreement with Option 2

4.17 Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 2 (53.1%), with 53.3% of members of the public agreeing. A relatively high 21.3% of all respondents said they didn't know.

If no, why do you disagree? - Option 2

4.18 The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 2 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received can be summarised as follows:

Positive

"It would seem to provide the most extra facilities."

"It would be good to have extra beds while still being close enough to visit."

"How many dementia beds are there now? If this increases the number of beds then it's good."

- 4.19 A number of respondents provided views on this option in terms of distance and travel time from existing homes, mainly Garth Olwg.

Transport / Distance

“People from other valleys might have difficulty getting there.”

“Too far away for people living elsewhere in RCT. Families won’t be able to visit, people lose their friends / community links. Staff having to travel miles without public transport links.”

“Not quite sure how relatives and friends would get there to visit as there are no direct or quick transport links from Church Village and their relatives would become isolated and confused very quickly.”

Geography /Location

“Why should this facility only be in the Rhondda and not in the south of the area? Yet again the Taff area is neglected by the Council.”

“I am unsure as it seems the focus here is yet again on the valleys, not here in Talbot Green, Pontyclun, Miskin area.”

“We need a care home in the Pontypridd area.”

No change to Treorchy

“It should be retained for the future of the valley.”

“There should be no closures but more care homes.”

“It's lovely to have new care homes, but you don't have to close the existing good ones!”

- 4.20 Finally on option 2, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included:

Positive Impact

“Still able to visit regularly.”

“Treorchy should be utilised for the residents living in the area of Rhondda as long as there is enough spaces for the residents living in the area then I agree with this option.”

“My dad is currently in hospital and needs a dementia care home, Treorchy is close for family to visit daily.”

Impact on Travel

“Having to travel to the Rhondda to visit. No direct bus route and cost of travel to visit.”

“Why would I want to go to a home in Treorchy when I live in Tonteg? It would make my condition worse!”

“If anyone needed dementia care it would be difficult to get to Treorchy to visit them.”

- 4.21 59.4% of respondents to the Easy Read survey agreed with option 2, as the new facilities will be able to meet the evolving care needs of older people. The below comments were raised:

“Think it will be good for people with dementia as they will get their support needs met.”

“It is good to have the Extra Care support as long as they get it!”

“It will help the older people get the right care and support.”

“It needs to be local for relatives to be able to visit this is important.”

“It will be safer for them.”

“More flats are needed for older people especially those with dementia.”

- 4.22 17.4% of respondents to the Easy Read survey disagreed with option 2, and raised this comment:

“I am not happy to move into a residential home – I like living in supported living.”

4.23 **OPTION 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale.**

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

	Total	Do you agree with option 3?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	298	137 46.0%	88 29.5%	73 24.5%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	15	4 26.7%	5 33.3%	6 40.0%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council residential care home	32	19 59.4%	7 21.9%	6 18.8%
Advocate for a resident	1	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	134	58 43.3%	41 30.6%	35 26.1%
Staff member	28	8 28.6%	16 57.1%	4 14.3%
Other	19	10 52.6%	5 26.3%	4 21.1%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	69	38 55.1%	13 18.8%	18 26.1%

Table 5: Agreement with Option 3

4.24 Overall, 46.0% of respondents agreed with option 3 for Ferndale House Care home, with 29.5% of respondents disagreeing. There were a relatively high number of respondents who were unsure on this option, with 24.5% of respondents stating that they “didn’t know”.

If no, why do you disagree? - Option 3

4.25 The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 2 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received can be summarised as follows:

4.26 A number of responses that could be perceived as positive were placed in the comments box as to why they disagree with the option 3.

Positive

“This is a better option for the residents.”

“Home is run down in places but would like the new building to stay in Ferndale.”

“This particular area of the Valley really needs this, if it moved elsewhere such as Treorchy, family will find it extremely difficult to visit due to very poor transport links.”

“As a staff member of Ferndale House for the last 20 years and also 7 years as a home care worker, I feel this proposal is very much needed in this valley as an EMI and elderly, as there is a great demand for these places. Extra care, I feel, would be invaluable against EMI residential.”

- 4.27 Once again, a number of respondents provided views on this option in terms of distance and travel time from existing homes, mainly Garth Olwg.

Transport / Distance

“Can’t see how relatives and friends will now be able to visit as no direct transport links from church village to Ferndale so visiting would stop.”

“Middle of nowhere.”

“Same reason- too far away. No transport links.”

No Change

- 4.28 Some of those in disagreement said they were in favour of the new Extra Care facilities, but not at the expense of the existing residential care home.

“If this option would be possible while retaining the current provision within RCT I would support it but clearly it involves the closure of facilities currently providing services to the detriment of their local residents.”

“There are not enough care facilities across RCT as it stands. I’m not against this new accommodation but think it should be built as well as keeping the existing Ferndale House Care Home open.”

Dementia Care

- 4.29 Some of the respondents provided views on dementia care in the area, in particular the need and demand for the service.

“Need more support in the area for dementia needs.”

“I agree with the extra care scheme, however, how much thought has gone into the fact, of 10 beds will cover Ferndale and surrounding areas for Dementia care.”

“The proposed dementia care provision is inadequate for the Rhondda Fach locality when there is no private competitor. Doubling the proposed dementia care provision would be a more suitable idea when demand for the provision currently out demands what we can supply.”

“I think there is more of a demand for residential dementia residents.”

- 4.30 Finally on option 3, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families. In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included:

Positive Impact

“At least some provision would be in the Rhondda Fach near family.”

“The development of new accommodation will offer many opportunities for the future both in quality of the accommodation on offer and independence.”

Impact on Travel (Garth Olwg)

“Too far to travel and lack of continuity in care which would severely affect residents.”

“Too far away for family to visit loved ones.”

Impact on Residents

“I am a member of the public who visits care homes through singing and have witnessed the bond between staff and residents! To break this would be dreadful!”

“Most of my family live local and my family would prefer me to stay here I live currently until the new build is finished.”

“If the care home closed and I need care for mobility issues etc. send would have to leave the area.”

Impact on Staff

“I could possibly lose my job. A job that I love doing. I am the main breadwinner in the home as my partner is now disabled. Ferndale new build is going to be the smallest building. Yet again something taken from the people of the Rhondda.”

“As a domestic member of staff, it is not known whether jobs will be available. I think all staff from Ferndale House should be kept together. I waited for a contract so I could have stability and consistency for me and my young daughter.”

“Impact my employment currently on a 0 hour contract. Is there work for me or am I going to be offered a position.”

- 4.31 55.1% of respondents to the Easy Read survey agreed with option 3, and 18.8% of respondents disagreed. The following comments were made:

“Keep it the same.”

“Feel sad for older people who have to leave.”

4.32 **OPTION 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash.**

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

	Total	Do you agree with option 4?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	273	127 46.5%	82 30.0%	64 23.4%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	6	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	3 50.0%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council residential care home	31	14 45.2%	13 41.9%	4 12.9%
Advocate for a resident	1	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	133	58 43.6%	42 31.6%	33 24.8%
Staff member	14	7 50.0%	5 35.7%	2 14.3%
Other	19	8 42.1%	5 26.3%	6 31.6%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	69	37 53.6%	16 23.2%	16 23.2%

Table 6: Agreement with Option 4

4.33 Overall, 46.5% of respondents agreed with option 4, with 30.0% disagreeing and 23.4% stated that they “didn’t know”.

If no why do you disagree? - Option 4

4.34 The 30.0% of respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 4 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received were similar to those already received for the other options, in terms of distance to travel from other care homes, if relocated to Mountain Ash and support for the new accommodation, but some suggestions that the old home should also be kept or that additional capacity is needed. A selection of comments are provided below:

“Too far away and difficult to visit on public transport.”

“Again miles away from where we live.”

“The existing care facility should remain open alongside the new facility, to provide even more accommodation.”

“Again need to have additional capacity, ‘closing the ‘old’ home would be counterproductive.”

4.35 There were a number of positive comments:

“It provides extra facilities to meet growing demand & would be more convenient personally.”

“Better option for existing residents.”

4.36 Finally on option 4, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included:

Positive Impact

“This would be a wonderful opportunity for residents living in the lower Cynon Valley.”

“Easy to access via A470.”

“Good to look ahead for future residents as long as it does not affect the day-to-day normality for the dementia patients that are settled and happy.”

“Although difficult to get to for my family, a larger dementia facility might benefit other residents of the Cynon Valley.”

Family / Resident Impact

“Far less visits and little or no interaction with home.”

“It would be detrimental to my wellbeing in the future if I needed a care home to be moved from my area to go and live somewhere I didn't know or be with people I didn't know or have anything in common with!!”

“Less visitors which would be detrimental to my mother's health.”

4.37 53.6% of respondents to the Easy Read survey agreed with option 4, commenting:

“When people can no longer cope living on their own, it is good to have somewhere safer for them to go.”

4.38 **OPTION 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village.**

This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs

	Total	Do you agree with option 5?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	293	101 34.5%	148 50.5%	44 15.0%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	12	0 0.0%	11 91.7%	1 8.3%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council residential care home	31	9 29.0%	14 45.2%	8 25.8%
Advocate for a resident	2	0 0.0%	2 100.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	140	45 32.1%	76 54.3%	19 13.6%
Staff member	19	6 31.6%	11 57.9%	2 10.5%
Other	20	5 25.0%	12 60.0%	3 15.0%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	69	36 52.2%	22 31.9%	11 15.9%

Table 7: Agreement with Option 5

4.39 Overall, the highest proportion of respondents did not agree with option 5 (50.5%).

If no why do you disagree? - Option 5

4.40 The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 5 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received were largely similar to those already made in the report, with additional concern about the location of the new accommodation being near a school. Many comments focused on there not being alternative provision in the locality and the perceived distress that residents would suffer if uprooted from their community. A lot of comments also praised the current staff and atmosphere at Garth Olwg and expressed worry that this would not be continued.

Praise for existing provision

“Management are amazing here and will be missed.”

“Garth Olwg Means More to families than just a care home.”

“To close this care home would be a travesty, these residents have already had to move out of their homes because they are no longer able to care for themselves they are settled and happy with their fellow residents and staff who are like family to them. How awful would this be to uproot them and leave their friends and familiar surroundings behind.”

Local community impact

“This care home is needed in the community to support the NHS and vital care needed.”

“I disagree because there are no other care homes in the area and it’s the residents home. I believe it’s not appropriate for the community as well as all the hard working staff at Garth Olwg.”

“This care home is imbedded into our community. We need to maintain and grow the support in the area.”

Location

“Church Village isn’t a location where individuals with learning disabilities would obtain the most stimulation, what’s here for them?? Where are the clubs etc?? Individuals where you have a physical or learning disability need to feel valued and be stimulated within their community what is going to be provided for them in those terms??”

“Ridiculous idea when Comprehensive School is a stone throw away. Both are vulnerable and are at risk of each other. The care home is a home for settled residents and children in the community go there and learn about the elderly members there. The home has a great reputation and good links to the local businesses and societies.”

“Because we need a care home to serve the local area. I also don’t agree with this being right by schools.”

- 4.41 Finally on option 5, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included travel barriers, distress to current and potential future residents and the impact on existing staff.

Travel

“Would have to travel distance to visit and that is not easy with public transport.”

“Able to visit residents easily. No public transport to proposed valley locations.”

“This would impact upon my family were my parents need to go into care in the future as those of us who care for them would have great difficulty in visiting anywhere further afield than Talbot Green as we are dependent upon public transport.”

Resident and Family Impact

“It would be a travesty to close this home as the people in the surrounding area love having their relatives there as it is a really good home. Local, convenient for family to visit and if I needed a home, I would choose this one and my son who has Asperger’s would be able to visit me as he knows the area and would feel safe getting there to see me!!”

“It would make a very vulnerable old lady confused, upset, disorientated, anxious. She would regress in her health and the decision would shorten her life expectancy.”

“Massively. This is the third care home my Nan has been a resident at in just two years. The constant closures and disruptions are taking their toll on her mental well-being.”

“The loss of the only local care home would mean that me or my family would be able to stay as part of our local community when we need care in the future.”

“I would be placed somewhere else and it would put upset to my life the not knowing where I would work, putting upset in my family also.”

Staff Impact

“Why should I as a carer who’s been working at garth olwg for 18 yrs loving every minute be moved on to another home or be made jobless just to suit these top nobs who havent got a heart or clue about feelings just disgusting.”

“I have worked here since I came straight from school (YTS). I only live 5 minutes away and would find travelling very difficult and I’ve known no difference.”

Positive Impact

- 4.42 The only positive comments were from respondents who have family that would benefit from the increased support for adults with learning disabilities:

“This would be welcomed, we have a adult daughter with learning difficulties and recognise the need for additional accommodation to support these adults.”

“My son has learning disabilities and will need support in the future when we are no longer around to care for him.”

“It would mean losing a job in a place that I love working as it has been my job for the last few years on my doorstep. I am nearing 60 years old and it saddens me that I have to move elsewhere.”

- 4.43 52.2% of respondents to the Easy Read survey agreed with option 5, and made the following comments:

“It is good to build independence with support and make new friends.”

“Fantastic for people with LD to have more places to live.”

“It is good to have a new Extra Care facility for people with learning disability in Taff Ely.”

“People with learning Disabilities will get the support with medication and with health needs.”

“They can have a lifeline and there will be someone there in case of an emergency.”

“It is a good thing to have it, but not for older people to move out.”

“More supported living is needed.”

4.44 31.9% of respondents disagreed with option 5, with concerns regarding staff and older people. The following comments were raised:

“I don’t think it is a good idea for older people to have to move out.”

“It can be difficult for older people to get to know new places especially if they are confused.”

“It is hard to settle in when there is change.”

“I don’t like the sound of residential care for anyone. Lots of people living together is not a good idea.”

“What about the staff that work there- these homes create employment.”

“It is important to have same staff.”

4.45 Other Suggestions or Alternative Options

The following are a selection of comments received and mainly mirrored the comments that had already been made.

Garth Olwg Responses

- 4.46 The responses that related to Garth Olwg were against the proposal for that care home, with suggestions that the home should be kept and improved.

“There are many areas that could be considered to build a new accommodation without the need to decommission garth olwg. Tonteg hospital has been derelict for Years , spend money on doing this up !!!”

“Keep garth olwg open it’s a wonderful care home with fantastic staff.”

“Keep garth olwg open.move residents to 1 side of building then do work that needs to be done new windows new roof as promised, make bedrooms bigger with ensuite it can be done.”

- 4.47 A number of the responses on Garth Olwg were against the proposal for new accommodation to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village.

“Why would this home be suitable for adults with learning disabilities? That could be developed elsewhere as I assume the adults will not be local to the area.”

“People with learning disabilities wouldn't know where they are anyway. Very blunt yes but it’s true. The older generation will.”

“Keep Garth Olwg open and use existing provision across RCT for the support for adults with Learning disabilities.”

- 4.48 There were calls from some respondents to keep everything the same:

“Do nothing and leave it as it is.”

“Why change for the sake of change especially with the state of the country as it is we have no money but you are looking to spend money we don't have.”

- 4.49 A number of respondents felt that there was a need for more capacity in care homes and to build new ones where appropriate.

“With an aging population, RCT needs to far more proactive in planning for the future. Many more care and nursing homes need to be built and they need to serve all areas, not just the depths of the valleys.”

“Provide more local care homes and staff them accordingly.”

“More residential and nursing home placements not less! Put money where its needed and not throwing it down the drain.”

- 4.50 Some of the responses noted that the service change would be upsetting for the residents of the care homes:

“This has been my home for 18 months. If there is no residential element, where will I be placed. When moving to Ferndale House was meant to be my forever home, now I am threatened with a further move. This deeply upsets me. All staff are my family.”

“I like it at Ferndale House and the thought of moving from Ferndale where I spent all my life is very distressing to me. There is no other home or facilities in this valley for us to go. I feel like the decision where I live will be taken out of my hands if a new plot will not be found. This should not be your decision to make but mine.”

“I am so pleased that I am in residential care. I love all the staff as they look after me well and they will do anything for me. It will upset me if any of this will change and to move on.”

Ferndale

- 4.51 There were a number of comments and concerns about the services available in the Rhondda Fach and Ferndale:

“The proposals are unfair for the Rhondda Fach as you plan to build bigger care homes in the other areas which makes it more favourable for them.”

- 4.52 In particular with respect to the need for dementia care in the area.

“The proposed dementia care provision is inadequate for the Rhondda Fach area. There is no provision for residential or dementia care between Rhondda Fach and Cynon valley. Current demand for dementia care in the Rhondda Fach is high.”

“Is there a need for extra care when there is a higher need for dementia care and I feel that everyone who works at Ferndale House should also work in the new build including cleaners, cooks, care staff.”

“In my opinion, the biggest new build with the most best should be built in the Ferndale area as it is the only care home in the Rhondda Fach area and maybe there should be more than 10 dementia beds as this is the illness on the increase and a lot of younger people are having it and families have to struggle to look after them. It is vital that this is built in the Ferndale area as being the only one in the Fach, as residents' families could struggle to travel to other areas to see their loved ones as local transport is very poor.”

4.53 Preferred Accommodation

The 74 respondents to the Easy Read survey were asked to provide comments on the type of accommodation which would suit their needs. The following comments were received:

“I want a place where I got someone else, where I can get to know people. I would like to share to start with then move out to live on my own.”

“Elderly residential for when I get older.”

“I would like a new build and I would like to be able to have a partner stay overnight at my flat and for family Members to visit.”

“I would like to live in extra care as I can be more independent but there is staff there.”

“Extra Care is good as you can meet new people but it is important that mam and dad can visit.”

“I like a kitchen where I can do my own cooking.”

“I need my pets, to do volunteering and the things I like to do.”

“There should be CCTV 24/7 and someone should monitor it.”

“More staff need to be available.”

“Having friends in the communal room when they visit.”

About you

4.54 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents were asked how the proposals affecting them would relate to any of the below.

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. Disability
5. Sexuality
6. Religion / belief
7. Gender identity
8. Relationship status
9. Pregnancy
10. Preferred language

4.55 The following are a selection of the comments received.

“Difficulty of visiting due to disability.”

“The ageing process brings some mobility and activity problems. A little support and suitable housing could help keep residents independent.”

“As I’m getting older I don’t know what the future holds as to care I may need! I therefore worry that if or when I need residential care, the home i choose could be closed and I moved in somewhere else! Such uncertainty in the future is worrying!”

“If you closed our local home I would not be able to visit family members who need care due to distance, finances and my disability.”

“I am 93 years of age and I would find it very traumatic if I was moved around before the new build.”

“The proposals do not have an effect on me personally but I believe as the general population is becoming older ie living longer we will need more care homes and also sheltered accommodation. Or even social housing for over 60s.”

4.56 Under the Welsh Language Standards, with regards to the proposals, and the impact they may have, respondents were asked how they could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive, Negative or Neutral) and if, in any way, it treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language. Respondents were further asked how neutral effects could become positive, how positive effects could be increased, or how negative effects be decreased.

4.57 Most of the comments received said that there would be no impact and questioned how this related to residential care. The following are a selection of the comments received.

“My school education for Welsh was very limited. For those who wish to learn to speak Welsh it should be available free of charge.”

“Not sure I can answer as you didnt explain how care is provided and how you make sure language choice is addressed. Where would be best to be cared for in a welsh speaking care home?”

“(a) The council should ensure that the care provision is provided using both Welsh and English, according to the resident's preferences (b) Staff should receive appropriate training in both languages, signage should be bilingual and there should be no discrimination according to language in treatment or care, and staffing should be arranged so that there should always be a Welsh speaker working.”

“More opportunities should be provided for staff to learn welsh and provide incentives to do so.”

The detailed comments received for the above 2 questions have been made available to officers for the development of the associated Impact Assessments.

5. PUBLIC DROP-IN MEETINGS

- 5.1 To ensure public engagement with the consultation, 3 public drop-in sessions were advertised via the [Council's website](#) and [social media](#). In total 29 members of the public took part.

The drop-in sessions were arranged at the following locations:

Location	Date	Time	Number of people in attendance
Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre	16 th January 2023	5-7PM	6
Mountain Ash Library	24 th January 2023	5-7PM	0
Ferndale Hub	25 th January 2023	5-7PM	23

Table 8 – Public Drop-in Locations

- 5.2 The drop-in sessions were arranged as an opportunity for the public to raise any concerns they may have regarding the consultation and to ask questions directed towards the Director of Adult Social Services and the Head of Service for Accommodation regarding the future of Care Homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Along with this, consultation booklets and easy read documents were supplied, both in English and in Welsh, to ensure the public were fully informed and had the opportunity to participate and have their say by completing the survey.
- 5.3 The following comments and themes were identified from each drop-in session:

Garth Olwg Learning Centre

Theme	Comment Raised
Sadness at the closure of the home.	"With Garth Olwg closing we feel like we are losing something in the Community. "
Concern for residents in the home.	"It will be difficult to move residents in a care home who have been there for 10 years as they are already used to their surroundings. This might affect their health overall."
Continuity of Care in the new home.	Noted that continuity of care has been a pertinent theme so far during the consultations, residents would like staff to accompany them when moving homes – families also think this is important
Staffing	Concerns were raised regarding what will happen to the staff following Garth Olwg's proposed closure. Further comments were raised regarding care workers being undervalued nationally.
Consultation held again surrounding the future of Garth Olwg	Those in attendance raised questions surrounding why once again there is a proposal to change Garth Olwg, following the previous consultation outcome.

- 5.4 Overall, those in attendance were concerned with the impact the closure would have on the residents as well as the local community. However, they agreed that modern facilities need to be built which will meet the care needs of the public in the future, including both Extra Care provision and accommodation with care for those with a learning disability. An acknowledgement was given that although the staff provide outstanding levels of care within our homes, there is now a need for more tailored facilities to meet different requirements of care into the future. Transportation issues were also discussed during the meeting, with those in attendance raising concerns regarding the public transport accessibility to other homes within RCT.
- 5.5 They felt reassured that the Council will look after the residents of Garth Olwg care home and provide support for the families.

Mountain Ash Library

- 5.6 There were no members of the public in attendance.

Ferndale Hub

Theme	Comments Raised
Concern around the number of dementia beds to meet future need	Although there was a general consensus that Extra Care was a positive proposal for the area, concerns were raised by those in attendance that the proposal outlined for Ferndale has only 10 residential dementia beds. Members of the public discussed the suitability of this in the future, given current dementia projections.
Concern for residents	Concern for current residents of Ferndale House. Members of the public felt reassured that the care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.
Staffing	Staffing concerns were raised regarding their future with the proposals for Extra Care and the role of the housing association. Broader issues were also raised surrounding staff pay and casual contracts. Members of the public noted that carers nationally are undervalued.
The need for residential care in the future	The need for residential care provision in the long term was raised for the Ferndale/Rhondda Fach area.
Current NHS pressures	Comments were raised regarding the suitability of the current home to support those currently in hospital.
Modernisation	General consensus was that there is a need to modernise provision within Ferndale/Rhondda Fach area and members were happy with the prospect of investment into their local community.

- 5.7 Overall, there was general support for the proposals outlined for Ferndale. Reassurance was provided to those in attendance that Ferndale House would

be decommissioned when the new facility is developed. Those in attendance provided concern for current staff at the home regarding how they would be impacted by these proposals and the role of the housing association. Moreover, it was discussed that although the staff provide excellent quality of care at the home, the home itself is outdated to meet future need and modernisation of the facility is required, especially given change in care needs. The investment in the local community is welcomed.

6 WRITTEN RESPONSES

- 6.1 The following section outlines a summary of the written comments received from residents within the local community.
- 6.2 A total of 7 emails or letters were received. The table below highlights and summarises the responses received:

Date Received	Email/Letter/ Contact Centre	Information received
19/12/2022	Email 1	<p>I am a member of Sally's Angels, a group of singers based in Pontyclun!</p> <p>We have visited Gartholwg on many occasions and have been overwhelmed by the kindness and fantastic care given to the resident!</p> <p>It was with much sortie to be told on our recent visit about the pending closure of this incredible home! Both Staff and Residents were in tears as they told us of this awful news! This has been the home for many years of the residents and therefore cannot comprehend the rational of closing a place where they feel is their home!</p> <p>Please try and get the powers that be to reconsider this decision!</p> <p>We were all deeply upset to hear from the residents and the affect it will have on their mental health!</p>
13/12/2022	Email 2	<p>I object to this proposed closure, its vital for locals to have access to the facility , which is needed, travelling to other areas isn't easy especially in poor weather. Constant threat of closure results in poor morale for the staff at the home . With regards to your plan for housing children with learning disabilities in Church Village, so close to Garth Olwg school, not sensible. Remember, the social services history of " caring" in the children's home, which used to exist in Church Village, which lead to the death of xxxxx , that home was demolished,</p>
28/12/2022	Email 3	<p>Please note that I am not happy that RCT intend to disinvest this care home (Garth Olwg). It has provided homes for very needy people for many years and is a valuable asset.</p> <p>Please reconsider the closure.</p>
05/01/2023	Email 4	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>I am just reading your booklet on the proposed changes for residential care in RCT</p> <p>Please could you clarify whether options 2-5 are in addition to the existing care homes remaining open or whether they will replace those facilities (which will be decommissioned).</p> <p>Also, please could you explain why the number of Extra Care apartments and residential beds proposed differ from site to site.....is this down to the cost of land purchase or something else?</p>

16/01/2023	Email 5	<p><u>Residential Care Home Consultation – Submission from Mick Antoniw MS and Alex Davies-Jones MP</u></p> <p>We have been contacted by constituents and a small number of Councillors in respect of RCT County Borough Council’s (RCTCBC) proposed modernisation of residential care services and specifically, the proposal for the Garth Olwg residential home in Church Village.</p> <p>We recognise that RCTCBC has a duty to provide sufficient quality residential care options to meet the needs of older people. We recognise also that the care of older people is an issue that matters to many constituents, and we wish to contribute to the consultation in order to register our view.</p> <p>We welcome RCTCBC’s programme of investment to modernise and improve residential care provision, which reflects both the continuing trend is for people to remain in their homes for longer (and where necessary, receive their care package at home) and the growing demand for specialist provision, including for adults with learning disabilities.</p> <p>Taff Ely is currently well provided for in respect of residential care and this will continue as a result of RCTCBC’s plan for additional capacity and modernised facilities at both the Parc Newydd home in Talbot Green and the Cae Glas home in Hawthorn (which will also have facilities to provide for dementia, mobility and hoisting). In contrast the facilities at Garth Olwg are clearly not fit for purpose. We understand that only one of the existing fourteen residents at Garth Olwg is from the local area, so the proposal’s impact on visiting families is likely to be minimal.</p> <p>The proposal for a new facility at Garth Olwg to accommodate adults with learning difficulties is an important step in increasing specialist provision. We understand that the new facility at Garth Olwg will be a c£10m investment and that as a result of the closure of the existing Garth Olwg facility there will be no staff redundancies.</p> <p>Care needs are changing. In our view, RCTCBC’s investment in this programme of modernisation and improvement will ensure that the best facilities are available, without reducing capacity. In respect of the proposal for Garth Olwg and taking all factors into account, we believe that replacing the current care home with a new, specialist home is appropriate to the care needs in Taff Ely and RCT more widely and therefore also has our full support.</p>
16/01/2023	Email 6	<p>Our Cllrs discussed the consultation at our meeting last week and have asked me to advise you that they thought that the wording on the website was not that clear in what you were asking.</p>
18/01/2023	Customer Care Call	

		<p>Garth Olwg Consultation - regarding the potential closure of the residential care home. Customer called regarding those who are not able to complete consultation via the website, is there any way they can complete a physical copy and hand it in? Customer referred to the local library and if there was any potential for them to be distributed to them for residents. Would it be possible to contact back regarding this please.</p>
25/01/2023	Email 7	<p>Helen Fychan - MS</p> <p>Dyddiad Date: 26.1.2023</p> <p>Pwnc Subject: Ymgynghoriad Gofal Preswyl Cyngor Rhondda Cynon Taf</p> <p>Annwyl Cyngor Rhondda Cynon Taf</p> <p>Mae nifer o etholwyr wedi cysylltu a mi yn datgan pryderon am y cynnig sydd gennych parthed cau cartref preswyl Garth Olwg yn Ton Teg.</p> <p>Rwyf yn croesawu'r buddsoddiad newydd a amlinellir i greu cartrefi preswyl modern sydd yn gallu diwallu anghenion nifer o bobl, ac yn deall yr angen i symud gyda'r oes ac i foderneiddio. Serch hynny mae rhai cwestiynau dilys wedi cael eu codi gyda fi am y cynlluniau arfaethedig ac wedi eu nodi isod:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rydych yn nodi yn y rhesymeg dros y penderfyniad bod llai o alw am lefydd mewn cartrefi gofal yn gyffredinol, ond bod cynnydd mewn galw am lefydd nyrsio ar gyfer pobl a dementia a phobl sydd a phroblemau iechyd dwys. Yn sgil hyn pam ydych chi am gau cartref sydd yn darparu gofal nyrsio i'r grwp yma o'r boblogaeth? Gwyddom fod gwasgiadau difrifol ar y sector iechyd ar hyn o bryd, yn rhannol oherwydd diffyg lleoedd ar gyfer gofal cymdeithasol yn y gymuned i'r rheiny sydd ddim eto yn ddigon iach i ddychwelyd i'w cartrefi. Oni fyddai'n synhwyrol i ddatblygu'r capasiti gofal nyrsio a llenwi yr holl lefydd allai fod ar gael yn Garth Olwg fel datrysiad i hyn? Mae'r penderfyniad i'w gau yn llwyr er mwyn ei ail-ddatblygu i fod yn ganolfan ar gyfer oedolion gyda anabledau yn mynd i waethygu'r sefyllfa o safbwynt diffyg opsiynau ar gyfer henoed sydd angen gofal nyrsio. 2. A ystyriwyd os oedd modd defnyddio y gyllideb a glustnodwyd ar gyfer ail-ddatblygu cartref Garth Olwg i ddatblygu sgiliau'r gweithlu a chael cyfarpar addas i gymryd mwy o bobl sydd angen gofal nyrsio gan gynnwys rheiny sydd angen cyfle i wella ac ad-ennill cryfder ar ôl cyfnod yn yr Ysbyty? 3. Mae'n ymddangos o'r ffigyrau a rannwyd yn yr ymgynghoriad mae pendraw y trywydd hwn fydd gwaredu pob gwely nyrsio o ofal Rhondda Cynon Taf yn uniongyrchol. A oes asesiad risg wedi ei wneud o goblygiadau hyn i'r dyfodol? Rydym wedi gweld yn y sector tai yn ddiweddar mewn rhai awdurdodau nad yw'r sector tai cymdeithasol yn gallu bodloni gofynion yr awdurdodau lleol am niferoedd digonol o dai i gwrdd a'i dyletswyddau statudol. Mae'r system honno bellach yn creu heriau sylweddol i

		<p>bobl sydd angen cartrefi, ac awdurdodau wedi colli'r hyblygrwydd a fyddai wedi bod ganddynt yn y gorffennol i adeiladu unedau newydd a rheoli'r farchnad tai cymdeithasol. Oes perygl y gwelwn farchnad rydd yn datblygu yn y maes gofal nyrsio henoed a fydd yn gadael pobl bregus iawn mewn perygl am na fydd gan yr awdurdod lleol ei cartrefi eu hunain i gynnig llety ar fyr rybudd pan bo angen?</p> <p>4. Dengys adroddiad diweddaraf Arolygaeth Gofal Cymru fod y cartref preswyl yng Ngarth Olwg yn ddiogel, yn glud ac yn llwyddo i fodloni preswyliaid, eu teuluoedd ac yn meddu ar tîm profiadol o ofalwyr sydd wedi bod yno am flynyddoedd. Mae lleoliad fel hyn yn bluen yng nghap yr awdurdod lleol a byddai'n drasiedi ei weld yn diflannu gyda thrigolion yn cael ei hail leoli gan golli eu cynefin a'u cymuned yn hwyrnos eu bywydau.</p> <p>5. Mae nifer o bobl gydag anwyliaid yn Garth Olwg yn nodi mai dim ond newydd symud yno mae rhai, yn dilyn cartrefi gofal eraill yn cau. Maent yn pryderu am symud anwyliaid unwaith eto, o leoliad mae nhw wedi setlo ynddo. Yw'r awdurdod wedi ystyried pa ddarpariaethau eraill sydd mewn perygl o gau, yn sgil yr argyfwng costau byw a beth fydd opsiynau gofal amgen os bydd y cartref hwn yn cau?</p> <p>Gobeithiaf y byddwch yn rhoi sylw teilwng i bob un o'r ymatebion a ddaw i law, ac y byddwch yn ystyried sylwadau pawb wrth gynllunio i'r dyfodol.</p> <p>Yn gywir</p> <p>Dyddiad Date: 26.1.2023 Pwnc Subject: Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's</p> <p>Residential Care Consultation Dear Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, A number of constituents have contacted me to express concerns regarding your proposal to close Garth Olwg Residential Care Home in Ton-teg. I welcome the new investment outlined to create modern residential care homes that can meet the needs of a number of people, and I understand the need to move with the times and modernise. However, some valid questions have been raised with me regarding the proposed plans, and are noted below:</p> <p>1. You have noted that the reason for the decision is that there is generally less demand for placements in care homes, but there is an increase in demand for nursing care placements for people with dementia and people with profound health problems. As a result of this, why do you want to close a home that provides nursing care to this group of the population? There are serious pressures on the health sector at the moment, partly because of the lack of places for social care in the community for those who are not yet well enough to return to their homes. Would it not be sensible to develop the capacity within nursing care and fill all of the spaces that could be available in Garth Olwg as a solution to this? The decision to close the home in its entirety in order to redevelop it to become a centre for adults</p>
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		<p>with disabilities is going to make the situation worse with regards to the lack of options for older people that need nursing care.</p> <p>2. Have you considered whether it is possible to use the budget that has been earmarked for redeveloping Garth Olwg Care Home in order to develop the skills of the workforce and getting appropriate equipment to take on more people who need nursing care, including those that need to get better and regain strength after some time in a hospital?</p> <p>3. It seems from the figures shared in the consultation that this course of action would ultimately lead to getting rid of all nursing beds from Rhondda Cynon Taf's care. Has a risk assessment been conducted in relation to the future implications of this? We have seen recently in the housing sector in some authorities that the social housing sector can't meet the requirements of local authorities with regards to the number of houses needed to meet its statutory duties. That system is now creating significant challenges for those people who need homes and authorities have lost the flexibility that they would have had in the past to build new units and control the social housing market. Is there a risk that we will see the development of a free market in the nursing care sector for older people that will leave very vulnerable people at risk as the local authority won't have their own homes to offer accommodation at short notice when needed?</p> <p>4. Care Inspectorate Wales' recent report shows that the care home at Garth Olwg is safe, cosy and manages to satisfy its residents, their families and also has an experienced team of carers that have been there for years. A setting like this is a feather in the cap of the local authority and it would be a tragedy to see it disappear with residents being relocated from their homes and their community in the latter stages of their lives.</p> <p>5. A number of people who have loved ones in Garth Olwg have noted that some have only just moved there, following the closure of other care homes. They're concerned about moving their loved ones again, from a setting where they have settled. Has the authority considered what other provisions are at risk as a result of closing the home, in light of the cost of living crisis, and what the alternative care options would be if this home was to close?</p> <p>I hope that you will give each of the responses submitted the attention they deserve and that you will consider everybody's comments when planning for the future.</p> <p>Regards, Heledd Fychan MS</p>
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Table 9 - Email Responses

7 PETITIONS

- 7.1 A total of 2 petitions were received in relation to option 5 and the proposed closure of the Garth Olwg Care home. The full Petitions will be provided to Officers and Cabinet Members, along with the full comments from the survey.

	Information received	Number of signatures
Petition 1	Garth Olwg Care Home in Church Village has served our community well for nearly sixty years. We call on Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council Cabinet to rethink their latest decision to close the facility as a residential care home, which would reverse their previous judgement that the home would stay open. The home has been invaluable for residents who are no longer able to manage in their own homes. This move is cruel for residents, particularly for those recently moved from other care homes, along with the loyal dedicated staff.	189
Petition 2	We, the under signed oppose the proposed closure of the Garth Olwg Care Home in Church Village and ask Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to reject this proposal.	364

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Proposed changes to Residential Care Homes and Extra Care Housing for older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Consultation Report

Authors: Phil Evans and Paul Pavia
February 2023

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Executive Summary

1. This report analyses findings from a consultation process undertaken by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in respect of proposals to modernise its residential care services for older people and to create additional Extra Care housing.
2. Consultation took place from 12th December 2022 to 27th January 2023. Alongside the public consultation process, Practice Solutions ran an exercise which provided additional opportunities to ascertain the views, wishes and feelings of care home residents and their families and residential service staff within the four homes directly affected by the proposed options. Sixty-two residents and relatives participated and thirty-seven staff.
3. The consultation events were designed to:
 - offer participants the best possible information about the proposals for change;
 - give them appropriate and effective ways of making known their views and feelings in an environment which encouraged people to use their voice, individually and collectively; and
 - ensure a strong thread of independence throughout the process, including writing an informed but non-partisan report for Cabinet which accurately reflects what had been said.
4. Events for residents and relatives were organised for each of the four Council-run care homes for older people affected by the proposed options – Troedyrhiw, Ferndale, Ystrad Fechan, and Garth Olwg.
5. The main themes that emerged in the discussions are set out in the full report. It is important to note that, in some key areas, representations made in three of the homes (Troedyrhiw, Ferndale House and Ystrad Fechan) differed considerably from those in Garth Olwg.
 - i. Without exception, residents and relatives praised staff for the high quality of care and support currently provided in the care homes.
 - ii. People wanted clear priority given to meeting the assessed needs of current residents and to ensuring continuity of care. Initially, some participants were sceptical about whether this could be reconciled with the Council's proposed options. Some questions were asked about whether possible budget cuts were the real motive for change.
 - iii. Having listened attentively to clarification from senior managers, most participants began to express greater confidence in the plans that were being considered. For example, they appreciated the scale of investment which the Council is prepared to make in providing modern, purpose-built accommodation and facilities for older people. They asked for more details about the Council's Extra Care housing programme (including schedules for building, potential sites for redevelopment and how the new facilities would operate).
 - iv. There was a positive response to reassurances that the proposed changes would not involve residents moving out of current placements unless their individual circumstances changed. This helped participants to acknowledge that creating new, more modern facilities was the proper way forward and they broadly supported the options put forward in the Cabinet report. In some events, people discussed the possible merits of 'doing nothing' (i.e., keeping the status quo or waiting for additional information before making decisions). However, they agreed that prolonged uncertainty is destabilising and risks generating even more anxiety.

- v. People were worried about how the Council's proposals would be implemented, especially during any period of transition. They wanted decisions to be accompanied by a commitment to ensuring that safeguards would be in place, including prompt assessments of need, choice of placements, dignified and timely transfers, top ups where necessary and full involvement by current staff in the homes. Once again, concerns centred on the need for implementation plans to put the well-being of current care home residents and their families at the heart of any proposed change. This should be demonstrated by placing more emphasis on co-production throughout the modernisation process; ensuring timely/effective communication about the general programme of change; and setting out in detail the implications for individuals whose lives will be affected.
 - vi. There was strong opposition from residents and families in Garth Olwg to the option which involves decommissioning the care home. Residents did not want to leave a place they regarded as home and relatives were very anxious about the impact of the proposed changes. They put forward an alternative where the home would be retained and modernised. Two of the residents had already experienced a placement move brought about by the sudden closure of an independent sector care home. This made them especially appreciative of the environment provided by Garth Olwg and even more worried about change. Their relatives explained the difficulties which they had previously experienced, including the challenge of finding a setting in which their family member could thrive.
6. Consultation events for staff working at all the Council's residential care homes affected by the proposed options were organised in three geographical localities (Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely). No staff attended the Cynon event. A separate event was held for relevant managers. The main themes that emerged in the discussions are set out in the full report.
- i. In all the events where staff were in attendance, they demonstrated how much they wanted the best for current residents, for their interests to be a paramount concern in decision-making, and for a meaningful choice of placement to be made available to residents in homes where planned closure was agreed.
 - ii. They were provided with assurances that, where possible, the Council would decommission homes only when new facilities had been built. Given the length of time needed to develop alternatives, this means that the proposed changes are unlikely to involve residents moving out of current placements unless their individual circumstances change.
 - iii. With the exception of Garth Olwg staff, the options put forward by the Cabinet did receive support, although doubts persisted about the merits of decommissioning homes. Some staff felt that they might be adversely affected by the proposed changes and said that they were experiencing considerable anxiety about Human Resource issues - such as job security, safeguarding employment rights, long-term career prospects, remuneration and other entrenched causes of instability within the residential care sector.
 - iv. Despite these high levels of anxiety, staff displayed a strong sense of loyalty to the Council. This was grounded in a shared public service ethos, the high standard of care being delivered in the homes, its employee terms and conditions vis-a-vis the independent sector, and the fact that Council-run care homes are anchored in the communities they serve. They looked for reassurance that the provision of care in new Extra Care Housing facilities would be undertaken by Council staff.

- v. Participants were preoccupied by the proposals for the home in which they worked and for their geographical area. However, they were also looking for evidence that the Council has a genuine (and future-proofed) commitment to providing high quality care and modern facilities in those homes where the options include retention. In particular, there was a feeling that the Council still needs to improve staff recruitment and retention. They expressed dissatisfaction with the practice of advertising only casual posts.
- vi. The staff said that, in their opinion, most residents (and their relatives) would prefer to remain in their current home, even if they could not be modernised to provide facilities such as en-suite bathrooms. Those working in Garth Olwg believe that the proposed option for the home would have a very adverse impact upon current residents, as it would deny them the opportunity to remain living in the home. Staff from the Rhondda Fach made strong representations that a facility, either a residential care home or Extra Care housing/dementia residential care, should be available in their valley. This would aid staff recruitment and retention and also ensure that the community was not deprived of an important community asset. They wanted assurances about where this new facility would be located and further consideration of the proposed balance there between extra care accommodation and residential care facilities for people experiencing dementia-related illnesses.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report analyses the findings from a consultation process undertaken by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in respect of proposals to modernise its residential care services for older people and to create additional Extra Care housing. Consultation took place from 12th December 2022 to 27th January 2023.
- 1.2 The report is in five parts:
- Part 1: Introduction
 - Part 2: The Council's Proposals
 - Part 3: Consultation Methods
 - Part 4 Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives – Main Themes
 - Part 5: Consultation Events with Staff and Managers – Main Themes

There are three accompanying documents:

APPENDIX 1: Presentation for Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives

APPENDIX 2: Reports from Individual Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives

APPENDIX 3 Reports from Individual Consultation Events with Staff and Managers

2. The Council's Proposals

- 2.1 The Council's key priorities include a commitment to modernising and continually improving Adult Social Care Services.
- 2.2 Some factors helping to influence its approach are set out below.
- Welsh Government policy, including the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which directs councils to undertake local market assessment and shaping duties;
 - The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016; and
 - The Cwm Taf Regional Plan 2018 to 2023, produced by relevant local authorities and the Local Health Board in response to their statutory duties for conducting population needs assessments and providing a market strategy.
- 2.3 In November 2016, Cabinet approved a strategy designed to modernise accommodation options for older people and deliver Extra Care housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf. It committed the Council to reviewing and reshaping the care market to:
- increase the options available for people needing accommodation with care and support; and
 - deliver a viable alternative for people who can remain independent with support.
- 2.4 In September 2017, Cabinet agreed a £50m investment plan to develop 300 Extra Care beds across Rhondda Cynon Taf and to deliver modern accommodation options able to meet the needs and changing expectations of a growing population of older people. This policy decision was intended to further the process of achieving a shift in the balance of care from residential care settings to more community-based options, including Extra Care housing.
- 2.5 Notwithstanding this decision, Rhondda Cynon Taf has continued to depend heavily on residential care placements. It has the highest proportion of people aged 65 or over living in residential care in Wales.
- 2.6 The future of the Council's residential care homes for older people has been subject to ongoing review since 2017. In December 2020, Cabinet considered:
- the outcomes of three previous stakeholder consultations;
 - the rationale and drivers shaping the choice of preferred options for future provision of the Council's residential care homes for older people; and
 - supporting information relating to capacity and demand.
- 2.7 The decisions made are summarised below:
- *The Council's residential care homes have served their communities well and are popular homes with good standards of care, provided by committed staff.*
 - *There is a need to retain Council residential care homes to ensure that the Council meets its commitment to maintaining, in the local market for residential care, an in-house offer of provision.*

- *The difficulties experienced by existing Council's residential care homes in accepting the range of referrals and the complexity of need being presented unless the current facilities are upgraded to the modern standards identified for dignified care delivery.*
- *The demand for traditional residential care is decreasing and less residential care will be needed in the future, as more people will receive care in their own homes (including extra care housing and other supported housing schemes). This is consistent with national and regional priorities and the Council's aim of providing care for and support to people in their own homes wherever possible.*
- *The over-provision of residential care beds and sufficient alternative provision of the required type and quality to meet current and forecast demands - less residential care will be needed in the future geographical market share across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas.*
- *The current and forecasted need is for more complex care (including dementia care), reablement, respite care or short breaks for carers and nursing care.*
- *The impact of older people exercising choice now on the occupancy levels in our care homes.*
- *To receive a further report setting out a comprehensive modernisation programme.*

2.8 Following a further review, Cabinet agreed in July 2022 to address ongoing pandemic-related issues and challenges within residential care (including reduced demand and low occupancy, staffing shortages and quality of care issues) by:

- closing temporarily Ystrad Fechan (Treorchy) and transfer the eight residents to Pentre House (Pentre) or another home of their choosing which meets their needs; and
- in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, providing temporarily up to ten new step-up/step-down beds at Parc Newydd (Talbot Green) to support hospital discharge.

Because affected residents were supported to access suitable alternative provision, occupancy levels at other Council care homes increased.

2.9 In December 2022, Cabinet received a detailed report setting out a modernisation programme for the Council's residential care homes and providing, for consideration, proposed preferred options for future provision.

2.10 The five options were:

OPTION 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes.

This includes:

Clydach Court in Trealaw

Pentre House in Pentre

Tegfan in Trecynon

Cae Glas in Hawthorn

Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.

OPTION 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy.

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.

OPTION 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale.

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash.

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village.

This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

- 2.11 The proposed changes in the service provided by some of the Council's residential care homes require the Council to consult with the public and those directly affected (including care home residents, their families, and staff). This is to ensure that their views can be considered when a final decision is made. To fulfil its legal obligations, the Cabinet decided that a six-week consultation process should take place.

3. Consultation Methods

- 3.1 To implement the Cabinet decision on public consultation, the Council's Research and Consultation Unit developed a comprehensive approach for the exercise. The aim of the public consultation was to gather as many views as possible from residents, their relatives, staff and the public, to inform the Cabinet in its decision-making about the future provision of residential care homes for older people in each of the geographical areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 3.2 Information about proposed changes, options and the consultation process were publicised extensively, including use of the Council's website (www.rctcbc.gov.uk/consultation) and a FREEPOST address. A dedicated consultation page on the Council's website contained key links and attachments. A booklet called HAVE YOUR SAY! was made available. Both the website and the booklet explained how to complete a questionnaire/survey, online or in hard copy. All completed questionnaires had to be returned by 5pm on 27th January. People were also encouraged to participate by means of "Drop In" events across the County.
- 3.3 The public consultation process ran alongside an exercise designed specifically to provide additional opportunities to ascertain the views, wishes and feelings of care home residents and their families and residential service staff within the four homes directly affected by the proposed options. This was seen as a crucial aspect of the overall approach and one which merited considerable planning and attention.

The role of Practice Solutions

- 3.4 The Council engaged Practice Solutions¹ to facilitate independently a series of consultation events which would inform participants and give them opportunities for discussion and debate in group sessions. Senior managers from Social Service (including the Director and the Head of Accommodation Services) attended the sessions, to provide further information about the Council's intentions and to answer questions posed by relevant stakeholders. The advocacy service provided by Age Connects was promoted and made available to all service users and their families. A representative from Age Connects attended each consultation event. There was Trade Union representation at meetings with staff and with managers. Observers made a written record of each session. People in attendance were provided with information about how to make further contact with Practice Solutions should they wish to provide any additional observations.
- 3.5 The independent consultation events took place over a period of three weeks, from 9th January to 24th January 2023. Four meetings took place with residents and their relatives from the care homes most affected – Troedyrhiw, Ferndale, Ystrad Fechan, and Garth Olwg. Meetings with staff took place in three of the Council's leisure facilities – Sobell Leisure Centre (Aberdare), Llantrisant Leisure Centre and Rhondda Sports Centre (Ystrad). A meeting with managers likely to be affected by the proposals took place in the Council's offices in Ty Elai (Williamstown).
- 3.6 The consultation events were designed to:
 - provide participants with the best possible information about the proposals for change;

¹ From its base in Abercynon, Practice Solutions:

- supports social care and health organisations across Wales to plan and deliver improvements in services; and
- facilitates effective engagement with service users and staff.

- give them appropriate and effective ways of making known their views and feelings in an environment which encouraged people to use their voice, individually and collectively; and
- ensure a strong thread of independence throughout the process, including writing an informed but nonpartisan report for Cabinet which accurately reflected what had been said.

3.7 Different presentations were used in events for care home residents and their families and for staff and managers but the overall agenda was similar.

- What do you think? PART 1
- How can I have my say?
- Where are we right now?
- Why are the changes needed?
- What are the options?
- What do you think? PART 2
- What happens next?

3.8 Details of the independent consultation events held including the numbers of people attending each event are set out below:

Week	Date	Venue	No of Attendees
Residents and Family Meetings	10 January	Troedyrhiw	16
	12 January	Ferndale House	16
	17 January	Pentre House (Ystrad Fechan)	2
	19 January	Garth Olwg	28
Staff Meetings	9 January	Ty Elai (Managers)	6
	11 January	Sobell Leisure Centre	0
	19 January	Rhondda Sport Centre	22
	24 January	Llantrisant Leisure Centre	9

4. Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives

- 4.1 Events were organised at each of the four Council-run care homes for older people affected by the proposed options-Troedyrhiw, Ferndale, Ystrad Fechan, and Garth Olwg. Residents and relatives were invited to attend. The agenda was designed to maximise participation (see **Appendix 1**). The meeting for Ystrad Fechan residents and relatives was held in their current placement, Pentre House.
- 4.2 Following a short presentation from Practice Solutions to set the scene, an open “What do you think?” session was undertaken on each occasion (to initiate comment and discussion). Practice Solutions then outlined the five proposed options and advised residents and relatives about how they could have their say within the wider consultation process. Another “What do you think?” session was scheduled for the second part of the meeting to capture further thoughts, observations and questions.
- 4.2 **Appendix 2** has reports from each of the individual consultation events with care home residents and their relatives. A summary of the main themes that emerged in the discussions is set out below.

Main Themes

- a) The number of participants varied but it was evident that people very much wanted the opportunity to express their views, to have them recorded and to influence the decision-making process. In all the events, it quickly emerged that some people had been left perplexed by conflicting information, rumours or difficulties in navigating complicated systems/processes. They appreciated the way in which senior managers sought to answer questions and provide realistic reassurance. Exchanges of views were properly challenging but also characterised by a willingness to listen and to reconsider.
- b) While acknowledging the need for services and facilities to be modernised for the future, without exception residents and relatives praised staff for the high quality of care and support currently provided. The contribution and commitment of staff were mentioned repeatedly. There was high regard also for services which have a strong public service orientation, well connected to the community and to their locality. People were anxious that this key element could be lost if and when changes are made, especially if services are transferred to independent sector organisations.
- c) People wanted clear priority given to meeting the assessed needs of current residents and ensuring continuity of care. In the case of three homes (Troedyrhiw, Ferndale House and Ystrad Fechan), assurances could be given that changes would not involve residents being compelled to leave current placements unless their individual circumstances changed. Here, participants in the consultation events were willing to acknowledge that creating new, more modern facilities was the proper way forward. They were broadly supportive of the preferred options for put forward in the Cabinet report.²
- d) There was strong opposition from residents and families in Garth Olwg to the option which involved closing and decommissioning the care home. Residents did not want to leave a place they regarded as home and relatives were very anxious about the impact of the proposed changes. They put

² Because of the need to close Ystrad Fechan as a matter of urgency, two of its residents had moved to Pentre House. They were very pleased to know that they would be able to remain in the placement while new facilities are being developed.

forward alternatives whereby the home would be retained and modernised. Two of the residents had already experienced a placement move brought about by the sudden closure of an independent sector care home. This made them especially appreciative of the environment provided by Garth Olwg and anxious about change. Their relatives explained the difficulties they had encountered, including the challenge of finding a setting in which their family member could thrive.

- e) During the meeting in Garth Olwg, people listened carefully to explanations given by senior managers. This helped to generate discussion about what might happen to residents if Option 5 was approved and what steps could be taken to safeguard the interests of current residents and their relatives. While maintaining their opposition to the proposal, they did welcome the efforts made to understand and respond to their concerns.
- f) Putting care home residents and their families at the centre of the modernisation process was seen as essential. This would be helped by a greater emphasis on co-production - ensuring timely, effective communication about the detailed implications for individuals as well as the general programme of change. Participants were very anxious about how Council decisions would be implemented, especially during the period of transition. They wanted any decision to be accompanied by commitments to ensuring that safeguards would be in place, including prompt assessments of need, choice of placements, dignified and timely transfers, 'top ups' where necessary and full involvement by staff in the homes.
- g) There was unanimously a feeling that any disruption to the residents must be kept to a minimum. Residents and relatives requested early, detailed information about transition planning, as well as the timing of any such move to ensure that the process is properly managed and that continuity of care can be maintained. People were concerned about safeguarding the interests of residents who lack capacity. Relatives were seeking assurances that longer travel distances should be avoided, especially as some of them are dependent on public transport. They were reassured by the fact that the proposed redevelopment sites being considered in Mountain Ash and Ferndale are seen as good locations for new facilities.
- h) The events generated debate about the Council's rationale for its proposals. For example, there was initial scepticism about explanations for low occupancy levels in residential care homes, given factors such as increasing numbers of very old people in the population and severe problems in discharging people from hospital. Also, some people were concerned that the Council's primary motivation for making changes was to make financial savings. After considerable debate, it was generally acknowledged that most older people experiencing delayed discharge from hospital did not want permanent placements in residential care homes and that there is a discernible move away from choosing residential care where other suitable options are available.³ The Council's commitment to significant investment in accommodation for older people was warmly welcomed.
- i) Residents and relatives had some reservations about the ability of Extra Care housing to match the high standards of care in current homes and to provide a 'homely' environment while also catering for complex needs. They were somewhat reassured when more information was made available, alongside an offer of opportunities to visit one of the new facilities. They welcomed case examples of

³ There was a degree of consensus around the fact that the Council is required to meet increasing demand from older people for care and support within the resources available. This generated further discussion about how this can mean reducing reliance on traditional services such as residential care homes which are no longer viable and moving to a different pattern of help – one that is sustainable for the future and effectively meets the needs of an ageing population with more complex needs and different expectations.

the way in which current facilities in Rhondda Cynon Taf are working. Possible financial implications for individuals moving into other facilities were worrying those likely to be affected. Requests were made for further information about proposed sites and about how the transition to Extra Care would be undertaken and the timetable for homes to close. There was a very strong preference that, in any new facilities, the provision of care should be undertaken by the local authority.

- j) In some of the events, there was discussion about the possible merits of 'doing nothing' (i.e., keeping the status quo) or waiting for additional information before making decisions. However, people agreed that prolonged uncertainty is destabilising and risks generating even more anxiety.

5. Consultation Events with Staff and Managers

- 5.1 To facilitate discussion about the proposals to modernise care homes in the Borough, consultation events were organised in three geographical localities (Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely) for staff working in all the Council's residential care homes affected by the proposed options. It should be noted that no members of staff attended the Cynon meeting. The format for the consultation events mirrored that for care home residents and their relatives but there were slight changes to the information content.
- 5.2 **Appendix 3** has reports from each of the individual consultation events with managers and staff. A summary of the main themes that emerged in the discussions is set out below.

Main Themes


- a. All the events demonstrated how much staff wanted the best for current residents and for their interests to be a paramount concern in decision-making. With the exception of Garth Olwg staff, the options put forward by the Cabinet received general endorsement by those attending consultation events.
- b. Fearing that they might be adversely affected by the proposed changes, some staff said that they were experiencing considerable anxiety about Human Resource issues – such as job security, safeguarding employment rights, long-term career prospects, remuneration and other entrenched causes of instability within the residential care sector. Questions included:
- What would happen to staff members if their place of work closes?
 - Are current employees guaranteed to keep their jobs?
 - Will the current staff have options around redundancy?
 - Will the current hours be reduced if staff are redeployed?
 - How will proposed changes affect career prospects?
- c. It was helpful that HR and Trade Union representation was made available for the events, so that general concerns could be addressed. Staff were strongly in favour of continuing this level of dialogue and advice as soon as decisions are made. It was important to ensure that these decisions are made known to staff directly. They were especially concerned that more needed to be done to improve staff recruitment and retention. It was their perception that not enough permanent contracts were being offered, resulting in too much reliance on casual contract and agency workers to cover unfilled vacancies. The subsequent discussions revealed some confusion about the Council's policy and its implementation. Managers gave a commitment to resolving the issue.
- d. Despite high levels of anxiety, staff displayed a strong sense of loyalty to the Council, but some felt that this was not always reciprocated. There was a consensus about wanting to remain employees of the Council. This was grounded in a shared public service ethos, the high standard of care being delivered, its employee terms and conditions, and the fact that Council-run care homes are anchored in the communities they serve.
- e. Staff were understandably preoccupied by the proposals for the home in which they worked and for their geographical area. However, they were looking also for evidence that the Council has a genuine and future-proofed commitment to providing high quality care and modern facilities in those homes where the options include retention. This would mean spelling out plans for investment in buildings and staff over a sustained period. 'Review fatigue' was evident, with staff expressing frustration and

apprehension that they find themselves in this position again within such a short space of time. There were fears that further reviews would be held, and further closures recommended. This was seen as putting at risk the Council's commitment to providing equity of service in the three principal parts of the Borough (Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely).

- f. Concerns were also raised about how the proposals have been communicated to staff. This had left much scope for misinformation and rumour. They felt ill-equipped to reassure residents and relatives whose lives were deeply affected by ongoing uncertainty or even to explain the reasons that lie behind the proposed options. Following all the problems associated with the pandemic, this had perpetuated feelings of crisis and uncertainty. However, they were pleased to have an opportunity to hear from senior managers.
- g. There was some appreciation that refurbishing all existing residential homes may not be financially viable. Staff appreciated the work done to explore the prospects for modernising each of the current homes, although there was scepticism about whether some findings are valid - especially as it is their perception that refurbishment has been put on hold for a long time.
- h. The staff felt that current residents and their relatives would prefer to remain in their current home even if they could not be modernised to provide facilities such as en-suite bathrooms. Those working in Garth Olwg believe that the proposed option for the home would have a very adverse impact upon current residents as it would deny them the opportunity to remain living in the home.
- i. Staff from the Rhondda Fach made strong representations that a facility, either a care home or extra care housing/dementia residential care, should be available in their valley. This would aid staff recruitment and retention and also ensure that the community was not deprived of an important community asset. They were concerned to explore in detail the option for Ferndale House set out in the Cabinet report and they welcomed details about a potential new site that is being explored.
- j. It was considered essential that residents in all homes are given a meaningful choice of placement if their home was to be closed while they were there. Staff expressed considerable relief that this is unlikely to be the case if most of the proposals go ahead, given the length of time needed to develop alternatives. They wanted assurances about where any new facility would be located and further consideration of the proposed balance between extra care accommodation and residential care facilities for people experiencing dementia-related illnesses.
- k. Where care homes are to be retained or redeveloped on another site, managers would like to see early, detailed information about the investment plans and what the implications would be for each home. They expect to be involved in the decision-making process as early as possible, especially in managing any potential impact for residents and staff.
- l. Some staff are looking for more information about moves to commission significantly increased levels of Extra Care housing. It appears that not everybody has a clear enough understanding about the role of housing associations and "not for profit" organisations, or the way in which Extra Care operates. There was a consensus that the Council should explore opportunities for ensuring that care in these settings is provided by its own staff.

Appendix 1

Presentation for Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives



**PROPOSED CHANGES TO
RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES
AND EXTRA CARE HOUSING
FOR OLDER PEOPLE
IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**



Consultation Events
January 2023

Phil Evans and Paul Pavia

[@Pracsolutions](https://twitter.com/Pracsolutions) www.practicesolutions-ltd.co.uk

AGENDA FOR CARE HOME EVENTS

- What do you think? PART 1
- How can I have my say?
- Where are we right now?
- Why are the changes needed?
- What are the options?
- What do you think? PART 2
- What happens next?



WHAT DO YOU THINK? PART 1

- What worries/interests me most is....
- What residents want most/least is.....
- It's very important that staff are/aren't.....
- What I would most like to see is.....
- Has the Council considered.....?
- Why are homes recommended for closure when they provide such good care?
- Why isn't there enough demand for places in Council homes?
- Other questions, comments, concerns?



HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY? PART 1

- Public Consultation started December 12th and closes January 27th
- Series of consultation events in residential care homes and with staff
- HAVE YOUR SAY! Consultation Booklet
- Further information on the Council's website
- Questionnaire/survey
- Democratic accountability



HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY? PART 2

- For further information, you can visit the Council's website: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/consultation where you can find out the detail of the proposals
- You can get in touch via:
 - 01443 425014
 - or
 - residentialcare@rctcbc.gov.uk
 - or
 - FREEPOST RSBU-HJUK-LSSS, Research & Consultation, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale, CF40 2XX



WHERE ARE WE NOW? PART 1

- The Council proposes making important changes in services for older people
- This would involve:
 - retaining five of the Residential Care Homes which the Council runs and eventually closing four others
 - creating three new facilities that offer Extra Care and residential dementia care, plus additional accommodation for adults with learning disabilities
- No decisions have been taken yet, pending this public consultation
- The Council invites you to let them know your views and Cabinet will make the final decision



WHERE ARE WE NOW? PART 2

- **£50m is being invested in Extra Care, to deliver 300 extra care apartments within five new facilities across the County Borough**
- **Extra Care housing aims to provide ‘a home for life’ for many people, even if their care needs change over time. People have their own self-contained home in purpose-built accommodation and with 24-hour care and support available. Apartments usually consist of either one or two bedrooms, a lounge area, a kitchen area and a fully fitted wet room**
- **Details about the Extra Care programme can be found on the Council’s website:**
<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/AdultsandOlderPeople/SupportingAdultsinRhonddaCynonTaf.aspx>



WHY ARE THE CHANGES NEEDED?

- **Long journey – ongoing review since November 2016 to establish the case for change, explore options and ensure that resources are used wisely.**
- **Outcome of the review - wanting to keep some Council-run residential care homes but only if they can be upgraded to meet changing needs expectations and standards (dementia friendly/ frailty/end-of-life care).**
- **Residential care homes are closing in many places - declining occupancy/ageing premises which require renovation and new facilities/ people’s preferences for other options.**
- **Plans are in place to develop new choices for older people, especially extra care housing and integrated support at home.**



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS? PART 1

- **OPTION 1:** Retain current service provision at 5 Council care homes.
- **OPTION 2:** New accommodation with *40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds* on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The home is temporarily closed with no residents living there and it would be permanently decommissioned.
- **OPTION 3:** New accommodation with *20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds* on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS? PART 2

- **OPTION 4:** New accommodation with *25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds* located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.
- **OPTION 5:** New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood. This would involve developing the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.
- Individual homes – Table 6 in the Cabinet report



WHAT DO YOU THINK? PART 2

- **Possible themes**

- Concerns for residents, carers and relatives if homes are closed.**
- How will the change be managed? - continuity of care, assessments for current residents (including advocacy), review of care and support plans**
- Timescales for change**
- What choice will residents have about where they live? – facilities, eligibility, costs**
- Geographical location of proposed facilities and investment plans**
- Implications for staff**
- Alternative proposals/Recommendations**



Appendix 2

Reports from Individual Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives⁴

a) Troedyrhiw

Proposal

Initially, concerns were raised about the proposed option for the care home, in relation to its closure and decommissioning. Residents and family relatives felt the care home provided good quality care and that it would be 'terrible' if it were closed.

One family member said: *"My father's needs are being met in the care home now. He has everything he wants here."*

One family member felt that the specific option for Troedyrhiw seemed *'too good to be true'* because the care home would not be closed until a new facility was developed.

It was unanimously agreed that any new facility needs to be built within the local area, so that families would be closer and better able to visit. Concerns were raised about identifying a site and questions were asked about what would happen if appropriate land could not be found. This was seen as a risk that must be mitigated but participants were much reassured when details about a potential site were provided.

High standards of care and specialist care

Assurances were sought that the same high standards of care and an appropriate, 'homely' environment would be available in any new accommodation provided to the residents of Troedyrhiw. In particular, relatives were adamant that any new provision should be run by the local authority.

Moving residents to Extra Care homes

In relation to any change that may occur following the Council's decisions, there was a unanimous feeling that any disruption to the residents must be kept to a minimum. More detailed information was requested about transition planning, so that the timing of any moves helped to ensure continuity of care.

As one relative stated: *"This will be a major disruption for people staying here at the moment. The care home is great as it's local and it has a good reputation. Anything which is built not like this will not be good for the residents. We need to ensure it's an easy transition."*

Both relatives and residents requested that, if a decision is made to approve Option 4, local authority officers should come back to them as early as possible, to involve them in developing the proposals for any new facility.

Relationships with staff, residents and their families

The quality of care and commitment shown by staff was praised and there were concerns expressed about their future employment. It was suggested that ideally, the staff should move

⁴ Material expressed in Parts 4 and 5 of this report directly represent the views of those attending the series of consultation events and does not cover the responses to questions and further information provided by Council officers.

with the residents to ensure continuity of care is maintained. Staff were also deemed to have a crucial role in providing families with help and support.

Relatives felt it was important that any new facility must have good staffing levels to deliver consistent, high-quality care. However, there were also concerns raised more broadly about staffing capacity at the current facility and that the Council needed to do more to encourage people to work in the sector.

Conclusions

At the end of the consultation session, there was a strong feeling within the group that the proposal for Troedyrhiw was the right decision for the community and the best outcome that could be achieved.

However, it was also felt that the needs of this current generation of residents should not be overshadowed in developing facilities for the next. Excellent communication with and support for families would be essential. Notification of any decisions must be made to residents and their families first before any wider dissemination.

b) Ferndale House

Proposal

There was some initial confusion around the 'preferred options' being proposed, with a perceived discrepancy regarding the information published on the consultation page on the Council's website and material printed in the 'Have Your Say' consultation document. People questioned what they perceived as ambiguity about whether the proposed options were a prioritised list, whether they were linked to each other or whether they were 'all or nothing' options, or whether they could be individually 'cherry-picked' by the Council. Further discussion helped to clarify all these issues. Officers in attendance provided clarification.

Residents and relatives liked the current care home facility and did not understand why change was necessary because they initially believed the care home was oversubscribed.

One family relative stated: *"I know the hassle that we had to go into my mother into here."*

Another recognised the positive psychological effect that had taken place when their loved one moved to the home and expressed their initial anxiety surrounding any proposed change.

However, when presented with the trend data on falling residential care home places, one relative observed: *"I was shocked when I saw the vacancies (referencing statistics in the information pack)."*

Another family member commented on current NHS pressures to discharge people from hospital and questioned why there was not a higher degree of demand for beds in the care home.

Questions were asked about: the location of the proposed new facility; how close it would be to the current home; how accessible it would be, particularly to emergency vehicles; how the retained care homes identified in Option 1 were decided on and whether the Council had a specific target to achieve in reducing residential care beds.

One relative asked: *"Is the Council trying to make cuts with these options and privatise care?"*

Another relative raised concerns in relation to the cuts in services, particularly day care services, that had already taken place in the community.

All these points were discussed in detail and the group then agreed with one participant who said: *"Now I feel much better about it all and grateful for the time to think about it."*

Moving residents to Extra Care homes

Residents and relatives wanted to know more about the model of care used in Extra care accommodation – how the care and support is delivered; what facilities are available and their suitability for residents affected by decommissioning; who would be eligible; what costs would be incurred; and how did the facilities link to the wider community. They sought detailed information about how the transition to Extra Care would be undertaken and the timetable for homes to close, to ensure that the quality and continuity of care would be maintained.

Relationships with staff, residents and their families

People praised the quality of care and commitment shown by staff. It was suggested that, ideally, the staff should move with the residents to ensure continuity of care. Staff were also deemed to have a key role in providing families with help and support during a period of transition.

However, broader concerns were raised about current and future staffing levels. One relative noted that the Council was not offering full-time, permanent jobs and was reliant on casual contracts, to the detriment of efforts to recruit carers. They felt that that work should have been undertaken to rectify this problem as they perceived working for the Council as a better option than working out in the community providing care.

Conclusions

At the end of the discussion, the general consensus was that the option set out in the Cabinet report for Ferndale House was the best way forward, especially as ‘doing nothing’ was not viable and was just going back to square one. Residents and relatives acknowledged the age and limitations of the current care home in terms of space and layout. However, change was seen as unsettling: residents and their families required much reassurance that the Council had fully considered the needs of current residents.

As one resident stated: *“The people here do want their dignity.”*

However, another family member said: *“Why wouldn’t anyone vote not to have a new facility, when we can keep the current one? I cannot see why anyone would not want it. It seems a better option for managers, staff and residents.”*

It was clear that, if any decision was taken to develop a new facility, that residents and their families would want to be involved in the shaping of those plans in a co-productive way, including the viability of the site identified by the Council. There was also a strong feeling that any new facility should be Council-run’.

At the conclusion of the event, one relative said: *“Come on...I want it done.”*

c) Pentre House

As the event was intended for former residents of Ystrad Fechan who had moved to Pentre House when their care home was temporarily closed, there were only two residents present and no relatives. The meeting was attended by an Older Person’s Advocate from Age Connects, who knew the two individuals and acts for one of them in other matters. Some parts of the consultation event were conducted bilingually.

Proposal

It was explained to both residents that they would not be affected directly by the proposals and they were reassured that their place in the home was secure.

Relationships with staff, residents and their families

Both residents were very happy with the care and support that they received in the home. They knew the staff who looked after them and they were both very complimentary about their work.

One resident said: *"They've been brilliant to me here."*

While the other said: *"They're all bloody (sic) good."*

Conclusions

Both residents had moved from another residential care home; they felt very settled at Pentre House and got on well with staff and the other residents.

One resident noted there were no staff in the care home that she could communicate with fluently in Welsh (her first language). However, staff do make a conscious effort to use Welsh phrases and sayings to engage with her and this is much appreciated.

Both residents were happy to stay at the home. They very much appreciated further confirmation that the proposals would not affect them personally. There was a clear need for staff to reinforce this message and provide further reassurance.

d) Garth Olwg

Proposal

There was significant opposition to the proposal to decommission Garth Olwg as a residential care home and repurpose it as a supported living facility for adults with a Learning Disability. Residents and relatives felt that this was the worst-case scenario for the home.

There was a high-level of anxiety amongst both residents and relatives. There was a feeling that the Council *"needs to understand they are dealing with 'people' not 'bed numbers" and "start dealing with people's expectations."*

As one relative stated: *"When looking at care, we can't lose the fact that they are people, and they have a story. If many of them had a choice, they would want to be in their own homes. But we are aware that domiciliary care has long lists. Circumstances have dictated that they have to live here. The Council needs to consider that they are paying over £700 a week for their own care (self-funded) so should remember that. All they want is to stay where they are because they are happy where they are. I feel that, if you do a show of hands, many would agree."*

One resident said: *"I'm filled with alarm and very upset."*

Another resident said: *"I've only been there a year but it's the best life I've ever had."*

A third resident was worried about moving away from the very good friends they had made in the home. The resident chose to read out a statement, describing how when they arrived in Garth Olwg, their situation was dire, physically and mentally. *"It is due to the understanding and hard work of the staff that I am the person that I am today. I am very happy here and the thought of having to move elsewhere is causing me mental distress. This is a very happy, well-run home. We have a dedicated, hard-working staff and remember this is the only home in RCT that during the covid pandemic had no deaths or cases of coronavirus. The effort and work staff made during that time was incredible. Now their efforts and hard work are being rewarded by being made possibly redundant or having to find other employment. As many of them have been here for years, it is a blow for them. Jenny the warden has been here for 33 years. The staff must be devastated. Returning to the residents here... personally I would not be happy to become an extra care resident.When in 2019, it was decided to keep Garth Olwg open, it was a great relief. Once again, closing Garth Olwg, I feel that authority think only of numbers and not people and decide to change their mind.....I understand the need for support for people with learning difficulties, but remember the elderly have needs too! I would now like relief in my final days having worked all my life."*

One relative explained about their mother's experience of moving to the care home in September 2022 and that the move was not well managed and was a very difficult episode for the whole family. They enquired why they were not made aware of these proposals at the time before the move was made. They also expressed a '*lack of faith*' in the Council to manage another move when they witnessed the impact of the last move and especially given there were more people to transition from Garth Olwg to other facilities. The resident in question expressed great upset because she had been assured that it would be her last move now it was not going to be. The notion of supporting vulnerable older people who regarded Garth Olwg as their 'home for life' had not been given any priority, it was suggested.

One participant drew attention to a manifesto commitment made by the Labour administration in the 2022 local government elections to keep the care home open. He felt that, clearly, this had been reneged on.

There was a belief too that the needs of adults with Learning Disabilities were being given more priority than the older adults in the home.

One resident said: "*It seems that people with disabilities are being given everything and we feel we are being pushed aside despite paying into the economy for years.*"

Questions were raised regarding the rationale behind the proposal:

- Why was the local need in relation to Learning Disabilities not raised three years ago during the last consultation process? The view was that the Council had been short-sighted.
- Why does the Council feel the home is not fit for purpose, when residents and their families do?
- Are people really not wanting to come into residential care or is the extent of the vacancies in the home caused by a lack of staff?
- Were the new proposals future proofed? What will happen in a few years' time when there will be a further influx of elderly people?
- Given that residents in the care home did not fit categories of disabled or dementia – what care homes in the area now cater for their needs?

Alternative options/proposals

There were a several alternative proposals discussed:

- If there is a need, could the Council not develop a purpose-built facility on other land in the area and then decommission and move residents, in line with other proposed options in the consultation?
- Could the current building be adapted and modernised over time, minimising disruption to the residents?
- Given that the Council's analysis highlights future need for high care dementia beds and the pressure on the NHS to discharge people back into community care, could Garth Olwg be dual registered for both residential and also nursing accommodation?

Relationships with staff, residents and their families

There was unqualified praise for the quality of care and the commitment shown by staff.

One resident said: "*There's a lot of love and care in this facility and you cannot buy that. I've had marvellous support here. I'm now able to walk again since moving here.*"

Residents and relatives expressed concern about staff welfare but also regarding their future employment options. It was hoped that they would be redeployed to Parc Newydd.

Extra Care

Residents and relatives asked questions regarding the model of care used in Extra Care accommodation: how the care and support is delivered; what facilities are available and their suitability for residents with varying degrees of need; and who would be eligible. Several relatives expressed a view that they would be unhappy to move their loved one into an Extra Care facility.

Moving residents to alternative care facilities

Participants requested information regarding how transition arrangements would be managed if a decision were made to close the care home. Residents and relatives asked questions regarding choice of alternative provision and what the timescales would be to make that transition. One relative asked if suitable alternatives could not be found in the short-term, whether their loved one would be able to stay until other arrangements were made.

One relative asked about the circumstances of a loved one with a Learning Disability and enquired whether she would have to move out to move back into Garth Olwg.

There was a strong view from both residents and relatives that the majority would want to remain in placements local to the current care home because they liked the community but also for the transport links for visiting relatives. One resident expressed a view that they did not want to move further away from their family and would prefer a transfer to a facility in Bridgend County Borough and asked whether this was feasible.

Concerns were raised about local alternatives and their suitability. In terms of Council-run Parc Newydd, there were concerns about current capacity and whether it could accommodate all the residents who may want to stay local and move there. One relative asked whether the Council could restrict access to Parc Newydd for new admissions and reserve sufficient capacity to allow all residents from Garth Olwg to transfer across if that were their choice. There was a perception that the rooms were smaller than those in Garth Olwg and that the outlook was not as favourable, which would have an adverse impact upon the well-being of residents. There were also concerns raised about the housing estate near Parc Newydd. There were perceptions that 'undesirable' people living there were potentially involved in risky, anti-social behaviour.

In terms of local independent provision, while people acknowledged that there were other independent sector providers in the vicinity, this was not an option that residents or their relatives had initially considered. They wanted to go to Garth Olwg because the facility and level of care were excellent.

Communication and information

Both residents and relatives enquired why they were not made aware of the options sooner.

They also enquired about the process of reporting and decision making – would they be able to see a copy of the independent consultation report in advance and how would it be published. They also asked when the Council reports would be published and how they would be able to access copies.

They also enquired about whether Council officers had seen the numerous petitions that had been generated and whether they had been formally submitted. As the Council's proposed option for Garth Olwg potentially has the greatest effect upon residents and relatives, it was felt to be unfortunate that their consultation event was the last in the schedule

Other issues

- Why were consultants commissioned to undertake this exercise, presumably at significant cost?
- What would happen to the money (capital receipts) from the other residential care homes identified in the preferred options Cabinet report?
- Why is the capital money used for infrastructure development and not staff/workforce development?
- Is the Council investing more money in older people now than in previous years?
- What is the purpose of the new Council developments in Llantrisant?

Conclusions

Given that Garth Olwg was initially earmarked for closure and decommissioning during the last consultation process and then given a reprieve, elevated levels of anger and anxiety had been generated by this being put forward as an option again. Residents and relatives unanimously opposed the proposal.

It was evident that both residents and relatives place a very high value on this Council-run care facility because of the quality of care, the dedication of staff and the homely environment that had been created. This had led them to put forward alternative options for the Council to consider.

Appendix 3

Reports from Individual Events with Staff and Managers

a) Staff Event at Sobell Leisure Centre

No members of staff attended the event.

b) Staff Event at Rhondda Sports Centre

Ystrad Fechan

Questions were raised initially about the temporary closure of Ystrad Fechan and the rationale behind the decision. Staff were aware that children's services were now making use of the premises but they had not been told anything about this decision, even as a matter of courtesy.

This had left them feeling angry and disappointed. *"We feel let down again by the Council."*

Another said: *"We feel in limbo. This has gone on too long...we have been here before."*

There were questions about the long-term plans for Ystrad Fechan and whether children's services were going to be there permanently or whether residents and staff were going to return eventually.

One member of staff said: *"We worked there for so long, we didn't want to leave."*

Another said: *"Fair enough that we've moved. However, if it reopens, surely as it's my home we can go back in?"*

Proposal

Staff members felt their greatest concern about the entire process was the uncertainty, the 'not knowing.'

There were also concerns raised by staff from Ferndale House about the level of service provision in that part of the county. There was a feeling that there had been cuts and service erosion over recent years.

One staff member said: *"There's nothing here in our valley. There is no elderly service or day services from Maerdy to Porth – there is nothing available for the elderly."*

Another member of staff said: *"I never thought I'd be sitting here once again fighting for the Rhonda Fach. All services have been taken away and everything is in Rhondda Fawr."*

While questions were asked about the location of the new facility and the timescales for the changes to take place, there remained an entrenched belief that the current proposals were an inadequate response to the needs of older people in the Rhondda Fach. There was concern about the proposed balance of dementia beds to Extra Care places, given increasing numbers of older people experiencing cognitive impairment. Staff felt that, before any long-term proposals were developed, the Council needed to address workforce pressures.

Workforce (recruitment, retention and security)

While there was considerable anxiety about what the proposals meant for staff job security in the future, there was also a strong focus around the recruitment and retention challenges for the Council's adult care workforce more generally. Staff felt that there were still too many vacancies, with not enough permanent appointments being made and too much reliance on casual contracts to cover those vacancies.

Staff felt that there needed to be more incentives for people who work in care. Staff wanted to see proper career pathways created, so that people could train and develop in permanent roles, ensuring greater stability for individuals and the Council over the longer term. There was also a feeling that staff loyalty needed to be properly recognised by the Council.

There was a discussion about the implications of the proposals for the current staff cohort in relation to the management of change – what it meant for job security; how the job would change; what it meant for local staff in terms of redeployment; what the effects would be on working hours and pensions and what the consequences would be if another provider (other than the Council) was commissioned to deliver care in the new facility.

Independent sector

Concerns were raised about the quality of care and standards of facilities available in the independent sector. It was suggested that the quality of Council care homes was much higher. There was a strong feeling that any new facility should be Council-operated because a public service focus and motivation were perceived to be better for residents, staff and the community.

One staff member said: *“The private sector is all about money – not care focused.”*

Extra Care

There was a discussion held around the development of an Extra Care facility, how the model worked and how flexible it was to manage the decline experienced by an individual along their dementia pathway, as well as accommodating the general demands of dementia EMI placements. One staff member expressed the view that the number of dementia beds in the proposal for Option 3 was not sufficient to meet demand and that it should be doubled (from 10 to 20).

Other issues

Staff commented on current NHS pressures to discharge in a timely way people from hospital in need of care and questioned why there was not a higher degree of demand for beds in care homes.

Conclusions

A strong commitment to residents, other staff colleagues and the needs of the community was demonstrated throughout the meeting.

Staff were under no illusion that Ferndale House requires updating. However, there were concerns and considerable anxieties raised about job security.

Notwithstanding the consultation process, staff felt strongly that the Council had already made its mind up about the proposals and that feedback would not lead to any real amendments.

c) Staff Event at Llantrisant Sports Centre

Proposal

Staff really wanted to know why Garth Olwg had been singled out again for closure? They expressed the view that the process was causing great anxiety, uncertainty and distress. Staff members said that the announcement of the proposals had a very strong impact upon their own Christmas celebrations.

Staff members raised their concerns about the effect the proposals and the consultation were having on the residents for whom they care.

One staff member said: *“Since the (residential) consultation, residents have been really bad. One resident did not want to leave their room as they are very low. We have to go back and deal with the upset. We*

don't want to have to deal with their questions and we are worried about answering them because we don't want to cause residents more upset."

Another staff member said: *"I think change is good sometimes, but it is scary. The residents that are going through it now, are going through it a second time. We were told after the previous decision that the home was going to be refurbished but that never happened."*

Several questions were raised regarding the rationale behind the proposal:

- Would there be enough residential beds in the locality to accommodate current residents looking to move to other settings?
- Was there still a high need for residential care given the NHS pressures on discharging into the community?
- Had staffing pressures and vacancies affected residential care capacity?
- Was this just a finance/cost cutting exercise?

A discussion then took place about details underpinning the proposed facility providing supported living for people with Learning Disabilities and whether the location was the right one for those individuals and the community. Questions were posed regarding:

- How many people were on the Learning Disability Waiting list for supported living?
- What would be the age range of people accommodated in any new facility?
- What level of disability or challenging behaviour would be in the statement of purpose for the setting?
- Would it be a secure unit?
- Were the local community and school made aware of the proposal?

Alternative proposals

Staff raised the point that given there is already an elderly frail resident with a Learning Disability in Garth Olwg. Could the Council not look to bring people together in one setting rather than segregate them? Could the facility not accommodate a mix of elderly frail and learning disabilities?

As one staff member said: *"We've had people with learning disabilities come into Garth Olwg before and that has never been a problem. Seems you don't care about the other people who have learning disabilities coming into us."*

Moving residents to alternative care facilities

Participants requested information regarding how transition arrangements would be managed if a decision to close the care home was made and what the proposed timeframe would be from the start of that process to decommissioning.

Extra Care

There was a discussion about the role of Extra Care in the County, the staff model, the financial implications for the Council, the Council's longer-term ambition; its role as a direct provider and/or commissioner and what implementing the model meant for the future of other residential care settings, like Parc Newydd and Cae Glas.

Staff felt that workforce stability would be achieved only when answers to these concerns had been agreed and implemented. Confidence in the Council's overall plans was seen as an important factor in securing new staff and retaining the current workforce. One question they posed was that if staff took the opportunity for redeployment to Parc Newydd, what guarantees could be given that they would not be in the same situation in two or three-years' time?

Workforce (Recruitment, retention and security)

There was a discussion about the implications of the proposals for the current staff cohort in relation to the management of change – what it meant for job security; what it meant for local staff in terms of redeployment to other care homes like Parc Newydd; what the effects would be on working hours, rights and pensions; and whether there would be redundancies.

Communication and information

Staff enquired why they were not made directly aware of the options sooner.

One staff member said: *“We found out via Facebook, before we were told collectively.”*

They also enquired about the process of reporting and decision making. Information was sought about when they would be able to see a copy of all the reports going to Cabinet, when the Cabinet meeting would take place and how they would be informed about any decision made. Staff wanted to be informed personally and in a timely way, rather than seeing anything published second-hand on a website or via social media.

They also enquired whether Council officers had seen the numerous petitions that had been generated and whether they had been formally submitted.

Conclusions

Initially, there was considerable frustration and anger that Garth Olwg had been earmarked again for closure and decommissioning. However, towards the end of the meeting, staff expressed more their feeling of resignation that the decision had already been made.

As one member of staff stated: *“I feel as though it is already a done deal.”*

Another said: *“The reason there were no people there (at the public drop-in) is because they fought last time to keep Garth Olwg open.”*

It was clear that staff do not want continued uncertainty and feel that a decision needs to be made but that they should be treated with courtesy and informed directly as soon as it is made.

d) Managers Event

Consultation Engagement

Concern was expressed about the scheduling of the consultation events, particularly in relation to Garth Olwg (given the potential impact of the proposals on its residents and staff). It was felt that these events should not be the last ones to take place. It was evident that many of the residents have the capacity to understand what is going on and the scheduling reinforces their view that they are not being properly considered.

Proposals

Managers felt that the proposals and the consultation process were generating a significant level of anxiety and uncertainty for both residents and staff.

One manager stated that the report to Cabinet did not place enough emphasis on how the proposals were going to make Council-run facilities a better place for residents to live. Their perception was that the report was ‘bed number focused’, as opposed to person centred. It was suggested that the proposals do not give enough reassurance to residents (and their relatives) that this was going to be their lasting home.

While understanding that the decision-making process needs to operate properly, managers expressed their view that a final decision should be made quickly to bring a greater level of reassurance and stability to the residential care system in the County Borough. The point was clearly expressed that the Council

could not keep going over the same ground every couple of years. Managers felt that the system requires a greater level of consistency and continuity. It was essential, therefore, that senior officers engage in effective, long-term planning with operational managers to achieve this. Matters such as future demographic trends, levels of demand (especially older adults with dementia), models of care, geographic coverage and workforce planning should be considered carefully.

It was felt that staff need a greater level of reassurance about the investment that will be made in new facilities but also in the care homes being retained. Following the last consultation, commitments were made about investing money in the care homes to be retained but that did not happen. It was felt that detailed plans for investment in homes to be retained must be shared with managers and staff at the earliest possible juncture, so that both groups felt empowered to help shape those plans.

Managers anticipated that residents and staff would be asking about the location of any new facilities because in many communities, land is a scarce commodity.

Moving residents to Extra Care homes

In relation to any change that may occur following the Council's decision-making process, there was a unanimous feeling that any disruption to the residents must be kept to a minimum. More detailed information was requested about transition planning, as well as the timing of any placement changes to ensure seamless, continuity of care.

Workforce (recruitment, retention, security)

While there was considerable anxiety about what the proposals meant for staff job security in the interim, there was also a strong focus on the recruitment and retention challenges for the Council's adult care workforce more generally.

As one manager stated: *"We have a really good group of staff, and we are aware that, if they leave, they are unlikely to come back."*

It was felt that the Council needed to give this thorough consideration because, with the current level of workforce pressures in terms of vacancies carried and staff burn-out, careful planning would be required to ensure safe and viable services could be maintained.

One manager said: *"Staff feel there has been a mass exodus following the last Cabinet review and the pandemic. We lost many staff and now we are struggling to accommodate people."*

There was a discussion about the number of current vacancies and the role of casual contracts to cover some of these posts. Concerns were raised that not enough people with casual contracts were moving into permanent positions and this must be resolved soon. The Council has to realise how long it would take to train new members of staff to the level of those who may potentially leave its employment.

Communication and information

Managers queried how the decision-making process would take place in terms of timing and how they and staff would be informed of any decisions made. Questions were also asked about the speed of the change process and transition planning following any decision.

A query was raised about whether hard copies of the consultation document had been sent out to residents, relatives and staff - not everyone has access to internet.

Conclusions

Managers clearly expressed their concerns about the potential impact of the proposals on residents and staff, and they were rightfully carrying the anxieties of those two groups into the meeting.

It was evident that managers wanted to move to a greater level of continuity and stability across services for accommodating older people in the county. Maintaining a state of constant review was not only unsettling for residents and relatives but also had a serious impact on recruitment and retention. They all wanted to work with senior managers and to take an active role in the process of change, thereby ensuring that the service in the county was well designed and fit for purpose.

Managers understandably wanted to be involved in the transition planning process following any decision about the proposals, but they also wanted early input into planning any new facilities, if that was the direction of travel set by the Council.

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KEY CONSULTATION THEMES

A summary of the key themes that emerged from the consultation, including officer responses, is provided below.

Impact on residents and families

The distress to residents and relatives caused by moving home, or by supporting their elderly relative to move home, has been cited as a main reason not to decommission. Respondents raised concerns about the location of alternative homes and whether families would be able to visit new locations. Families and residents raised concerns about the impact on friendship groups that had formed and the strong relationships with staff that had developed over years.

The Council acknowledges that asking residents to move home, whether this is on a temporary or permanent basis, is likely to cause disruption and distress for residents and their families and this concern is evidenced by the number of responses to the consultation on this theme. The Council has experience of successfully relocating residents and it is satisfied that through careful, detailed, person-centred planning, suitable alternatives can be found for current residents with as little disruption and distress as possible. Ensuring that families and friends can continue to visit will be an important part of this planning process. The Council is satisfied that for the majority of residents, the distress and any negative impact of the move can be sufficiently mitigated and will be relatively short lived.

A dedicated team of Social Care Practitioners will be allocated specifically to work alongside care home residents and their relatives should Cabinet decide to decommission a care home. These Practitioners will carry out full care assessments for all residents and these will generate an up-to-date person-centred care and support plan for each resident. The care and support plans will help to ensure that residents, their families and the social work staff, are fully informed of their care needs when residents come to make decisions on future accommodation, should the home be decommissioned. This will enable a full understanding of people's preferences for their future care, enabling beds to be reserved in the alternative accommodation.

Arrangements will be made to ensure that residents are fully supported to move to alternative accommodation. Staff from the home would assist residents in their moves if required to do so by relatives or residents and would be encouraged to visit after each move to ensure that the residents are settling in, and their needs are fully understood.

Impact on staffing

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is proud of the level of care its staff provides and their skills and capabilities are valued. Whilst there continues to be investment in the workforce, the Council acknowledges more needs to be done to improve the stability and confidence of this workforce alongside improving recruitment and retention. These challenges are not unique to Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Following the public consultation and only when the Council is in a position to make decisions which will affect staff, there will be a separate staff consultation exercise during which the Council's Management of Change procedure will be followed. The Council's Human Resources Department will work closely with the Service and Trade Unions in order to support staff through the changes at the appropriate time.

Staff would have the opportunity and be encouraged, where possible, to be redeployed and relocated with residents to a retained Council residential care home. In such cases, staff from the residential care home would also assist residents in their moves if required to do so by relatives or residents and would be encouraged to visit after each move to ensure that the residents are settling in, and their needs are fully understood.

Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made

The way in which individual care needs are met and delivered has changed considerably since the Council's Care Homes were opened. The Council is aware that it needs to plan for the future and is looking at different ways to provide care and choices for its vulnerable adults and older people population.

The need for "standard" residential care provided at the Council's 9 residential care homes will continue to decline, alongside increases in community based support accommodation and more specialist dementia care accommodation. The Council is required to respond accordingly to this change in needs. Replacing our existing old care homes with new standard residential care homes is not what is required, and the Council's priority must be to ensure that with partners we create sufficient specialist dementia care provision and more opportunity for people to be cared for independently in the community by increasing options like extra care housing. This is about making sure we invest our resources in the right way so that people get the right level of care for their needs.

The Council wants to provide a range of services so that needs can be catered for on an individual basis. The Council acknowledges that some people will still need support in residential care homes. As per the Cabinet report, there are currently 34 registered care and nursing homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf, offering 1308 beds, with 184 vacancies. With these beds, and current and proposed additional extra care housing, the Council believes there will be sufficient accommodation care services for older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Quality of care now and in future / concern regarding independent care home market

A number of respondents raised concerns relating to the quality and cost of local independent homes when compared to the Council's in-house provision. A few respondents were concerned that the independent sector was profit oriented and therefore felt that standard of care may sometimes be lower. Rhondda Cynon Taf is served by a number of excellent independent sector providers that are subject to the same regulations and inspection requirements as the Council's in-house services. Any cost implications, including the requirement to pay top ups, would be considered when looking at the suitable alternatives available locally for each individual, although it is worth noting that there is sufficient capacity in the Council's Residential Care Homes to meet current and future need.

Strong resistance to decommissioning: Garth Olwg from residents, families and staff.

It is clearly positive that the residents of Garth Olwg residential care home are well settled and content with their accommodation and good quality care. The Council are acutely conscious of the depth of feeling aroused among care home residents, families, local communities, and staff. The overwhelming message from people and their families can be simply summarised as wanting all Council in-house care homes to remain open and it is a testament to the skills and commitment of the staff at these homes that this is the case, and the residents are happy there.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the majority of respondents to the consultation are not in favour of the home closing and the reasons offered in the consultation response have some validity in themselves, it is also worth recognising that respondents are directly impacted by the proposals and the Council must also consider the wider context of the current and future needs and expectations of all people, including those with learning disability in all our communities.

Officers consider that the recommendation put forward in this report are appropriate when taking into consideration all relevant factors and themes arising from the consultation process and EIA.

It is worth noting, there are two extra care schemes, two Council Care Homes, plus independent sector care homes within a 5-mile radius of the current Garth Olwg residential care home that can meet the needs of residents, should Cabinet agree to proceed with the recommended preferred option.

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: **Jill Bow**
 Service Area: **Adult Services**
 Date: **10th February 2023**

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

Residential Care Homes for older people.

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

The outcome of previous consultations and Cabinet decisions, and the further supporting information included in the report, have informed the proposals for the revised future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes. These proposals, which are in line with current policy direction and current and future need, are summarised below:

- Retaining the current service provision at five current Council care homes – Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.
- Providing a new accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy – this development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the health board. It would be located on land near Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is temporarily closed with no residents and would be permanently decommissioned.

- Providing a new accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale – this development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new facility is developed.
- Providing a new accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash – this development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new facility is developed.
- Remodelled accommodation to provide care for people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village – this would be achieved by redeveloping Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

In considering this proposal, the Council will need to meet its requirements under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Part 4 code of practice. In addition, all social care staff undertake Equality and Diversity training as part of the Social Care Wales Induction Framework.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required. Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people)	<p>Negative (in respect of immediate residents through the potential of being relocated to another home)</p> <p>Positive (future provision and state of the art facilities, better services and provision, more choice for older people, will effectively meet complexity of individual's needs).</p>	<p>The proposal will impact on older people as the care home provides primarily long-term accommodation for older people, including some people who have dementia.</p> <p>Residents and their families during previous consultations have raised concerns over the impact of moving to alternative accommodation will have. In particular, people are concerned that moving will cause stress and illness amongst residents, break the ties people have within the home and local community, and make it difficult for families and friends to continue to provide the support and care they do currently. We will ensure that the involvement and encouragement is embedded throughout the process and will ensure development of transitional plans for each resident.</p> <p>Adult Social Care will need to take the individual health and wellbeing of each resident, as well as</p>	<p>We have more recently successfully relocated 8 residents from Ystrad Fechan, 15 from Dan Y Mynydd and 10 from Bronllwyn to other Council care homes with no detrimental effect. We will draw on previous experience and utilise best practice to support this process</p> <p>Alzheimer's Association, Changing Care Providers (Accessed 17 December 2021)</p> <p>Achieving closure: good practice in supporting older people during residential care closures' Glasby, Jon; Robinson, Suzanne; Allen, Kerry (2011)</p> <p>At the time of writing, 14 residents will be affected by the proposal for Garth Olwg. Should the decision be agreed</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>the needs of families and carers, into account as part of its arrangements for supporting residents to move, should the proposals be agreed by Cabinet.</p> <p>We will assist in ensuring that the risks which can be associated with a move are kept to a minimum. This is based on thorough assessments, including risk to health and wellbeing, and ensuring that all factors are fully taken into account in the process of identifying where a resident moves to and ensuring the move itself is properly handled. (Alzheimer’s Association, Changing Care Providers December 2021), outlines processes and good practice examples to support the service to assist residents/relatives to relocate to an independent provider should they choose to do so.</p> <p>We will also follow best practice guidance (Achieving Closure: good practice in supporting older people during residential care closures 2011) and lessons learned from previous residents that have been relocated</p>	<p>by cabinet a further EIA will be undertaken to reflect the decision.</p> <p>Our service records indicate that a proportion of residents have some age-related needs. – Age profile of residents is 70 – 95 years of age.</p> <p>Previous consultations – Cabinet Report - Modernisation of Residential Care Services - September 2019</p> <p>New models of accommodation with care developed over recent years in the county borough have delivered positive outcomes for older people, including those with dementia and their carers and families.</p> <p>Strategy to modernise Accommodation options and deliver a programme of Extra Care housing (2016 – 2026)</p> <p>Residents are regularly assessed so that changing needs can be identified</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>To ensure continuity of care for residents, staff from current homes will help with the transition to minimise disruption faced by residents.</p> <p>However, there is a potential positive impact in the future. The proposed development of new accommodation with care, including extra care apartments and residential dementia provision in Treorchy, Mountain Ash and Ferndale will ensure, if agreed, that older people, including those with disabilities will have better quality care accommodation that is more suited to their individual needs and wishes; thereby improving the lives of adults that live in the accommodation. If these new developments are approved, they will have state of the art facilities and better services and provision of services for users. These new facilities will also mean a greater choice for older people needing to access the service and means that we will be able to meet the complexity of individual's needs.</p>	<p>- Social Workers with experience in moving residents would be involved in any change of home required.</p> <p>Extra care housing provides care and support for older and vulnerable people in settings and in ways that people say that they prefer.</p> <p>Provision of extra care housing is aimed at enabling vulnerable people to maintain their independence and ensures that a range of services are developed that meet the diverse needs of all communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p> <p>Investment and modernisation will support changes in the demographics of the elderly population, and will meet the needs of both frail and more active older people and provide accommodation to meet the aspirations of the current elderly community and of future generations</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p><u>Council's Residential Care Home Staff:</u></p> <p>The age profile of staff ranges from 18 to 70, around two thirds of staff are over 50 years of age.</p> <p>To mitigate any compulsory redundancies, opportunities for redeployment will be available and utilising the Council's Enhanced Voluntary Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for eligible staff, as part of on-going workforce planning arrangements.</p>	<p>To meet current and future demand the council has committed to the development of 320 units of extra care housing, we currently provide 140 units.</p> <p>68 staff will be potentially directly affected by this proposal.</p> <p>35 staff - Garth Olwg</p> <p>33 staff - Ystrad Fechan (the home has been temporarily closed since August 2022); all staff have been relocated to other in-house homes.</p> <p>Age profile of staff - 19 years – 70 years.</p> <p>Staffing profile from ITrent</p> <p>All staff affected by the proposal will be supported via the Management of Change protocol.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Disability (people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</p>	<p>Negative (in respect of immediate residents through the potential of being relocated to another home)</p> <p>Positive (future provision and state of the art facilities, better services and provision, more choice for older people, will effectively meet complexity of individual's needs).</p>	<p>The frail nature of many of the residents and the fact that a number also have dementia means that in terms of disability, the proposals could result in a negative impact in the immediate future for people affected who might be deemed to be disabled as well as elderly.</p> <p>Dementia can impact upon on a persons' capacity to make an informed decision about moving home, whether this is on a permanent or temporary basis and those who lack capacity to make this decision would need to be supported by relatives, people with power of attorney or independent advocates where required in accordance with mental capacity law. Some residents require support with their mobility and/or have sensory impairments.</p> <p>We will ensure that the involvement and engagement with families / carers is embedded throughout the process and will ensure the development of transitional plans for each resident to minimise disruption as much as possible.</p>	<p>Detailed assessments outline the needs of individuals - care and support plans are reviewed and assessment/care and support plans are updated to reflect these changes.</p> <p>This information is outlined at the assessment stage and care and support plans are subject to on-going review</p> <p>Previous consultations.</p> <p>New models of accommodation with care developed over recent years in the county borough have delivered positive outcomes for older people, including those with dementia and people with learning disabilities and their carers and families.</p> <p>An <u>Easy Read</u>, accessible format of the information booklet and questionnaire was created and supplied during the meetings. One resident with a learning disability</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>We will need to take the individual health and wellbeing of each resident, as well as the needs of families and carers, into account as part of its arrangements for supporting residents to move, if the proposals be agreed by Cabinet.</p> <p>Assessments will be completed; relatives and advocates will be consulted to ensure location and facilities of their choice meets their needs.</p> <p>We will assist in ensuring that the risks which can be associated with a move are kept to a minimum. This is based on thorough assessments, including risk to health and wellbeing, and ensuring that all factors are fully taken into account in the process of identifying where a resident moves to and ensuring the move itself is properly handled.</p> <p>We will also follow best practice guidance and lessons learned from previous residents that have been relocated.</p> <p>To ensure continuity of care for residents, staff from current homes will support the transition to minimise. disruption faced by residents.</p>	<p>accessed the Easy Read format to ensure full engagement in the process.</p> <p>Detailed pre-admission checklist has been developed and implemented to support assessment and admissions</p> <p>Residents have been able to step down from nursing placements to an extra care environment maximising their independence –</p> <p>Evidenced outlined in individuals’ case studies – Statutory Director’s Annual Report.</p> <p>Annual Review data / documentation.</p> <p>Learning Disability Needs Analysis Data</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>However, there is a potential positive impact in the future. The proposed development of new accommodation with care, including extra care apartments and residential dementia provision in Treorchy, Mountain Ash and Ferndale will ensure, if agreed, that older people, including those with disabilities will have better quality care accommodation that is more suited to their individual needs and wishes; thereby improving the lives of adults that live in the accommodation.</p> <p>In addition, the proposed development of Garth Olwg provides opportunity to support people with a learning disability to effectively meet their assessed needs and existing and future demand as more people are living longer, with increased complex care and support needs. If agreed, the redevelopment of Garth Olwg represents a significant positive step forward to achieving modern high quality care accommodation to people with learning disabilities.</p>	

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Gender Reassignment (anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)	Neutral (in respect of immediate residents) Positive (in respect of future provision and services)	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic. All social care staff undertake Equality and Diversity training as part of the Social Care Wales Induction Framework. The Service will liaise with the Council's EIA and Training Departments to ensure specific training and support on Gender Reassignment is available and accessible to staff	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Marriage / Civil Partnership (people who are married or in a civil partnership)	Neutral	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity (women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)	Neutral	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Race (ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)	Neutral	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic. Staff from ethnic minority groups cultural requirements are taken into consideration and are supported to maintain their religious and cultural beliefs.	The service employs staff from ethnic minority groups and will continue to support employment and admissions for individuals that share this characteristic. We currently employ 3 staff from ethnic minority groups
Religion or Belief (people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)	Neutral	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Sex (women and men, girls and boys)	Negative (in terms of immediate residents and staff due to potential of being relocated to another home) Positive (in terms of future provision and services).	Immediate impact may have more of an effect on women as there are more female residents than male. We will accommodate residents wishes / choice where possible by placing them on units with other residents of the same sex.	Female residents are more than men. Women are more prominent within care sector workforce

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Sexual Orientation (bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)	Neutral	<p>It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.</p> <p>The service has supported LGBTQ residents by providing appropriate/ private space and support for people to explore their sexual orientation</p> <p>https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/policybristol/briefings-and-reports-pdfs/2017-briefings--reports-pdfs/PolicyBristol_Briefing_November_2017_Inclusive_Care_Homes.pdf</p>	The service has a diverse makeup of staff, many of whom identify as LGB+. We will continue to support employment for people who share this characteristic.
Armed Forces Community (anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)	Positive (in respect of future provision and services and new residents)	Residents from this community are supported within extra care, where appropriate, and will be signposted to relevant services and events relating to the Armed Forces to enhance their wellbeing.	Armed Forces Veterans are supported within our extra care facility and the service will continue to support individuals that share this characteristic
Carers (anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)	Neutral	The proposal would have a neutral impact on carers, as the Council is continuing to provide accommodation with care to people with an assessed need. However, proposals may have an impact on carers in terms of ease of access to see a relative or friend if they move into another	Previous consultations New models of accommodation with care developed over recent years in the county borough have delivered

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		care home. Transport links to any alternative home and the ability of carers to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.	positive outcomes for older people, and their carers and families. There will be assessment of impact on carers during and following consultation stage.

If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

Not applicable

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes

No

Name: Jill Bow

Position: Head of Accommodation Services

Date: 10th February 2023

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services. Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single parents and vulnerable families • Pensioners • Looked after children • Homeless people • Students • Single adult households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living in the most deprived areas in Wales • People with low literacy and numeracy • People who have experienced the asylum system • People misusing substances • People of all ages leaving a care setting • People involved in the criminal justice system
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PLEASE NOTE: All individuals are means tested prior to admission. Most of our current residents' care costs are funded via this method.

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Neutral	<p>It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals.</p> <p>Transport links to any alternative home and the ability (including cost implications) of family and friends to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.</p>	<p>All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required.</p> <p>There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals. Transport links to any alternative home and the ability (including cost implications) of family and friends to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required. There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.
Material Deprivation <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals.	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required. There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.
Area Deprivation <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals. Transport links to any alternative home and the ability (including cost implications) of family and friends to	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required in line with fairer charging protocol.

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.	There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.
Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals.	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required. There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.
Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals. Transport links to any alternative home and the ability (including cost implications) of family and friends to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required. There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage. Reviewed data of family / friends contact/address details to ascertain suitable location of alternative accommodation in line with choice of home.

SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified.

The decisions taken by Cabinet will be communicated to all residents, their families, and staff. If a decision is taken to decommission one or more of the Council's care homes:

- Adult Services will initiate the Council's Care Home Closure Protocol in relation to each home, and decommissioning will be approached in a planned and carefully managed way, in line with national best practice guidance. This would include the involvement of residents, families, friends and staff from the Care Home.
- Adult Services will use its experience of supporting residents, their families and staff when individuals have needed to move to a new care setting, for example from a care home to a nursing home or where services have closed in the past.
- Residents and families will be at the centre of discussions.
- Staff in Adult Services will make themselves available to support families and care home residents to make informed decisions. This would take into account specific issues such as long standing friendships and transport links to any alternative home and the ability of carers to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process. Where appropriate other care professionals including health staff and GPs would be involved. Staff will also work closely with residents, their families and, if relevant, any new care providers; facilitating visits to potential new homes where appropriate and developing up to date relevant information to support a seamless transition
- Advocates will be arranged to support discussions were needed.
- Discussions and decisions will be overseen by an Officer Group that will ensure a person-centred approach is taken with residents, their families and advocates, if appropriate. Adult Services will also support people to move closer to their

families, including those who may wish to move outside of Rhondda Cynon Taf or would like to consider any of the new developments in extra care that are being supported by the Council.

Staff in the Council's care homes will also have dedicated Human Resources support allocated to minimise the impact of any decisions in line with the Council's Management of Change Policy. Adult Services will also work closely with Trade Unions.

4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

To be updated when redeployment opportunities have been identified and expressions of interest for Enhanced Voluntary Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy Scheme received.

4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

The outcome of previous consultations and Cabinet reports, together with supporting information from local adult social care records and analysis of previous and current service provision have informed the proposals. Along with National policy and national and local strategy developments.

4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

The Let's Talk public consultation conducted in part by the Council's Consultation Team took place from 12th December 2022 to 27th January 2023 in order obtain as many views as possible from interested stakeholders to enable the Cabinet to make informed decisions on the preferred options for each home.

Practice Solutions Ltd, Abercynon, were commissioned to undertake an independent consultation on the preferred options with residents and their families and staff from of the Council's residential care homes that are the subject of this report.

In addition, through co-production and support of Cwm Taf People First, 1 online information session and 15 in-person sessions were held across Rhondda Cynon Taff areas to gain views from people with a learning disability. Overall, there were a total of 74 easy read surveys completed.

Detailed information about the consultation and feedback received, including key themes on the preferred options for change are set out in the consultation reports.

The feedback received has been reviewed and analysed and can be summarised into the following key themes:

Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated. In addition, the consultation responses have not identified any other viable options the Council has not considered.

4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

Following the consultation, the impact assessment will be reviewed and Cabinet will receive further reports on the progress and outcomes of the implementation of the preferred options, if agreed.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

To be determined following Cabinet's final decision.

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

Director of Adult Services.

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

The results of the monitoring will be assessed to inform future reports to Cabinet regarding the implementation of the preferred options, if agreed and of ongoing care market analysis for adult social care across health and social care

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Diversity and Inclusion team – equality@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. See our guidance document for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in equality/Socio economic considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments

Diversity and Inclusion team Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
<p>The Residential Care consultation was conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from the 12th December 2022 and ended on the 27th January 2023.</p> <p>The consultation used an online and paper survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.</p>	<p>February 2023</p>	<p>The consultation has been appropriately publicised in order for anyone who wishes to have the opportunity to contribute.</p> <p>Following concerns raised from residents and relatives around relocating to another facility, we would use previous experience of managing home closures in line with best practice and implement a phased approach to closure so the service can focus and ensure the specific needs of our</p>

<p>A consultation booklet was provided to all care home residents and their relatives, which included the survey, and an easy read document.</p> <p>To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the Councils online consultation webpage to encourage engagement. An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.</p> <p>3 public drop-in sessions were also held.</p> <p>Overall, 255 survey responses and 7 emails were Received to the consultation, along with 1 call to the Customer services phone line and 2 petitions.</p> <p>Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 1, to retain the current service provision at the 5 current Council Care Homes (69.4%), with 62.9% of the public agreeing with option 1.</p> <p>Service response from both residents and relatives indicate a high level of concern and anxiety around having to move from their care home.</p> <p>Through coproduction and with the support of RCT People First, 1 online information session and 15 in person sessions were held across the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely areas to gain views from members of the public with a Learning Disability.</p>		<p>vulnerable residents are appropriately met. Residents would be supported to move by people they know eg staff in the care homes and families.</p> <p>This approach will be in accordance with the implementation plan that will be developed following the cabinet decision</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the need for increased dementia beds within the Ferndale proposal, but this will be in line with current trends and future demand.</p> <p>Involvement and engagement with residents, staff and families regarding the outcome of the consultation.</p> <p>On-going engagement with residents, families and staff will be undertaken via quarterly Regulation 73 visits to all our registered care home establishments.</p> <p>Implementation of a transitional plan.</p> <p>.</p>
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Overall, there were a total of 74 Easy Read surveys completed.

A common theme throughout the analysis were views relating to Garth Olwg residential care home and disagreement with that proposal (proposal 5), with suggestions that the home should be kept and improved.

Continuity of care has been a pertinent theme so far during the consultations, residents would like staff to accompany them when moving homes – families also think this is important

Concerns were raised regarding what will happen to the staff following Garth Olwg's proposed closure. Further comments were raised regarding care workers being undervalued nationally

Concerns were raised on the impact the closure would have on the residents as well as the local community. However, they agreed that modern facilities need to be built which will meet the care needs of the public in the future, including both Extra Care provision and accommodation with care for those with a learning disability

Overall, there was general support for the proposals outlined for Ferndale. Reassurance was provided to those in attendance that Ferndale House would be decommissioned when the new facility is developed. Those in attendance provided concern

<p>for current staff at the home regarding how they would be impacted by these proposals and the role of the housing association. They also felt that the proposed ratio for dementia residents needs to be increased and incorporated in the new proposal.</p> <p>Overall, 46.5% of residents agree with option 4, with 30% disagreeing and 23.5% stated that they didn't know".</p> <p>There was also continued praise and recognition to our care home management and staff team for the excellent quality of care provided within the Council's residential care homes.</p> <p>Putting the well-being of current care home residents and their families at the centre of the modernisation process was seen as essential</p> <p>People were especially anxious about how Council decisions would be implemented, especially during any the period of transition. They wanted any decisions to be accompanied by commitments to ensuring that safeguards would be in place, including prompt assessments of need, choice of placements, dignified and timely transfers, top ups where necessary and full involvement by staff in the homes.</p> <p>There was appreciation for local investment, modernisation, and purpose-built schemes for individuals, was expressed during the consultations.</p>		
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<p>This is evidenced in the minutes from the meetings held with families, residents, and staff.</p> <p>Staff emphasised that they needed stability within their working environment as there had been previous consultations over a significant period of time and they felt it was pivotal that a decision on the proposals needed to be verified.</p>		
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations

SECTION 7 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the equality and socio-economic impact section of the Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

The Council will take account of the challenges which the people affected by the proposals in this report face, ensuring that the impact of any changes is mitigated as detailed in the impact assessment, if they are to be implemented. Due to the nature of the people group, there would be a disproportionate impact on older people and people with a range of disabilities. The key potential impacts of the preferred options on people with protected characteristics particularly older people and carers are set out in the EIA. Alongside these, a number of mitigating actions have been proposed.

SECTION 8 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Jill Bow

Position: Head of Accommodation Services

Date: 10th February 2023

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name: Neil Elliott

Position: Director Adult Services

Date: 16th February 2023

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.

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WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

Stage 1 – Information Gathering	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name:	Modernisation of the Council’s Residential Care Homes
Department	Adult Social Services
Service Director	Neil Elliott
Officer Completing the WLIA	Jill Bow
Email	Jill.bow@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	07786523926
Brief Description	<p>New proposals to invest in new modern care accommodation.</p> <p>These proposals build on the already significant investment in care accommodation by this Council over recent years, will continue to provide access to local Council-led provision, while also addressing the longstanding oversupply of resident care provision and focussing on current and future demand needs by creating more modern care accommodation for people, which offers increased choice and independence in their local communities.</p> <p>Proposals are as follows:</p> <p>Retaining current service provision at five Council care homes – Clydach Court, Pentre House, Tegfan, Cae Glas and Parc Newydd.</p>

	<p>Providing a new extra care and residential dementia accommodation in Treorchy. Ystrad Fechan Care Home, which is currently temporarily closed is recommended to be permanently decommissioned.</p> <p>Providing a new extra care and residential dementia accommodation in Ferndale. Ferndale House Care Home would be decommissioned when this new accommodation is built.</p> <p>Providing a new extra care and residential dementia accommodation in Mountain Ash. Troedyrhiw Care Home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is built.</p> <p>Providing a new supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities in Church Village, by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home and would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.</p>
Date	February 2023
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Current and future service users Service user family, carers and friends Employees

What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	<p>The aim of the proposal is to consult with residents, staff and families around potential future changes to current service delivery as part of the moderation of the Council's residential care home provision.</p> <p>The Consultation process will engage with residents, families, employees and the wider community, and will be undertaken in both Welsh and English and in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.</p>
Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.	Welsh language groups such as service users, employees and the wider community will continue to be able to contact the Council in the Welsh language, if they choose to do so, as this will provide continuity of service delivery. All documentation relevant to the proposed service change will be available bilingual formats

<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>The 2011 census indicated that of the 225,555 residents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf, 12.3% (27,779) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 87.6% (197,776) were not able to speak Welsh. This can be compared to the All-Wales figures that showed, of the 2,955,841 residents living in Wales, 19.0% (562,016) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 81.0% (2,393,825) were not able to speak Welsh.</p> <p>Mwy Na Geiriau 2022 -2027 ('More than Just Words') is the Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care. The aim of the framework is to ensure that organisations recognise that language is an intrinsic part of people's care and the offer of Welsh language services to people is so important. Ensuring positive well-being outcomes for individuals, is something which underpins the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. The Codes of Practice under the Act require local authorities to ensure Welsh language services are built into service planning and delivery and that services are offered in Welsh, to Welsh speakers, without them having to request it as required by the 'Active</p> <p>Legislation and policy in Wales require that Welsh language services in social care are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the same standard and are as easily and promptly available as English medium services • As wide-ranging and thorough • Organisations shouldn't assume English as the default languages when providing their services • Welsh speakers should not be required to ask for a service in Welsh.
<p>Other relevant data or research</p>	<p>Recently released 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show that the anticipated increase in Welsh speakers across Wales as a whole has not been realised. The all-Wales figured showed a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers to 17.8% percent. There was a small increase in RCT, however – the percentage of our population who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%, and we saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough (from 27779 to 28556).</p> <p>RCT was also one of only for LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tudful, all neighbouring county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider how it may impact the services we provide.”</p>

Breakdown of Welsh speaking residents and staff situated within the Council's residential care homes:

Garth Olwg - Residents 2– staff 0
Pentre House - Residents 1 - staff 3
Parc Newydd - Residents 0 - staff 2
Caeglas - Residents 0 - staff 2
Clydach Court - Residents 0 - staff 2
Ferndale House - Residents 0 - staff 3
Troedyrhiw House - Residents 0 - staff 1
Tegfan - Residents 0 - staff 4

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Previous Welsh Language Impact Assessments can be found on Inform by [clicking here](#).

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The proposal will have a positive impact on service users, staff and the wider community, to use the Welsh language, if Cabinet approve the proposal for the modernisation of the Council's residential care home services.</p> <p>Existing and new staff are being encouraged to begin Welsh language lessons and continue on their language journey. Six staff have recently completed The Welsh Language Level 1 training as part of the Social Care Wales Induction Framework for social care workers.</p> <p>Recruit Welsh speakers to increase face-to-face Welsh language service provision</p>	<p>Welsh language Level 1 skills / training forms part of the Social Care Wales Induction Framework and is also incorporated into the Social Care Wales registration process. (All social care staff must complete the above as part of their registration process, this also applies to staff working for private sector organisations).</p> <p>The service has recently recruited another Welsh speaking social care worker who will be based in Tegfan residential care home - this appointment will increase the number of Welsh speaking staff based within the home (as outlined in the data section).</p>	<p>To actively offer Welsh language services to ensure that people's needs are understood and met, and those who access and work in residential care home services can rely on being treated with dignity and respect they deserve. As outlined in Mwy Na Geiriau 2022-2027 ('More than Just Words') is the Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health and social care.</p>

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g. Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative / Positive</p>	<p>The proposal would have a neutral impact on the numbers and/or percentages of Welsh speakers with service users, employees, and the wider community.</p> <p>Garth Olwg Care Home is based in the most “Welsh-speaking” area of the County Borough, and, if Cabinet agree to decommission it as a care home, this could potentially have negative impact on people’s ability to receive care in an area where Welsh Language is more prevalent than others. However, in adult services we are committed as a care service to providing the Welsh language “Active Offer” irrespective of individual service location in line with Mwy Na Geiriau 2022-2027</p>	<p>All new staff who don’t already meet Level 1 Welsh requirements undertake online Level 1 training, (2-hour online course). This process is incorporated into our Employee Induction Framework.</p> <p>Welsh speaking residents and staff will also be able to access all consultation documentation in the Language of Welsh.</p> <p>Welsh speaking residents and staff will have the option of the resident’s/staff consultation meeting being discussed with them in the medium of Welsh</p> <p>RCTs 5-year strategy requires the Council to increase Welsh language skills of our workforce. In addition, the Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050</p>	<p>Staff training to enhance learners’ bilingual skills</p> <p>Work with the relevant departments/ services to Provide online course for beginners that’s tailored to those working in care</p> <p>Advise residents of the homes that have Welsh speaking staff, so they have an opportunity to converse in the medium of Welsh if they choose to do so.</p> <p>Utilise our pre-admission checklist for the relocation of residents as this will highlight residents Welsh language preference.</p>

		<p>('More than Just Words'), Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.</p> <p>If agreed, the decommissioning of Garth Olwg Care Home will directly impact two Welsh-speaking residents who reside there (amongst other residents), who would be required to move, possibly to different settings where they would no longer have the opportunity to speak Welsh with other residents as they do with each other at present. Although there are possible negative impacts that need to be acknowledged, it should also be noted that Garth Olwg currently has no Welsh-speaking staff who can converse fluently with these residents, whilst other settings across the County Borough do employ Welsh-speakers at this time. Short of ensuring Welsh-speaking staffing capacity at Garth Olwg in the interim period, moving from Garth Olwg could possibly have positive impacts</p>	<p>strategy wants a million Welsh Speakers by 2050.</p> <p>The service currently has 17 staff and 2 service users who can communicate in Welsh.</p>	<p>Recruiting Welsh speakers will contribute to creating this environment and would increase opportunities to use the Welsh language.</p>
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		<p>in the longer term for these Welsh-speaking</p> <p>Staff are actively encouraged and supported to learn Welsh and speak Welsh in work.</p> <p>Welsh language preference has been incorporated into our pre-admission checklist for individuals' who access the service.</p> <p>All staff records include details of language preference.</p> <p>Care Inspectorate Wales Care Home Inspection reports are available bilingually.</p>		
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	Positive	<p>The proposal will have a positive effect on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p>Legislation places a duty on Council's to consider the Welsh language in accessing, commissioning, and delivering care to individuals in order to ensure that they experience the best possible outcomes.</p>	<p>Consultation documentation is published in hard copy and online in both Welsh and English and includes a response proforma to enable collection of the views of stakeholders.</p> <p>All Council residential care homes are named in Welsh</p> <p>All communication is bilingual. Enquiries / comments/ complaints, emails /out of office notifications are bilingual, and if</p>	<p>Service users, staff and the wider community will be able to use the Welsh language, when they are given the opportunity to express their views on the proposal during the consultation process.</p> <p>Supporting access to Welsh language for service users/staff via radio, television, and books.</p>

		Welsh language preference has been incorporated into our pre-admission checklist for individuals' who access the service	Welsh is the preferred language, they will be responded to in Welsh.	<p>Review promotional materials when consulting with residents in order to ensure compliance with Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>Service to explore opportunities to deliver Welsh medium activities in our care home settings</p>
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards e.g. increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services through</p>	Positive	<p>Continue to monitor and improve systems in place to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p>Welsh Language is embedded into the Social Care Wales</p>	The consultation process will follow the Welsh Language standards as will all correspondence with service users and staff.	The service supports Welsh speaking staff to communicate with Welsh speaking residents and colleagues in their preferred language.

<p>the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>		<p>Induction Framework – staff wellbeing meetings form an integral part of this framework.</p>	<p>Job descriptions / advertisements are presented in a bilingual format.</p> <p>Social care staff participate in the Welsh language training sessions in line with the SCW Induction Framework</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to greet service users in Welsh and use the Welsh Language in work.</p>	
<p>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>All service communications, whether via letter, website or telephony is bilingual, with Welsh text first or to the left of English text - this will remove the risk of isolating individuals who communicate in Welsh by failing to provide services in their preferred language.</p>	<p>Promotional materials, website, and all subsequent correspondence available bilingually.</p> <p>Signage throughout all our residential care homes is displayed bilingually</p>	<p>Ensure greater consistency in terms of the Welsh language services on offer and improve their quality across the service. All residential care home services have been provided with laptops, the service will utilise this technology to promote and deliver Welsh language sessions to staff, this will enable them to access the training in a more flexible and convenient means.</p> <p>Promote Welsh speaking staff via our rolling advertisement for casual social care staff.</p>

Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
All residential care home services have been provided with laptops, the service will utilise this technology to promote and deliver Welsh language sessions to staff, this will enable them to access the training in a more flexible and convenient means.	On-going	Head of Service
The service will continue to promote Welsh speaking staff via our rolling advertisement for casual social care staff	On-going	Care Home Registered Manager/s

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.

What was identified?	Why is it not possible?

Stage 4 – Review

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services – welshlanguageofficer@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed (Stage 1>6) impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments.

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<p>Welsh Language Services welcome the attention paid here to matters regarding recruitment and training of Welsh speakers relating to these proposals. We would, however, like to see more attention paid to how these proposals will make it possible to recruit more Welsh speakers to ensure an active offer of care in Welsh can be made, and care received in the language of the service user's choice.</p> <p>We would also like to see an acknowledgement of the potential negative impact the closure of Garth Olwg may have on residents ability to receive care within a community where the Welsh language is more prevalent than others within the County Borough, and what will be</p>	February 2023	<p>The service will continue to promote Welsh speaking staff via our rolling advertisement for casual social care staff</p> <p>Welsh language preference has been incorporated into our pre-admission checklist for individuals' who access the service</p> <p>Service to explore opportunities to deliver Welsh medium activities in our care home settings</p> <p>There are currently two Welsh speaking residents that reside at Garth Olwg and this is the only home that does not have any Welsh speaking staff. To promote the Welsh language within our service we can offer the residents relocation to homes of their</p>

<p>done to ensure other Council-run services, and privately commissioned services, can offer activities etc in Welsh to mitigate against any potential negative impact.</p> <p>Some detailed data about Welsh - speaking staff, service users and their families may help demonstrate how Welsh language services can be provided elsewhere to mitigate against any negative impacts too.</p>		<p>choice and homes that employ Welsh speaking staff, providing residents and staff with the opportunity of conversing in the medium of Welsh. In addition to this, Welsh speaking residents and staff will also be able to access all consultation documentation in the Language of Welsh.</p> <p>Welsh speaking residents and staff will also have the option of the resident's/staff consultation meeting being discussed with them in the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Expanded on the legislative requirements of the Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.</p>
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
<p>1. Include the following note regarding Welsh Language figures from 2021 Census:</p> <p>“Updated following review panel on 16.02.23 to reflect 2021 Census figures:</p> <p>Recently released 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show that the anticipated increase in Welsh speakers across Wales as a whole has not been realised. The all-Wales figured showed a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers to 17.8% percent. There was a small increase in RCT, however – the percentage of our population who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%, and we saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough (from 27779 to 28556).</p>	<p>February 2023</p>	<p>All comments made at the review panel have been actioned</p>

<p>RCT was also one of only for LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tudful, all neighbouring county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider how it may impact the services we provide.”</p> <p>2. Update Cabinet report to include reference to WLIA at 2.1 and 4.8.2</p> <p>3. Update Cabinet report (9.2) and Stage 6 of WLIA to include acknowledgement of negative impact identified in WLIA, whilst also demonstrating longer term positive effects/mitigations in place to turn help ensure a more positive outcome.</p>		
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
<p>The Residential Care consultation was conducted in-house</p> <p>The consultation period ran from the 12th December 2022 and ended on the 27th January 2023.</p> <p>The consultation used an online and paper survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.</p>	<p>February 2023</p>	<p>The consultation has been appropriately publicised in order for anyone who wishes to have the opportunity to contribute – all consultation documentation was available bilingually.</p> <p>We have 3 Welsh speaking staff employed at Pentre House and had Welsh speakers present in all the consultation events.</p> <p>The Welsh speaking staff member attended the residents meeting at Pentre House and. communicated with the resident in the medium of Welsh.</p>

A consultation booklet was provided to all care home residents and their relatives, which included the survey, and an easy read document.

To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the Councils online consultation webpage to encourage engagement. An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.

3 public drop-in sessions were also held.

The majority of comments received stated that there would be no impact on the Welsh Language.

One resident (Pentre House) noted there were no staff in the care home that she could communicate with fluently in Welsh (her first language). However, staff do make a conscious effort to use Welsh phrases and sayings to engage with her and this is much appreciated.”

Other comments received from the survey analysis in relation to the Welsh Language

Language is irrelevant but good care isn't!

The council should ensure that the care provision is provided using both Welsh and English, according to the resident's preferences. Staff should receive appropriate training in both languages, signage should be bilingual and there should be no discrimination according to language in treatment or care, and staffing should be arranged so that there should always be a Welsh speaker working.

Wales should make the language compulsory in all departments and general use. It should be the main language taught in schools. English to be taught as secondary.

Where possible residents should have the opportunity to speak in their preferred language.

I am Welsh speaking and an advocate for keeping the language alive.

WELSH LANGUAGE SERVICES RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION.

We appreciate that Welsh speaking staff were in attendance throughout the consultation events and were able to converse with residents and other potential affected parties in Welsh. This is really good practice and we're sure it was appreciated by Welsh-speaking service users.

The comments from the consultation, such as those listed above, are addressed within the evidence provided and the mitigations noted in the Welsh Language impact assessment – e.g. the importance of language choice in ensuring the quality of care, and the availability of Welsh speaking staff and the need to increase numbers of Welsh-speaking staff where possible.

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

If agreed, actions related to the implementation of the proposals will be monitored through the Service's Delivery Plan in line with the Council's Performance Management Framework. This will include the actions identified in Stage 3 'Strengthening the proposal'.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the impact assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts. This summary must be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. It is not suitable to only write 'please see full report at Appendix x' in the body of the report. The impact assessment must be published alongside the report.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows:

A possible negative impact on the Welsh language was identified in Stage 2 of the WLIA, as the closure of Garth Olwg Care Home will directly impact two Welsh-speaking residents who reside there (amongst other residents), who would be required to move, possibly to different settings where they would no longer have the opportunity to speak Welsh with other residents as they do with each other at present.

Whilst there is possible negative impact that needs to be acknowledged, it should also be noted that Garth Olwg currently has no Welsh-speaking staff who can converse fluently with these residents, whilst other settings across the County Borough do employ Welsh-speakers at this time. Short of ensuring Welsh-speaking staffing capacity at Garth Olwg in the interim period, moving from Garth Olwg could possibly have positive impacts in the longer term for these Welsh-speaking residents, were they to move to another setting where Welsh-speaking staff are employed.

If agreed, all recommended proposals will comply with Mwy Na Geiriau 2022-2027 ('More than Just Words'), Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.

Stage 7 – Sign Off			
Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Jill Bow	Service Director Name:	Neil Elliott
Position	Head of Accommodation Services	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature	<i>J Bow</i>	Service Director Signature	
Date	10/02/2023	Date	16 th February 2023

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: RESIDENTIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY 2022-2027

REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH COUNCILLOR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Author: Annabel Lloyd, Director of Children's Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1 provide information about children's services plans for developing residential care services in line with the Council's duties, and in the context of the Welsh Government Policy ambition to remove profit from the provision of care for looked after young people, and
- 1.2 Seek Cabinet's agreement to approve and adopt the proposed Looked After Children: Residential Care Transformation Strategy 2022-2027 - Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the information contained within the report;
- 2.2 Note the comments and observations of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, following pre-scrutiny of the proposed Strategy on the 28th November 2022; and
- 2.3 Agrees to adopt the Looked After Children: Residential Care Transformation Strategy 2022-2027

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Children's Services is seeking endorsement of the overall strategy, and the proposal to implement the action plan that will see the Council move to a

not for profit model of provision of residential care that is close to home by 1st April 2027.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In all cases, the Council supports families to look after children at home, with support where necessary. In January 2022, the Cabinet approved the Council's looked after prevention strategy that sets out its commitment to family support, and making sure that only those children for whom there is no safe alternative, become looked after.
- 4.2 When children become looked after, care by relatives or connected people is always our first option, and foster care where that is not achievable. Some children's needs cannot be met by substitute family care or foster care, and they will need to be looked after in residential care. This strategy, and its related action plan set out the intention to deliver an unprecedented change of strategic direction in relation to children's residential services.
- 4.3 Residential services are an essential element of the portfolio of provision that is required to meet the Council's statutory obligations to looked after children. It has been increasingly evident over recent years that the largely outsourced residential provision has struggled to supply services to meet the changing needs of our looked after young people, and commissioning systems have not entirely had the desired impact.
- 4.4 In 2022 Welsh Government began to implement a policy to eliminate private profit making from the provision of care. There is consequently an urgent imperative on all local authorities to plan for this transformation ahead of 1st April 2027 when it is proposed that all providers will have transitioned to a not for profit status.
- 4.5 Children's Services has taken a sector-leading needs-led approach to the identification of the types of residential provision that will be required to meet the needs of children and in the future.
- 4.6 The vision for this strategy is that by 1st April 2027, all Rhondda Cynon Taf young people who need residential care are looked after close to home in high quality settings where they can thrive, and that they are looked after by a stable, resilient, skillful and well supported staff group.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 An equality and diversity assessment has been carried out and has identified positive and neutral impact, no negative impacts were identified.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Welsh language assessment has been carried out and has identified positive and neutral impact, no negative impacts were identified.

7. CURRENT SITUATION

- 7.1 This table provides a breakdown of placement type as at 15th October 2022

Placement Type	15/10/2022	%
Foster Care - Independent Sector	109	17%
Foster Care – Local Authority Foster Carers	157	25%
Relative Foster Carers	215	34%
Placed For Adoption	15	2%
Placed With Parents	70	11%
Residential Care Independent Sector	49	8%
Residential Care provided by the Council	11	2%
Educational Accommodation	1	0.2%
Supported Lodgings	7	1.1%
Parent & Child Foster Placement	4	0.6%
Parent & Child Unit	1	0.2%
Youth Offending Institute	1	0.2%
Total	640	

- 7.2 At present there is a mixed commissioning and local authority provision model, and most children who need residential care are living out of county. The Council provides 5 registered children's homes of its own as below, and one setting is available for emergency accommodation that will be refurbished in preparation for registration of a 3 bedded children's home that will be available in Quarter 3 of 2023/24.

- Beddau – approved for 4 children
- Bryndar – approved for 5 children
- Nantgwyn – approved for short breaks for children with a disability who live at home
- Cairn Ingli – approved for 2 young people for 12 weeks for assessment
- Brynna – solo (newly registered 2022)

- 7.3 The increasing demand, juxtaposed with the increasing scarcity of registered children's homes has led to a risk of the Council being unable to avoid reliance upon settings that are recorded as Operating Without Registration (OWR) by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW). This happens where a placement is required but there is not one available

due to scarcity of supply. The matter is included in the Council's risk register. Every effort is made to avoid reliance on OWR. At the time of writing this report, there were 5 such arrangements, and in each situation there is a plan to move respective young people onto registered settings as a matter of urgency.

By the time of there being no alternative to setting up OWR arrangements, officers have carried out extensive searches for suitable registered placements (often 100+), and safe alternatives with family alongside extensive support is always considered as a possibility to avoid OWR. OWR involves staff caring for a child in an address that is not a registered children's home. In the event that OWR cannot be avoided, young peoples' safety and well-being is always the priority, and the setting is carefully risk managed and run in every way as if it were a children's home with enhanced monitoring of safety and quality of care as well as reporting to the Director of Children's Services and CIW on a weekly basis. In each case the OWR arrangement is minimised to the shortest period necessary to identify a suitable registered placement, and can include the Council deciding to register a specific setting for a young person where searches for a suitable placement remain fruitless over a period. This can be a period that is anything between days or a small number of weeks. There are currently 2 of the 5 young people in an OWR placement for whom the Council needs to develop bespoke registered settings, the lead in time for registration will take longer, and up to several months. Both the relevant Cabinet Member and the Corporate Parenting Board will receive more regular detailed reporting in relation to OWR and how the Council is addressing the issues relating to it.

- 7.4 Also included in the Council's risk register is the current challenge in relation to workforce, and recruitment of suitable staff in residential care continues to be a barrier that is being addressed, with some difficulty, via the workforce strategy.

8. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

- 8.1 A multi-disciplinary residential steering group was established to guide the work and develop this strategy in 2021/22. Representation was drawn from children's services, education, regional partnership board, housing, and adult services. The background work involved evaluating the evidence of need by carrying out a literature review, secondary data and financial analysis, alongside deployment of an evidence based needs analysis tool (The BERRI (www.berri.org.uk) to assist in mapping future need. There was also engagement with staff in meetings and discussions with multiple stakeholders.
- 8.2 The results of this work concluded that there are benefits to rethinking the use of residential care and developing more children's homes. The opportunity to create the range of needs-led homes required will be different than can be achieved by market-based commissioning which is dictated by provider availability. The number of homes Rhondda Cynon

Taf has of its own will need to increase, and children’s services will need to develop its not for profit commissioning capability whilst managing the meanwhile risks of a contracting availability, and supporting those young people who are presently in independent provisions. There is considerable uncertainty about the transition arrangements for existing for profit provisions, and what regional or national not for profit collaborations might fill the gap. These developments will need to happen over a number of years in a planned sequence, and will need close financial and operational management.

8.3 The evaluation work led to the development of a schedule of future residential needs which is summarised below in 6.4. There are 3 subgroups reporting to the steering group that are responsible for coordinating the significant work that is required with input across the Council and partnership landscape. The subgroups themes are:

- Workforce
- Estates and Finance
- 16+ yrs Accommodation

8.4 In the case of each of the settings identified below there will be a business case that addresses the detailed evidence of need, the funding source and the provision of information to any ward member in relation to any sites that have been identified. This process is noted in 2.1 of the action plan accompanying the strategy document, and the format for this has been agreed.

9. OUTLINE SCHEDULE OF RESIDENTIAL CARE NEEDS

9.1 The schedule of need is broken down into 2 areas (i) those provisions that need to be available in the next 4 years, and ahead of at April 2027, and (ii) those provisions that will require longer term development and take account of the changing environment and review of the strategy planned for 2026-7, and evaluation of the changing transition environment and firm legislative intent at that time.

9.2 The prioritisation of developing new settings will be determined by the steering group in conjunction with the estates and finance sub group bearing in mind the urgency of emerging need, the availability of sites, staff and funding.

Area of Need	Provision Type	Number of young people in setting
(i) Emergency Accommodation – Same Day	De-escalation, reduce anxiety, stabilise whilst searching for suitable homes. Likely, but not always to be for boys	3 or 4 young people
(i) Complex Needs	Regional provision.	3 or 4 young people

	<p>Integrated Health, Education and Social Care led by Regional Partnership Board (RPB). Secure or in patient avoidance for children with the most complex care and support needs.</p> <p>An RPB work stream has been established.</p>	
(i)Carn Ingli II	Trauma informed approach – seek to assess and step down to home, relatives or most suitable care setting - 12 weeks period of accommodation.	2 or 3 young people
(i)Therapeutic Homes x2	Mid – Long term therapeutic provision, move on from Carn Ingli for those who cannot return home or to relatives. Likely one for girls with focus on recovering from exploitation and one for boys. This is a new model of care for RCT.	2 settings for 4 young people
(i)Beddau / Bryndar x 2	Family style approach to care for children with mid – long term needs; transition to reunification with family or supported living as an adult	2 settings for 4 young people
(i)Children with Disabilities *	Increased short breaks and 2 beds for 52 weeks placements.	12 + short breaks and 2 long term
(i)Transition to adulthood – (complex needs)	Joint work with adults services for young people who will have care and support needs in adult services.	3 young people
(i)Fostering Well-being	A new model that will require evidence based scoping of care for young people who need foster care but for whom a foster family cannot be identified.	To be confirmed
(ii) Co-located accommodation at Special School	Increased short breaks and 2 beds for 52 weeks placements (Provision * may be stood down for this to be made available).	To be confirmed
(ii) Specialist ASD	Integrated health and social care	To be confirmed

	Those ASD young people with most complex needs.	
(ii) Parent and Child	Regional : 12-15 weeks to assess risk and develop attachment / parenting. Inform decision about future support to family or whether baby / children should become looked after.	To be confirmed

10. MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY AND ITS ACTION PLAN

- 10.1 The performance measures for the strategy are included in the accompanying strategy document at page 21. Delivery against this strategy and its action plan will be monitored by the Residential Transformation Steering Group. The impact of this work, and the need for a future strategy and action plan will be reviewed in 2026/7 ahead of the implementation of the legislative intention.
- 10.2 An annual report will be provided to Corporate Parenting Board and the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

11. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 11.1 Consultation with stakeholders is noted above. Young people are clear about the benefits of RCT provided residential care, and their voices are regularly noted in Regulation 73 reports to Corporate Parenting Board. Young people will be involved in as many aspects of design as possible.
- 11.2 The proposed strategy was pre-scrutinised by the [Community Services Scrutiny Community](#) in November 2022.

12. PRE-SCRUTINY OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES RESIDENTIAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

- 12.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee met on the [28th November 2022](#), to consider pre scrutiny of the Children's Services Residential Transformation Strategy.
- 12.2 Members acknowledged the considerable uncertainty around providers continuing with a not-for-profit model of delivery by 2027 and wanted reassurance that, if some for-profit organisations, exited the sector, specific provisions were still in place for children and young people to be taken care of.
- 12.3 Members recognised the legislative intention in the drive to take profit out of the equation but raised concerns that this would have unintended consequences and cut across the drive, to reduce the number of residencies out of county.

- 12.4 Members felt that it was important for Young People not to be living in bed and breakfast accommodation, whilst acknowledging there were no RCT under 18-year-olds in such accommodation.
- 12.5 Whilst recognising the shortfalls in the market provision and there were certain exceptions, Members felt it was important for Young People to be reasonably placed, rather than out of county.
- 12.6 Members felt it was important to consider the appropriate provision, in the right place, acknowledging the need to increase capacity, closer to home, with a sense of urgency

13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 13.1 This is a difficult to control area of budget with increasing costs in association with the national minimum wage, the cost of living, inflation, and the impact of instability and increasing demand leading to increasing costs.
- 13.2 In order to achieve the ambition, the following cost areas have been identified:
- **Capital:** Development of the new sites to the standards required for registration with CIW
 - **Revenue (Infrastructure):** Staffing and expertise to develop the provisions, some of this will be time limited, but the need for focus on quality outcomes and compliance with RISCA (Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act (Wales) 2016) will have longstanding financial impact.
 - **Revenue:** Running costs of each new provision as it is developed
- 13.3 An outline assessment of the likely capital and revenue costs over 3 years has been carried out in preparation for the submission of a £17.1 million funding proposal to Welsh Government under the Eliminate and Change funding. At the time of writing a decision is awaited.
- 13.4 An application has been made and agreed in principle for a capital grant under the Housing with Care fund via RPB for investment before 31st March 2023, and subsequent applications may be made.
- 13.5 A Regional Integration Fund application for staffing to embed trauma informed practice has been made, but is unlikely to be forthcoming in the current context.
- 13.6 As highlighted above a business case format for each individual setting and investment has been agreed. This is the method for assessing the capital and revenue impact of each setting for the Mid Term Financial

Plan. Final decision making lies with Group Directors for Finance and Social Services in consultation with Cabinet Members.

14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 14.1 This report and the related strategy is specifically concerned with s.75 of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014, and the duty to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children in relation to residential care.
- 14.2 The role of a corporate parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children.
- 14.3 The registration of Social Care and Inspection (Wales) Act 2016 sets out duties in relation to the registration and regulation of children's homes, and Section 5 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 states it is an offence to provide a regulated service or services in Wales without being registered to do so. It is in relation to this breach of law that the Council provides weekly OWR reports to CIW, seeking to ensure that young people are placed in suitable registered provision as soon as possible where OWR has become unavoidable.

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

- 15.1 This provision also supports the Council to contribute to all of the seven well-being goals:-
- **A prosperous Wales:** children who receive the right care and support are better prepared for adulthood and achieving prosperous futures.
 - **A resilient Wales:** children who are given every opportunity to meet their developmental milestones and overcome barriers to developing skills are prepared with the space to grow and the tools to build resilience throughout life.
 - **A healthier Wales:** access to high quality local services supports children to meet their developmental milestones and develop social skills, enhancing their emotional wellbeing.
 - **A more equal Wales:** by delivering a full range of residential care provision in all localities to meet the needs of children and parents ensures that children and families have access to high quality childcare irrespective of where they live.
 - **A Wales of cohesive Communities:** access to services that are not restricted to particular communities promotes equality and harmony across communities and the means to share community resources in order to be responsive to need and build resilience.

- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:** children who are given the potential to thrive learn to be tolerant and accepting, preparing them for a multi-racial, globalised adult world.
- **A globally responsible Wales:** children who have access to high quality care and support are afforded experiences that prepare them to be globally responsible.

16. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 16.1 The document is strategic and is applicable to all electoral wards and residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

17. CONCLUSION

- 17.1 The Council has a duty to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children under s.75 of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014.
- 17.2 Current arrangements do not entirely meet need, and will need to change in line with the proposal to legislate to remove profit.
- 17.3 The Strategy to Transform Residential Care that has been prepared with a view to ensuring that young people who need residential care are looked after close to home in high quality settings where they can thrive, and that they are looked after by a stable, resilient, skillful and well supported staff group.
- 17.4 The Pre-Scrutiny process has recommended that the Strategy be presented to Cabinet for approval.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: RESIDENTIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION
STRATEGY 2022-2027**

**REPORT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER
FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

Background papers

None.

OFFICER TO CONTACT: Annabel Lloyd, Director of Children's Services

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**Rhondda Cynon Taf
County Borough Council**

**Looked After Children: Residential Care Transformation
Strategy 2022-2027**

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Executive Summary

In all cases, the Council supports families to look after their children at home, with support where necessary. In January 2022, the Cabinet approved the Council's looked after prevention strategy that sets out its commitment to family support, and making sure that only those children for whom there is no safe alternative, become looked after.

When children become looked after, care by relatives or connected people is always our first option, and foster care where that is not achievable. Some children's needs cannot be met by substitute family care or foster care, and they will need to be looked after in residential care. This report, and its related action plan set out the intention to deliver an unprecedented change of strategic direction in relation to children's residential services.

Residential services are an essential element of the portfolio of provision that is required to meet the Council's statutory obligations to looked after children. It has been increasingly evident over recent years that the largely outsourced provision (85%) has struggled to supply services to meet the changing needs of our looked after young people, and commissioning systems have not entirely had the desired impact.

In 2022 Welsh Government began to implement a policy to eliminate private profit making from children's services, with residential services a central target. There is an urgent imperative on all local authorities to plan for this transformation that is intended to be fully implemented by 2026/27.

RCT has taken a sector-leading needs-led approach to identification of the types of residential provision that will be required to meet the needs of children both now, and in the future. This report sets out that work and its conclusions.

The changes required to the scale and type of provision available, to ownership, management and to related resources are substantial. The Council faces the challenge of becoming a provider in its own right on a much greater scale over the transitional period whilst at the same time managing a market of both evolving not-for-profit partners and declining and exiting existing partners. The interaction with regional partners and the Welsh Government during the transitional period will also be critical to developing the resources and services required.

This report articulates the current state of children's services rapidly developing strategy and action plans and seeks support for the approach and direction proposed. Strategy, and related action plans need to remain agile to adapt and evolve as the impact of the policy change is experienced in the coming months and years.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Values and vision

The vision for this strategy is that by 2027, all RCT young people who need residential care are looked after close to home in high quality settings where they can thrive, and that they are looked after by a stable, resilient, skillful and well supported staff group.

This work will also be underpinned by our commitment to stability for looked after young people, understanding that looked after young people need specialist services.

1.2 Our duties as a local authority

Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out local authorities' duties to looked after children. This study is specifically concerned with s.75 of that act, and the duty to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children in relation to residential care. Noting the evident benefit of foster carers and children's homes working well together in specific cases, there is a separate strategy and action plan in relation to the attraction and retention of foster carers as part of the regional Foster Wales plans.

1.3 National Policy context

In June 2021 the Welsh Government set out its vision for children's services in Wales in its programme for government: (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-03/children-and-young-peoples-plan.pdf>). The commitments included in the programme state the view that the Government does not believe there should be a market for care for children that includes profit-making, and that future care for looked after children in Wales should only be provided by public sector, charitable or not-for-profit organisations.

Since Autumn 2021 the Welsh Government's Eliminating Profit from the Care of Children Looked After Programme Board has been developing the proposals for the legislative changes required to achieve its vision, and in August 2022 issued a consultation document that included the intended timescale.

The Welsh Government Eliminating Profit Board recognises the scale of the change required across Wales, especially in children’s residential services, where 85% of places available in Wales are currently provided by independent providers, with private sector bodies making up 80% of available homes.

The transition period will be 4-5 years. New providers registering with CIW will need to have not-for-profit status from 1 April 2026, and any current “for-profit” providers will need to transition to, and register with CIW, as having not-for-profit status by 1 April 2027. By clear implication, any private provider not undergoing such transition will become de-registered in Wales and unavailable for use by local authorities in Wales).

In its September 2022 response to the consultation, the Children’s Homes Association (the representative body of children’s homes providers in England and Wales) has indicated that almost all current private-sector providers do not intend to transition. Government and councils across Wales therefore need to plan and take action to address the deficit in supply that will likely result. That said, RCTCBC Children’s Services cannot deliver on this transition alone, and although it is early days, 2 known and trusted SMEs have indicated a willingness to work with RCT in a not for profit future.

There is therefore a clear imperative across Wales for local authorities to plan to address the implications in this transformation of the service provider sector. This will include the development of investment plans to build new local-government owned homes and capacity (supported wherever possible by Welsh Government funding that targets such investment). This will need to be on a significant scale in order to replace independent sector capacity that is predicted to become unavailable.

1.4 The Competition and Markets Authority view

In 2020/21 the CMA carried out a study of the children’s social care market (including but not limited to children’s care homes) across Wales, England, and Scotland. The study reported in March 2022, recognising the different approaches being taken by the devolved governments of Wales and Scotland.¹

In the report for Wales, the CMA reaches some key conclusions that are relevant to RCT’s children’s residential strategy:

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/children's-social-care-market-study-final-report

- The report recognised the growing challenges faced by local authorities across all three countries and concluded that the markets were not functioning effectively.
- The CMA's financial analysis found that the cost to local authorities of providing their own children's home placements is no less than the cost of procuring placements from private providers. This has clear implications that any shift of supply to public sector over the coming years will likely not result in financial savings.
- The CMA highlights that a sudden loss of private capacity from the market could place local authorities in Wales in a difficult position, with negative impacts on children. The report for Wales therefore states the need to ensure the existing placements market continues to operate as well as possible in the transition period.
- The report includes a number of recommendations as to how to improve commissioning in the market (stating that these are also relevant to a market that will be solely not-for-profit based in future).
- The CMA predict that it is also likely that new placements capacity will be needed, to reflect changing needs, or simply to replace lost capacity.

The CMA review, set in the specific context of the Welsh Government's policy, gives clear signals as to the actions that are recommended to sustain the existing provider marketplace during the transition period and to plan to replace the significant loss of private sector capacity before 2026/27.

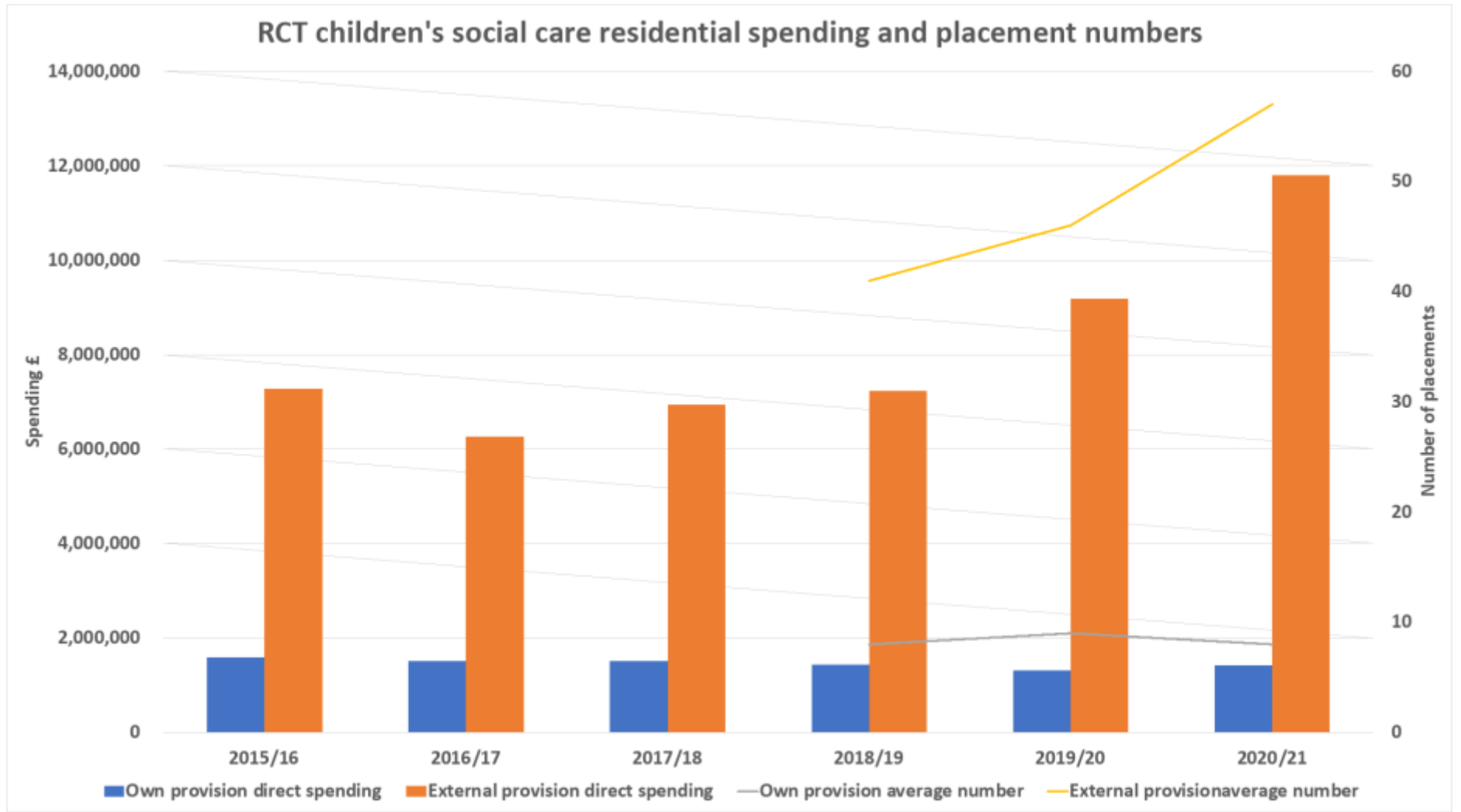
2. KEY DATA AND FACTS

2.1 Why we need this strategy

Despite the development of a 16+ accommodation strategy, and a placement commissioning strategy, at the time of developing the strategy, 90% of RCT's looked after children in residential care are placed out of county. During the past few years, the service has experienced an increase in demand for residential care, which is mainly supplied by independent providers. As at 30.09.21 when we prepared the baseline data for this project, there were 14 providers of residential care in RCTCBC with 50 beds (which would be sufficient for RCT demand if no other LA used these beds), 7 of those 50 places were taken up by RCT looked after children. The market place is not reliably supplying sufficient quality residential care close to home that is available at the point of need. Notwithstanding some great results, there have been some examples of weak outcomes also, and too many examples of young people move placements within residential care. Our ambition is to develop services close to home that can meet need and improve outcomes over the next 5 years.

RCTCBC has the second highest level of demand for, and spending on external children's care homes in Wales. Recent history across the whole of Wales has seen increases in both the numbers of children placed residentially and the costs associated with the purchasing of those placements.

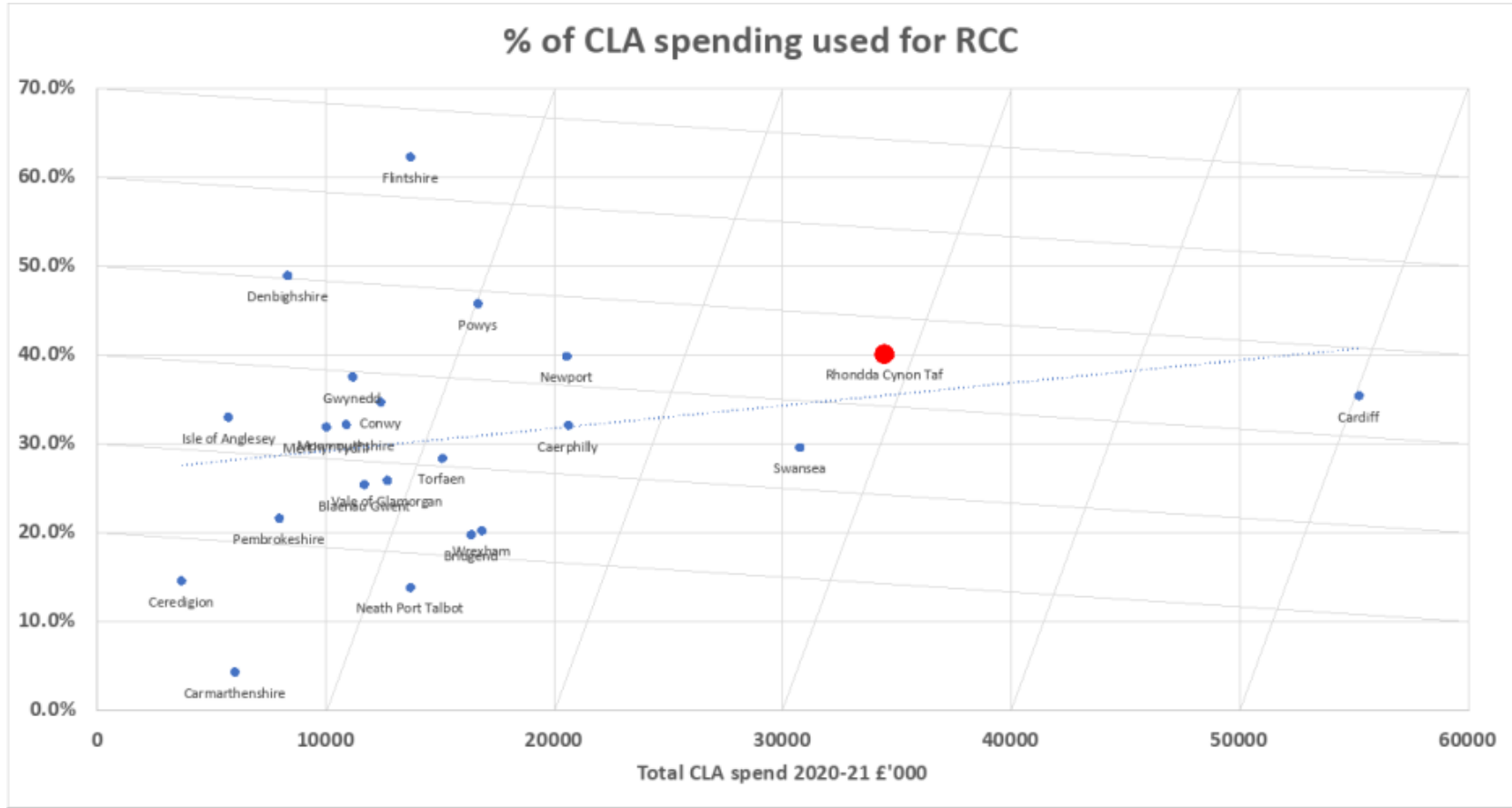
The Council's experience in recent years is illustrated below and mirrors the whole of Wales picture. The increases in spending have increasingly challenged budgetary control and RCT had already set out on a major review of its residential placement strategy in 2021/22 before details of the Welsh Government's policy implementation were announced.



2

² www.statswales.gov.wales

In addition to being second only to Cardiff in spending terms, RCT also spends a relatively high proportion of total Children Looked After (CLA) budgets on residential services. The combination of those two factors (illustrated below) means that, relative to all local authorities in Wales, RCT has a particularly strong motivation to address the placement supply challenges over the next 4-5 years.



3

³ www.statswales.gov.wales

2.2 RCT children's services and key data

RCT Children's Services provides a range of accommodation for children looked after including:

- Foster Care
- Kinship Care
- Residential Care
- Supported Accommodation (16yrs +)
- Supported Lodgings (16yrs +)
- Independent Living (16yrs +)

The following support services are in place:

- Allocated Social Worker
- Fostering Support Team
- Placement Finding Team
- Therapeutic Families Team (supports case formulation and implementation of Trauma Recovery Model in Children's Homes)
- Miskin Services (time limited intensive interventions that reduce risk)
- Multi-agency Permanence Support Services (New – will support therapeutic approaches in foster care and provision of therapy)
- Looked After Children's Education Team (including Head Teacher for Children Looked After)
- Step in the right Direction (Targeted support to employment)
- Advocacy
- 6 Children's Homes

Headline Data:

As at 15.10.22 RCT had 640 CLA which has been a reducing trend during the past year, but is the 4th highest per 10,000 capita in Wales, hence the updated looked after children prevention strategy that was approved by Cabinet in January 2022.

- 26% of admissions to care are children aged under 1 year old. The numbers have decreased by 15 when compared to the same period in 2020-21 and the trend shows that this age group continues to have the highest number and rate of admissions (hence development of the new pre-birth service Magu).
- The number of children being brought into care aged 16+ has increased by 1 when compared to the same period from 8 in 2020-21 to 9 which is 8% of the overall figure in 2021-22 (In line with increasing numbers of UASC and improved focus on protection from exploitation, we may need to anticipate increased numbers in this cohort).
- The highest number are in the 10-15 age group with 276 children in care (43%). This age group is consistently the highest percentage.
- 9% of the CLA population are placed in residential care and 1% of those young people are placed within RCT provided children's homes.
- 25% of the population are placed with RCT mainstream foster carers
- 34% are placed with connected carers
- 17% are placed with independent foster carers
- 11% are placed with parents

2.3 RCTCBC in-house residential

Nine councils in Wales currently do not own or operate any registered care homes for children, whereas RCT has five existing homes with one new site being prepared for registration at the time of writing.

The existing in-house know how, experience and resources that deliver residential care for children in RCT is a valuable base for further development. However, as illustrated above, the scale of existing reliance on private sector providers is 5-6 times that of the existing in-house capacity. This gives an indication of the significant scale of development and/or recommissioning with not-for-profit providers that will be required.

The review of residential strategy that began in 2020/21 identifies a wide range of provision that is needed to meet the needs of children from RCT. As discussed further in this document, there is need to consider the potential for developing provision solely as RCT, as part of the wider region, and also through collaboration with health and education partners.

Scrutiny of the weekly cost of RCT in-house places earlier in 2022 compared to the weekly costs of places purchased from external providers confirms the CMA findings that in-house services are unlikely to offer potential for financial savings.

2.4 What we did and how we did it

A multi-disciplinary residential steering group was established to guide the work and develop this strategy in 2021/22. Representation was drawn from children's services, education, regional partnership board, housing, and adult services. There was also representation from the University Health Board. The group identified the need to access additional knowledge and experience of the children's care home sector, and secured funding from the Regional Partnership Board for a feasibility study. Via a formal procurement process Revolution Consulting and the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care were commissioned to support the project.

This strategy document and action plan summarises the outcomes of activities undertaken by the steering group and advisors that included a background literature review, secondary data and financial analysis alongside engagement with staff in meetings and discussions with multiple stakeholders.

Our advisors particularly identified the need for an enhanced approach to strategy development that differs from previous strategy cycles. A more detailed, granular needs assessment approach at the level of each individual child placed in residential care was undertaken to inform a needs-led services description and strategy development. Outputs from this enhanced approach were summarised in detail for the steering group.

Priorities for the proposed action plan were developed from the analysis by the steering group and are set out in section 4 below.

3 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

If the Welsh Government's policy decision to eliminate for profit residential care continues, then the private sector homes that currently offer placements, in Wales and England, will no longer be available in their current format by 2026/27. At the time of writing it is unclear to what extent existing providers will adopt new, not for profit model of delivery.

It is clear there are benefits to rethinking the RCT strategy regarding the use of residential care and developing homes of its own. They will be known entities, directly related to meeting need, close to home, able to be managed directly and to offer relationships across RCT, health and education services from a shared values base.

The opportunity to create the range of needs-led homes required will be different than can be achieved by market-based commissioning which is dictated by provider availability. The number of homes RCT has of its own will increase significantly.

Without the need for the same scale of current procurement and commissioning the role and task of current personnel would be redirected to the identification, creation, matching, quality assurance and improvement, and sustaining of homes.

This development will need to happen over a number of years and in a planned sequence.

It will need close financial and operations management.

3.1 Five key areas for development

Five development areas	Why do we want to improve in this area?
<p>1. Develop Assessment and Practice</p> <p>Update and development of the evidenced based profiling tool to support the description of a child in a Placement Request Form thus providing a secure basis for placement making by design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To be assured needs are being assessed and described accurately and consistently with a view to improving outcomes for young people ■ To clarify the thresholds for placement in to fostering and residential options ■ To ensure there is good matching and the most appropriate placement leading to effective practice

Five development areas	Why do we want to improve in this area?
	<p>responses that make for efficient investment in a placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To enable good care planning from the outset in a manner that acts as the foundation for care planning, monitoring of progress, and decision making of moving on/stepping across to other settings ■ To ensure interventions are compatible with the Council's Looked after Prevention Strategy
<p>2. Develop Not for Profit Commissioning Development of relational commissioning with the not-for profit sector, shifting from a focus on transaction/procurement to the building of relationships, corporate and collegiate mutual trust enabling negotiation and flexibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To foster close, ongoing dialogue with and between aspects of children's services so that all are fully aware of operational demands ■ To achieve the right placement for the right child at the right time ■ Focus on identification, creation, matching, quality assurance and improvement, and sustaining of homes ■ Linking quality assurance to improvement through focus on communication, problem solving through learning ■ Ensuring the RCT culture of care, the shared identity and common value system, is adhered to consistently in all homes.
<p>3 Develop RCT Provision of Children's Homes that meets need and matches statutory sufficiency duty For RCT to meet the needs of children will require a range of homes offering differentiated provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Matching of needs to placement is effective in producing positive outcomes for young people and supports effective investment in a placement ■ One model of care cannot be replicated for all needs. RCT needs to act on an understanding that delivers 'what works for whom'. Residential services should be

Five development areas	Why do we want to improve in this area?
	<p>configured so that they can effectively meet the needs of children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All homes will have evidence-based practice as this brings a positive outcomes impact rather than 'care as usual', with no evidence base to the care. ■ The specificity and specialism of each home is highlighted as its primary task and is to be valued.
<p>4. Support and Develop the Residential Care Workforce Attraction, retention, training and support – investing in workforce development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Effective needs directed practice reduces the likelihood of a breakdown in placements and improves outcomes for children in care ■ It acts to attract new recruits and retains staff as a major factor is learning and job satisfaction ■ Support and consultancy - psychology, psychiatry, therapy - need to be integrated
<p>5. Leadership Leadership is a key factor in positive outcomes of residential options. Internal and external management is necessary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Councillors and Senior leadership will need enhanced residential knowledge and experience. ■ Registered Managers act as community of practice and mutual support ■ Ensure that the infrastructure resources required to deliver on this duty are realistically but proportionally made available ■ There is fair accountability for all across the Council as the strategy requires active buy-in from Social Services, Finance, Housing and Estates

It is projected that successful implementation of these improvements will lead not only to better outcomes but also to effective expenditure because of:

- The earliest access to the most appropriate intervention by design and decision reduces the intensity and duration of a placement, and also reduces likelihood of breakdown which incurs further cost that comes with multiple placements and escalating severity of need and expenditure. Proactive planned provision is more effective than reactive procurement from what is currently made available by providers being possible
- Increases in the number of children who can safely move on from care or step across to other placement options. Identification of the homes necessary to be created is a first step. The most dependable strategy is for RCT to develop the range of homes as its own resources, supported by targeted and agreed local supply by not-for-profit providers. Identifying not-for-profit providers is challenging, there are few in Wales with children's homes. Whilst some have indicated they may be open to discussions to develop further capacity in Wales, it is known that their knowledge and experience in the recent past has not included some areas of the more intensive and specialist residential child care practice. The few that have had a long consistent quality practice are unlikely to seek to offer any provision other than where it is currently located in England. Welsh Government may make funds available for the acquisition of currently for-profit business, but at the time of writing, the details of that have not been made available.

3.2 Finance

To establish the scale, range and number of homes indicated is unprecedented. The funding requirement is substantial, but it is an investment in the future. The bringing together of the people, their development, and the material environment is a large undertaking.

Such a phased establishment requires the appreciation of the first three years in any home follows a curve of dynamics, developments and practice will initially flow, then ebb, then be rekindled. That there will be homes at various stages will require a significant engaged management to sustain the homes. This cannot be underestimated.

This is a challenging and difficult to control area of budget with increasing costs in association with the national minimum wage, the cost of living, inflation and impact of instability and increasing demand leading to increasing costs.

In order to achieve the ambition, the following likely costs have been identified:

Capital: Development of the new sites to the standards required for registration with CIW

Revenue (Infrastructure): Staffing and expertise required to develop the provisions, some of this will be time limited, but the need for focus on quality outcomes and compliance with RISCA (Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act (Wales) 2016) will have longstanding financial impact.

Revenue: Running costs of each new provision as it is developed

An outline assessment of the likely capital and revenue costs over 3 years has been carried out in preparation for the submission of a £17.1 million funding proposal to Welsh Government under the Eliminate and Change funding. At the time of writing a decision is awaited.

An application has been made and agreed in principle, for a capital grant under the Housing With Care fund via RPB for investment before 31.3.22, and subsequent applications may be made.

A Regional Integration Fund application for staffing to embed trauma informed practice has been made, but is unlikely to be forthcoming in the current context.

In order to maintain financial controls, an Estates and Finance sub group has been established and a business case format for each individual setting and investment has been agreed. Final decision making lies with Group Directors for Finance and Social Services in consultation with Cabinet Members.

4 IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

This study and strategy have a necessary focus on children's residential services. However, these services exist in the context of children's services and the Council's wider duties and activities. The residential strategy therefore needs to be consistent with wider actions including but not limited to the prevention of escalation to residential care, fostering, prevention of placement breakdown and risk/contingency management.

4.1 Planning principles

A key message from many recent evaluations of innovation is that **transformative change is not easy to achieve** either for individuals or for organisations (for example: Bostock et al, 2017; Sheehan et al, 2018), also that it is important not to under-estimate the scale of change or adaptation needed in culture and working practices (Albers et al, 2020)

Key principles relating to more successful implementation of social work practice change are as follows:

1. That implementation plans should pay attention to 3 areas:
 1. Practice innovation
 2. Effective alignment of service pathways to the desired change, including assessment, planning and review activity and documentation; and IT supports.
 3. How the whole system supports the innovation
2. Effective, consistent leadership of change is required at all levels, including modelling of the desired practice changes by all including senior leaders; sustained support for the vision for change; and effective, varied communications.
3. Performance management and monitoring arrangements that reflect the priority areas for change.
4. Attention to the pace of the implementation of change.
5. Staged implementation including with reference to:
 - Exploration – of the rationale for change and proposed change(s) with practitioners and team managers to create an appreciation and commitment to the necessary developments and to ensure that there is a common language and framework of understanding. Essentially, they need to be brought on board, expecting always that some practitioners will embrace change quickly, others not.
 - Design work for the homes based on the RCT evidenced identified analysis

- Initial launch – including with attention to aligned training and broader supports for practice; opportunities to celebrate along the way; organisational alignment
- Phasing of implementation and report backs to the workforce
- Embedding – attention to sustaining change over a longer period.

4.2 Prioritising developments

The need to act at pace that results from this work being carried out in a changing policy environment is evident. The steering group has especially focused on how to prioritise the development of homes from those identified by this study and analysis.

Consideration has been given by the group to the factors that should influence the prioritisation, including:

- Impact potential: Number of children likely to require the service type
- Impact potential: Relative urgency of need
- Impact potential: Relative price of services if purchased externally
- Degree to which development can/should be carried out by RCT acting alone

This has contributed to a prioritised schedule of need that is guiding the work of the steering group and its sub groups.

4.3 Performance Measures

Any successful strategy requires a set of performance indicators that assist in measuring the success of the project and early alert of a problem that requires solution. The following measures are recommended and will be finalised at the December 2022 Steering Group Meeting:

Period	Number and %age of CLA who need residential care	Number and %age of children who received residential care in commissioned for profit settings	Number %age of children receiving residential care in RCT	Number and %age of CLA in not for profit residential care including in RCTCBC provided homes	Number of unplanned placement moves within residential settings	Number of children in residential care in full time education / employment / training	Budget Spend on not for profit residential care child including RCTCBC provided homes		Budget Spend on for Profit residential care	
							Weekly	Annual	Weekly	Annual
Baseline Year 31.3.22	64 (8%)	51 (80%)	8 (15%)	13 (20%)	4	46	£52,196	£2,714,179	£237,168	£12,332,735
31.3.23										
31.3.24										
31.3.25										

Delivery against this strategy and its action plan will be monitored but the Residential Transformation Steering Group. The impact of this work and the need for a future strategy and action plan will be reviewed in 2025-6 ahead of the implementation of the legislative intention. An annual report will be provided to Corporate Parenting Board and Scrutiny Committee as per Council decision.

5. OUTLINE PLAN

This document outlines RCT’s prioritised plan for the development of not for profit residential care. It has resulted from a study that has been informed by a rapid research review, secondary financial and data review and a detailed analysis of need. It anticipates future need and the requirement to shift to a not for profit model of delivery in line with government’s policy. It considers the following areas of business:

1. **Prevent** avoidable escalation of need to residential care
2. **Prepare to develop new provisions**, and engage with existing providers who may consider not for profit provisions
3. **Plan and coordinate** in an outcome focused integrated way
4. **React** to the need to develop emergency accommodation

1. Prevent avoidable escalation of need to residential care

Number	Outcome	Who is Accountable	By when	What Needs to Happen
1.1	The Looked After Prevention Strategy is implemented and monitored	Director CS	31.3.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services Management Team monitor the effectiveness of the CLA prevention strategy at Safeguarding and Prevention Quality Assurance Meetings and respond to any needs for change
1.2	RCT’s work under the auspices of Foster Wales increases the supply and skill of foster carers	Regional Development Manager for Foster Wales	31.3.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the RCT recruitment and retention strategy • The Regional Strategic Steering Group review performance against the strategy

1.3	Looked after children's needs are met early and opportunities to prevent escalation of need to residential are taken up via the Therapy Panel process and the implementation of the Multi-Agency Permanence Support Service	Therapy Panel Chair	31.3.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report by 31.3.23 evaluating the work of therapy panel and making recommendations to Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel about a future work plan that would manage and reduce escalation of need wherever possible
1.4	Engagement with providers is enhanced increasing support by RCT services to prevent avoidable placement breakdown and increase oversight of any changes in provision that signal a need for preventative action	Chair of Children's Services Residential Monitoring Group	31.3.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report by 31.3.22 to Children Looked After Therapy Panel which evaluates past work makes recommendations about work that will lead to increasing stability in residential placements.
2. Prepare to develop new provisions, and engage with existing providers who may consider not for profit provisions				
Number	Outcome	Who is Accountable	By When	What Needs to Happen
2.1	Prepare costed business cases for new provisions in priority order identifying the model of care and whether it is RCT, Regional or integrated provision	Head of Accommodation and Family Support	31.3.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a prioritised schedule of settings and models of care required during the next 3-5 years and 5years + Work up costed business cases, identifying funding sources
2.2	Look for opportunities to work towards not for profit provisions with providers who currently care for RCT children / are located in RCT	Children's Services Director	31.3.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify those providers who will collaborate / convert to not for profit
2.3	Develop outline contingency plans / exit strategies for those children whose home becomes unstable	Residential Monitoring Group	31.12.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair will supply Residential Transformation Steering group with a report outlining contingency plan

3. Plan and coordinate in an outcome focused integrated way

Number	Outcome	Who is Accountable	By When	What Needs to Happen
3.1	Evaluate evidence and develop a strategy	Service Director	1.11.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft strategy is developed
3.2	Consult with and involve stakeholders	Service Director	1.12.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation takes place ahead of concluding the strategy and implementing the action plan
3.3	Establish a multi-agency steering group and sub groups that coordinate the work, ensure that results are achieved, and resolves barriers	Service Director	1.11.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference agreed • Schedule of meetings agreed
3.4	Develop and review / update risk assessment and management plan and impact assessment	Change and Transformation Officer	1.11.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Plan and Impact Assessment considered and approved at steering group

4. React to the need to develop emergency accommodation

Number	Outcome	Who is Accountable	By When	What Needs to Happen
4.1	Same day placement accommodation is developed and registered by 30.6.23	Head of Accommodation and Support	30.6.22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop statement of Purpose for WH • Update procedures • Recruit to staff Team • Submit application to CIW

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME: 2022- 23 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 At the Council AGM on the 25th May 2022, it was agreed that going forward a detailed Cabinet Work Programme be published for a 6 month period, allowing sufficient notice and opportunity for consultation and / or pre scrutiny. Amendments to paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution were amended to reflect this position, although still allowing updated versions of the programme to be provided on a 3 monthly cycle to the Cabinet.
- 3.2 The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, provides that information about forthcoming executive decisions must be made available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to ensure these Committees are best informed to undertake and better plan their work. Although the Council are already well placed in respect of this duty, it is important to ensure the development of an accurate and robust

Cabinet work programme, outlining consideration of Key Decisions which will strengthen the robust Governance arrangements intended to be taken forward.

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

4. CABINET REPORTS

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

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

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

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

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

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

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

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

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

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 An updated Cabinet work programme for the 2022-23 Municipal Year is attached.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

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

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

Background Papers

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



Cabinet Work Programme

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

Specific Period: June 2022 – May 2023

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

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

Contact: Sarah Daniel (Tel No. 07385 086169)

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

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

	Proposed LUF Submission for the Cynon Valley	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
July 2022	Council's Performance & Resources Report To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Barrie Davies, Director Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Housing Support Grant Needs Assessment and Strategy	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Residential Care and Day Services Development - Bronllwyn This report will provide on development proposals for the former Care Home site as agreed by Cabinet back in December 2020	Paul Mee, Group Director – Community & Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Residential Care Services To provide an update position on the current in-house provision, including some proposed short term changes to current provision in order to meet current demand and staffing pressures.	Paul Mee, Group Director – Community & Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee

	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Shared Prosperity Fund	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	Family Engagement Officers	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	RCT SACRE Annual Report To receive the annual report of RCT SACRE	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
September 2022	Council's Performance Report To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Cost of Living Support – Follow Up (Discretionary) Scheme	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader of the Council		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Medium Term Financial Plan Update	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

	Update on a proposal for a new special school in RCT	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Solar Panel Grant & Domestic Heating Grant	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
October 2022	Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects – Supplementary Capital Programme	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Budget Consultation Report To inform Members of the proposed approach to resident engagement and consultation in respect of the 2023/24 budget.	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales - Annual Report and Letter 2021-2022	Andrew Wilkins, Director of Legal Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Annual General Meeting To provide Cabinet with details of the AGM in respect of the Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Ltd and Amgen Rhondda Ltd.	Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Exempt	
	Council Tax Premiums – Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader of the Council		Overview and Scrutiny Committee

	<p>Director Social Services Annual Report (Draft)</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with the annual report on the delivery, performance, risks, and planned improvements to the Social Services function of the Council</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Social Services Annual Complaints and Compliments Report</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with an overview of the operation & effectiveness of the Council's Social Services complaints procedure</p>	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for RCT</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with the proposed Leisure Strategy</p>	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure		Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Empty Homes Strategy 2022-2025</p> <p>To agree the Council's proposed approach to tackling empty homes which is set out in the Council's Empty Homes Strategy for the period 2022 -2025.</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Local Housing Market Assessment</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee

	Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Report	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
November 2022	Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report To consider the Annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Council Tax Base 2022/23 To receive the report in respect of setting the Council Tax Base 2022/23	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Investment		
	Council's Performance Report To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Extra Care Developments The new Extra Care developments, and a proposal to build new large care homes across the 3 former districts, which offer a mix of care from residential through to high end nursing care, so that residents as they age, do not have to move between care homes	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee

	<p>Corporate Asset Management Plan Interim Update</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with a progress update in respect of the plan.</p>	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
November 2022 - Service Change Cabinet	<p>Service Review of the Community Meals Service</p> <p>To assess the Council's Community Meals Service and to consult on the future of the service.</p>	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language		
	<p>Commencement of the Authority's Review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>To review and produce a revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan.</p>	Roger Waters, Director of Frontline Services	Leader		
	<p>Waste Services – Revised Waste Management Strategy</p> <p>To outline proposals for revisions to the Council's operational waste management processes and to initiate a consultation exercise in respect of the options for change as presented in the report.</p>	Roger Waters, Director of Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure		
December 2022	Residential Care	Paul Mee, Group Director Community and Children's Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee

	Council tax premiums – Long term empty properties and second homes	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Regeneration Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Members for Climate Change and Corporate Services, Public Health & Communities, and Development and Prosperity		
	Irrecoverable Debts To provide Cabinet with an update in respect of irrecoverable debts	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	
	Refugee Resettlement and Dispersal Programmes in RCT	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	SLT Change Report	Chief Executive	Leader	Exempt	

January 2023	Human Resources Strategy	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Waste Services Consultation Feedback	Roger Waters, Director of Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure		
	Budget Report	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Council Fees and Charges The need to advise Cabinet of the proposed Council Fees and Charges for the financial year 2023/24	Barrie Davies, Director of Finance and Digital Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Community Meals Consultation Feedback	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Nursery Provision Proposals	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Shared Prosperity Fund – Community Grant	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee

February 2023	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		
	Capital Programme To propose to Council the three year capital programme	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Residential Care Homes for Older People Consultation Feedback	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Residential Transformation Strategy	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Free Bus Travel	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme - Naming of Three New Schools in the Greater Pontypridd Area	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Non-Domestic Rates Report	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee

March 2023	Office Accommodation	Chief Executive David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Easy Read Constitution	Andrew Wilkins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Participation Strategy	Christian Hanagan Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	RIPA Annual Report	Andrew Wilkins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Council's Performance Report To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Acquisition And Disposal Proposal	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Corporate Asset Management Plan Update	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline

					Services Scrutiny Committee
	Sustainable Communities for Learning (Formerly 21st Century Schools): Proposal Relating to Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Proposal to improve the Education provision for a new special school in RCT To seek Cabinet approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultation for a new special school provision for RCT	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Education Supplementary Capital Programme	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Annual Equalities Report To receive the report of the Director, Human Resources in respect of the Annual Equalities Report.	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Eisteddfod Update To receive an update in respect of the Eisteddfod.	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Draft Town Centre Strategy for Aberdare	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline

	To receive the draft Town Centre Strategy and initial delivery plan outlining funding sources such as the Levelling Up Fund				Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Community Infrastructure Levy “CIL” Consultation Responses</p> <p>To update Cabinet on the responses resulting from the Community Infrastructure Levy “CIL” consultation in respect of the Council’s Regulation 123 List</p>	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects – Supplementary Capital Programme	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well Being Plan.	Chief Executive	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Learning Disability Day Strategy	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Ongoing Updates

Date	Report	Officer	Cabinet Member	Open/ Exempt	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Ongoing Updates	Processing Of Mixed Kerbside Recycling To provide Members with an update in respect of the opportunities of investment into processing of Mixed Kerbside Recycling	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	Highways Investment Scheme To receive regular updates in respect of the Highways Investment Scheme	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	Review of Mainstream School Transport Provision To provide Cabinet with the outcomes of the periodic review of the Council's mainstream School Transport Provision	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	Coal Tips	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services

					Scrutiny Committee
	Update on Aberdare – Hirwaun Passenger Rail Services Study	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Update on North West Cardiff – RCT Transport Corridor Study	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Digital Strategy To receive updates in respect of the Council's digital strategy	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Porth Town Centre Strategy To receive updates as and when applicable	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	Taff Vale Update and Business Plan To receive the Taff Vale Update Report	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development		Climate Change, Prosperity and Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee
	Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People – Consultation feedback To receive the consultation feedback	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee

	<p>SS&WB Board Development</p> <p>To consider any updates as appropriate in respect of the SS&WB Board</p>	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Regional Transformation Agenda</p> <p>To receive an update on the regional transformation agenda</p>	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Development of Community Hubs</p> <p>To consider the development of Community Hubs across the County Borough</p>	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Extra Care Strategy</p> <p>To receive update reports on the Councils progress in respect of delivery of the Extra Care Strategy</p>	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Advocacy</p> <p>To provide Cabinet with an update in respect of advocacy</p>	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Cwm Taf MASH Annual Report</p> <p>To receive the Annual report of the Cwm Taf MASH</p>	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	<p>Social Services & Wellbeing Act</p> <p>To provide updates as and when necessary on the Council's duties in respect of the Act</p>	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee

	National Adoption Annual Report To receive the National Adoption Annual Report	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Regional Adoption Annual Report To consider the Regional Adoption Annual Report	Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care		Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Local Air Quality Management Reports To provide details of the Local Air Quality Management Reports	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	21st Century School Transformation Programme	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Cardiff Capital Region - City Deal The need to advise of the progress being made in respect of the City Deal	Chief Executive	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Overview and Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee
	Staff Panel Report To receive details of the proposals put forward by the Council's Staff Panel in respect of efficiency savings and smarter ways of working	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business		Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Scrutiny Recommendations To receive recommendations coming forward following a scrutiny review.	Christian Hanagan Service Director Democratic			

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28th FEBRUARY 2023

FREE BUS TRAVEL THROUGHOUT RHONDDA CYNON TAF FOR MARCH 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR – FRONTLINE SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE, (CLLR A CRIMMINGS), AND THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (CLLR A MORGAN)

Author: Roger Waters, Director – Frontline Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- (i) Seek Cabinet approval to provide free bus travel for the period of 1st – 31st March 2023 for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary. This would apply to all operators currently operating a scheduled service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the content of the report and approves the proposal to introduce free bus travel for the period of 1st – 31st March 2023 for all journeys that start and terminate within the county boundary.

2.2 It is recommended that Officers review the outcomes of the free bus scheme, and seek to develop further free bus travel initiatives during the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years e.g., during December 2023; subject to funding

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Council has been successful in bidding for money through the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund to introduce initiatives that will help reduce the cost of living for residents, through measures that improve energy efficiency and combat fuel poverty and climate change. £500k has been awarded for the 2022/23 financial year, with further awards of £1.1m for 2023/24 and £1.2m for 2024/25.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 recognises the need for an accessible, sustainable, and efficient bus transportation network with specific attention to reliability, frequency, and geographical reach. Together with the review of mandatory and voluntary fares, the scheme looks to encourage modal shift from private car use towards sustainable travel.
- 4.2 The Council's 'Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030' strategy, agreed by Cabinet on 22 June 2022, states 'Working with Cardiff Capital Region and Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA), Transport for Wales and Welsh Government to develop public transport infrastructure and services to enable sustainable travel across the region that will meet future demand. Reducing the user cost of public transport would support this commitment and incentivise bus patronage.
- 4.3 Changing travel patterns associated with the evolving Covid-19 pandemic, highlighted the need to promote a public transport system that is reliable, affordable and easy to use, as a low carbon alternative to the motor car. Reduced public transport patronage has also necessitated a review of the way bus travel is funded in Wales.
- 4.4 As a result of these evolving travel patterns, local bus services in Wales are currently financially supported through the Welsh Government's Bus Emergency Scheme (BES3). This support addresses the loss of farebox revenue by operators and the additional costs associated with responding to the COVID 19 pandemic. Under the terms of the agreement, operators provide bus services that meet local needs under the direction of the lead authority for each region, working with and on behalf of its constituent local authorities. With the continuation of BES3 funding for the 2023/24 financial year, this initiative would encourage greater sustainability within the bus network by encouraging the return of patronage that was lost during the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. FREE BUS TRAVEL PROPOSAL

- 5.1 This report outlines the proposal to provide free bus travel for the period 1st – 31st March 2023 for all users in accordance with the terms of the Grant funding, operating alongside the existing concessionary fare scheme.
- 5.2 The proposed initiative offers free travel on all scheduled bus services (regardless of operator) that start and terminate within the county boundary. Services that start or terminate outside the county boundary would be excluded and subject to the full regular fare.
- 5.3 There would be no time restrictions applied, so free travel would be available from the first to last service each day, with wider benefits for social interaction and supporting economic activity across the county borough.
- 5.4 The proposal prioritises people and the climate.

- 5.5 With transport being responsible for 17% of Welsh Greenhouse gas emissions, the need to encourage transport modal shift has never been greater, with private car use emitting 62% (2018).
- 5.6 The proposal would support longer term objectives to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of travel as supported by the Wales Transport Strategy.
- 5.7 It also makes transport services accessible, fair and inclusive through the removal of economic barriers, which potentially prevent people from using sustainable public transport and encourage increased usage of public transport for retail and leisure activities. Over 30% of households in RCT do not have access to a private motor car.

6. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 An Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required. There are limited negative or adverse equality or diversity implications associated with this report, which can be easily mitigated.
- 6.2 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, Local Authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
 - 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
 - 2. Advance equality of opportunity.
 - 3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.3 The Council is committed to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act and in doing so contributing to the national Well-being goal of a more equal Wales, required by the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

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

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 The estimated cost of this one-month initiative is up to £500k, which will be wholly underwritten by Shared Prosperity Fund grant funding.
- 9.2 The Council will agree the costs of the initiative with operators in advance by using a historical level of “on bus” revenue (July 2022). This arrangement simplifies administration and removes any financial incentive for operators to inflate claims; and has been endorsed by the lead regional bus funding group, responsible for managing BES funding. It also provides parity between bus operators and does not cross subsidise or unduly increase the BES3 national agreement.
- 9.3 The initiative will operate alongside the WG concessionary bus pass scheme, and concessionary pass holders will need to present their pass to ensure the correct level of funding is obtained from the Welsh Government.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The Council can provide free bus transport for RCT residents under its general powers of well-being, provided that the way in which it operates does not breach any of the competition requirements or other statutory provisions relating to local transport provision in the various Transport Acts.
- 10.2 As such, the proposal would apply to all bus operators in RCT, but only to journeys starting and terminating within the county boundary and on routes already registered. This would ensure no unfair competitive advantage for specific operators or cross-subsidising out of area passengers.
- 10.3 This additional voluntary agreement between the Council and the RCT bus operators would operate alongside the BES3 national agreement, with the Council underwriting the revenue that the operators would have received from the paying passengers.
- 10.4 As the current BES3 contracts cap each operator’s profit, there would be no financial advantage or disadvantage to operators if the scheme was introduced.
- 10.5 The Transport Act 2000 requires travel concession authorities in Wales to issue statutory travel concession permits to any applicant resident who is aged 60 or over or meets the eligibility criteria, with regard to disability as set out in Section 146 of the Act. In Wales, this is the All-Wales Concessionary Travel Scheme.

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

- 11.1 The Council has committed to reducing our carbon footprint. This supports the priorities of the Council’s Corporate Plan ‘Making a Difference’ – 2020-24.

- 11.2 Public transport supports and promotes the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for People – are independent, healthy and successful; Places – where people are proud to live, work and play and Prosperity – creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.
- 11.2 These in turn support the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals and is consistent with the five ways of working, as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act.

12. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This initiative will make transport services accessible, fair and inclusive through the removal of economic barriers that potentially prevent people from using sustainable public transport and encourage increased usage of public transport for retail and leisure activities.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME - NAMING OF THREE NEW SCHOOLS IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

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

Author: Miss Non Morgan, Senior Manager for Governor Support & Emergency Planning

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to consider the recommendations made by the relevant temporary governing bodies as to the proposed naming of the three new schools in the Greater Pontypridd area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees to name the new all through 3–16 school at Hawthorn, 'Ysgol Afon Wen', which is the name put forward by the temporary governing body;
- 2.2 Agrees to name the new all through 3–16 school at Pontypridd, 'Ysgol Bro Taf', which is the name put forward by the temporary governing body;
- 2.3 Agrees to name the new Welsh Medium primary school in Rhydyfelin, 'Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Awel Taf', which is the name put forward by the temporary governing body; and
- 2.4 Notes all three schools are due to open in September 2024.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In April 2012, Cabinet agreed a protocol document produced by the Director of Education on Council policy for the changing and setting of school names. This protocol document is attached for information, as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The headteachers and temporary governors of the three new schools have undertaken extensive consultation on new names for the three schools and have agreed on suitable names for Cabinet's consideration.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Cabinet agreed at their meeting held on 18th July 2019 to formally confirm the proposals to create new 3–16 all through schools in Hawthorn and Pontypridd and a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin. These decisions followed an extensive consultation process and the publication of statutory notices, all conducted in accordance with statutory guidance contained in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code.
- 4.2 Following these decisions, temporary governing bodies were appointed at all three schools, to oversee decisions relating to establishing the schools. Since then, the temporary governing bodies have appointed headteachers. It is anticipated that the process of appointing all other staff will commence in earnest in the spring term 2023, following the consultation and adoption of the agreed staffing structures in accordance with the Council's management of change process.
- 4.3 There is also a need for the three headteachers to commence the preparation of documentation in relation to their schools, including a new school prospectus. They are also keen to commence work around the 'branding' of the schools, i.e. the designing of school signage and logos, school uniform choices and school colours. All of this work is however dependent on new school names being determined and approved in accordance with the Council's agreed process.
- 4.4 The outcome of these consultations and the recommendations for the new names are outlined below:
- 4.5 Hawthorn 3–16 School
- 4.5.1 The headteacher has undertaken consultation with the pupils and staff of all three schools that will close to create the new school. The temporary governing body considered the proposals and agreed on four options to consult with wider stakeholders, including all pupils, staff, governors and the community, via a survey on the RCT website.
- 4.5.2 Following the consultation process, the temporary governing body reviewed the outcome of the consultation and noted that **Ysgol Afon Wen** had received the highest number of votes (35%). In view of this, the temporary governing body wish to recommend Ysgol Afon Wen as the name of the new school, which was the highest scoring preferred name identified by pupils and staff.

4.6 Pontypridd 3–16 School

4.6.1 The headteacher has undertaken consultation with the pupils and staff of the two schools that will close to create the new school. The temporary governing body considered the proposals and agreed on four options to consult with wider stakeholders, including all pupils, staff, governors and the community, via a survey on the RCT website.

4.6.2 Following the consultation process, the temporary governing reviewed the outcome of the consultation and noted that **Ysgol Bro Taf** had received the highest number of votes (43.1%). In view of this, the temporary governing body recommended Ysgol Bro Taf as the name of the new school, as this was the highest scoring preferred option selected by pupils and staff at the three schools.

4.7 New Welsh Primary School

4.7.1 The headteacher has undertaken consultation with the pupils and staff of the two schools that will close to create the new school. The temporary governing body considered the proposals and agreed on four options to consult with wider stakeholders, including all pupils, staff, governors and the community, via a survey on the RCT website.

4.7.2 Following the consultation process, the temporary governing body reviewed the outcome of the consultation and noted that **Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Awel Taf** had received the highest number of votes (39%). In light of this, the temporary governing body wish to recommend Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Awel Taf as the name of the new school, as this was endorsed as the highest scoring preferred option selected by pupils and staff of the three schools.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 The cost of new uniforms and branding was raised in the consultation and this will be consulted upon in the spring term 2023. Every endeavour will made to ensure that new uniforms will reflect the current financial pressures faced by many families.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Welsh Language Impact Assessments have been undertaken as part of the consultations for each of the new schools. Promotion of the Welsh language was a consideration in the proposed naming of the three new schools.

6.2 The new Welsh medium primary that will open in September 2024 will have excellent facilities and will increase the delivery of Welsh medium education in RCT.

- 6.3 All three names proposed are Welsh, which will actively encourage the use of Welsh within the community.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 Although there is no statutory requirement to undertake consultation, the attached protocol document clearly outlines the Council's requirements in this regard and highlights the need for consultation with school pupils. All three schools have undertaken thorough and proper consultation with the key stakeholders associated with their schools, with pupils being at the forefront of this work.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There are no financial implications for the Council in respect of this proposal. All costs associated with the 'rebranding' of the schools, such as design of logos and badges is to be met from the delegated budgets of the schools themselves.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal implications in respect of decisions on school names.
- 9.2 New Instruments of Government will be required for the three new schools. These will be prepared in the summer 2024 in readiness for the opening of the schools in September 2024.

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

- 10.1 <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>
The proposal will also support the Well-being of Future Generations Act, in particular "A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language." The new Welsh medium primary school will develop skills, increase opportunities, and respect our status as a bilingual nation. The three schools having Welsh names will also promote bilingualism.
- 10.2 <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/ActionPlanforWelshLanguage>
<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/ComplianceNoticeStandards.pdf> [gePromotionalStrategy.pdf](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/PromotionalStrategy.pdf)
This proposal will support Priority 1 – Increasing the number of Welsh speakers by establishing a new Welsh primary school therefore strengthening the statutory education system which will increase the number of confident Welsh speakers.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 11.1 The new Welsh primary school sits in the electoral ward of Upper Rhydfelen and Glyn-taf.
- 11.2 The new all through school in Hawthorn sits in the electoral ward of Hawthorn and Lower Rhydfelen.
- 11.3 The new all through school in Cilfynydd sits in the electoral ward of Cilfynydd.
- 11.4 The new schools and associated catchments are also relevant to a number of other electoral wards within the Greater Pontypridd area.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 Members are asked to consider the proposed names of the three new schools that have been put forward by their respective temporary governing bodies as detailed in this report, and to agree to their implementation, noting that all the appropriate consultation that is required has been undertaken.

Other Information:-

Contact Officer

Miss Non Morgan, Senior Manager for Governor Support & Emergency Planning

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET
28TH FEBRUARY 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Item: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME - NAMING OF THREE NEW SCHOOLS IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact:

Miss Non Morgan, Senior Manager for Governor Support & Emergency Planning

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL POLICY ON THE SETTING AND CHANGING OF SCHOOL NAMES

1. This policy relates to the official names of schools meaning the name set out in the Instrument of Government (“IOG”).
2. School names must be consistent with legal requirements the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005. Paragraph 35 of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 is especially relevant: a copy is attached as part of this policy.
3. School names must not be misleading. Therefore, the Council shall expect that:
 - Where a school is a voluntary school and has a religious character, this is clear from the school’s name;
 - Where a school serves all or part of the primary age-range (ages 5-11) and is not a special school, one of the following phrases is used:
 - Infant School
 - Junior School
 - Primary School;
 - Where a school has “Primary” in its name it will serve all age-groups in nursery, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two;
 - Any implication or perceived implication in the school’s name is accurate:
 - Where a school is relocated, on a permanent basis, from a location in one electoral ward and/or community to a different electoral ward and/or community, the Council will request that the governing body review the IOG and the name of the school and shall not retain a name linked to its previous location that may mislead or confuse any interested parties. The governing body will have 60 calendar days to complete the review of the IOG;
 - If the governing body determines that there should be no change to the IOG and school name, it is required to inform the Council of the reasons why. Where the Council’s Cabinet has concerns over the proposed name, or if it does not meet the requirements in the Council’s policy, it will refer the matter back to the governing body for reconsideration with an explanation of their decision;

- If the governing body does not comply with this request, the Council will review the IOG and recommend to the governing body a suitable new name for the school. The Council will notify the governing body of the proposed change to the school name and the reasons for the change. The governing body will have 90 calendar days or at the discretion of the Council “reasonable time” to discuss the proposed changes with the Council in order to come to an agreement on the name. If no agreement can be reached the Council’s Cabinet will determine the change of name of the school.
4. If the governing body decides that the name of the school should be changed, it has to consult with pupils, parents and other stakeholders. All consultees shall be informed that the new name must not mislead or confuse anyone as to the school’s location. Best practice suggests that pupils of the school should play the lead role in determining a suitable school name. After a period of consultation with pupils, parents and other stakeholders the process for determining a school’s name shall be as follows:
- a) An item shall be placed on the agenda of a meeting of the full governing body making clear that a change of the school’s name is proposed and specifying the proposed new name (or options).
 - b) A change to a school name must be decided by the governing body.
 - c) Where the school is a voluntary school, the new name must also be approved by the relevant diocesan authority (for Church of Wales and Roman Catholic Schools).
 - d) If the governing body agrees to the proposed school name, they shall inform the Council so that the Instrument of Government can be changed.
 - e) Where the above stages have been completed satisfactorily, the Council’s Cabinet will consider the proposed new name in accordance with the Council’s policy and arrange for the school’s Instrument of Government to be changed.
 - f) Where the Council’s Cabinet has concerns over the proposed new name, or if it does not meet the requirements in the Council’s policy, it will refer the matter back to the governing body for reconsideration, with an explanation of their decision.
5. For new schools, the role of the governing body outlined in 4(a) – (f) above shall be undertaken by the temporary governing body until the permanent governing body has been set up.

Extract from the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005

Review of instruments of government

35. (1) The governing after it is made.

- (2) Where on any body or the local education authority may review the instrument of government at any time review the governing body or the local education authority decides that the instrument of government should be varied, the governing body or (as the case may be) the local education authority must notify the other of its proposed variation together with its reasons for proposing such a variation.
- (3) Where the governing body has received notification under paragraph (2), it must inform the local education authority as to whether or not it is content with the proposed variation and, if not content, its reasons.
- (4) Where the school has foundation governors, the governing body must not—
 - (a) give the local education authority any notification under paragraph (2), or
 - (b) inform the authority under paragraph (3) that it is content with the authority's proposed variation, unless the persons listed in regulation 34(2) have approved the proposed variation.
- (5) If—
 - (a) whichever of the governing body and the local education authority is the recipient of a notification under paragraph (2) agrees with the proposed variation, or
 - (b) there is agreement between the local education authority, the governing body and (if the school has foundation governors) the other persons listed in regulation 34(2) that some other variation should be made instead, the local education authority must vary the instrument of government accordingly.
- (6) If, in the case of a school which has foundation governors, at any time the persons listed in regulation 34(2) disagree with the proposed variation any of those persons may refer it to the National Assembly for Wales; and on such a reference the National Assembly for Wales must give such direction as it thinks fit having regard, in particular, to the category of school to which the school belongs.
- (7) If neither sub-paragraphs (a) and (b) of paragraph (5) applies in the case of a school which does not have foundation governors, the local education authority must—
 - (a) inform the governing body of the reasons—
 - (i) why it is not content with the governing body's proposed variation, or as the case may be,

- (ii) why it wishes to proceed with its own variation, and
 - (b) give the governing body a reasonable opportunity to reach agreement with it with regard to the variation; and the instrument of government must be varied by it either in the manner agreed between it and the governing body or (in the absence of such agreement) in such manner as it thinks fit having regard, in particular, to the category of school to which the school belongs.
- (8) Nothing in this regulation is to be taken as requiring the local education authority to vary the instrument of government if it does not consider it appropriate to do so.
- (9) Where an instrument of government is varied under this regulation—
- (a) the instrument must set out the date on which the variation takes effect, and
 - (b) regulation 33(3) applies in relation to any variation relating to the manner in which the governing body is to be constituted as if it referred to the date when the variation is made rather than the date when the instrument is made.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28th FEBRUARY 2023

NON-DOMESTIC RATE (NDR) RELIEF SCHEMES & REVALUATION UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE, DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR T LEYSHON)

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with:

- a) Details of the Welsh Government Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) – Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief (RLH) Scheme for 2023/24
- b) Details of a proposed local business rate reduction scheme
- c) Details of the NDR Revaluation which comes into effect from 1st April 2023

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Note the details of the WG RLH Scheme and formally adopt the scheme for the year 2023/24
- b) Agree the proposed local Business Rate Reduction Scheme for 2023/24
- c) Note the details of the NDR revaluation exercise

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To ensure that qualifying businesses benefit from the RLH scheme and the local business rate reduction scheme for the whole of the financial year 2023/24 (in relation to business rate payments) and that Cabinet are aware of the impact of the revaluation on businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 In March 2020, in response to the growing concerns about the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the economy in Wales, Welsh Government published details of a financial support package for businesses, which included a new temporary business rates relief scheme.

- 4.2 The scheme, the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rate Relief scheme, provided a business rate “holiday” for all qualifying businesses for 2020/21 and this was extended into 2021/22. Around 1,300 businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf benefitted from those schemes annually.
- 4.3 In March 2022, WG announced a number of changes to the RLH scheme, mainly to reduce the value of relief being awarded on an All-Wales basis. The main changes of the scheme were:
- To reduce the maximum level of RLH relief to 50% of the rates liability (previously 100%)
 - To limit the overall value of RLH relief a business could receive across Wales to £110,000
- 4.4 In conjunction with the RLH scheme, Cabinet has previously agreed to provide additional rate relief through a Local Business Rate Relief Scheme. In February 2022, Cabinet agreed a scheme that would provide additional rate relief of up to £300 to a qualifying business for the financial year 2022/23.
- 4.5 As of 1st February 2023, over £2.6M of RLH relief had been provided to over 600 qualifying businesses and £159K of local rate relief to 580 businesses for the financial year 2022/23.

5. RETAIL, LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY (RLH) RATES RELIEF IN WALES SCHEME

- 5.1 On 12th December 2022, WG announced further changes to the RLH scheme for 2023/24 to reflect the current economic context, including high inflation and increasing business related costs (e.g. energy, fuel).
- 5.2 The RLH scheme for 2023/24 will provide 75% rates relief (currently 50%) for the financial year and is aimed at businesses and other ratepayers in Wales in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors, such as shops, pubs, restaurants, gyms, performance venues and hotels.
- 5.3 The scheme aims to provide support for eligible occupied properties by offering a discount of 75% on the non-domestic rates bill of all eligible premises. The scheme will apply to all eligible ratepayers but the overall value of RLH relief that can be allowed (across Wales) is £110,000 per business.
- 5.4 The list of the types of businesses able to qualify for the relief is set out at Appendix 1 with those non-qualifying businesses set out at Appendix 2. One of the key qualifying criteria is that the property (hereditament) is used for the provision of goods and / or services to visiting members of the public.
- 5.5 As the scheme is a temporary measure, WG are providing the relief by reimbursing Councils who use their discretionary relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. It will be for individual Councils to adopt a scheme and determine awards in each individual case under Section 47. The Welsh Government will reimburse local authorities for the relief that is provided in line with

this guidance via a grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and Section 58A of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

- 5.6 In line with WG requirements, businesses will need to make an application to the Council for the RLH relief to be assessed and applied to their NDR bill.
- 5.7 As of 4th January 2023, the new UK subsidy control regime commenced with the coming into force of the Subsidy Control Act 2022. The RLH scheme is likely to be a subsidy under the new regime. Any relief provided by Councils under this scheme will need to comply with the UK's domestic and international subsidy control obligations.
- 5.8 To the extent that a Council is seeking to provide relief that falls below the Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) thresholds, the Subsidy Control Act 2022 allows an economic actor (e.g. a holding company and its subsidiaries) to receive up to £315,000 in a 3-year period (consisting of the 2023-24 year and the two previous financial years). Previous iterations of the RLH scheme in Wales were not provided as a subsidy. Councils should ask the ratepayers, on a self-assessment basis, to declare as part of their application for RLH that they are not in breach of the cash cap or MFA limit

6. PROPOSED LOCAL BUSINESS RATE REDUCTION SCHEME

- 6.1 In order to further support our Retail, Leisure and Hospitality businesses in 2023/24 it is proposed that the local discretionary relief be extended and provided in **addition** to the WG RLH scheme of up to a maximum of £500 per qualifying business (currently set at £300 per qualifying business).
- 6.2 The qualifying criteria of the RLH scheme shall be applied. It is estimated that 600 businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf would benefit from this further support.
- 6.3 In cases where the “net” rates bill (following the award of RLH and any other applicable reliefs) is less than £500, the rates bill will be reduced to zero.
- 6.4 Subject to an application and eligibility for RLH, the Council will then also award up to £500 local discretionary relief. Businesses will then receive an adjusted Non Domestic Rates bill, net of RLH relief and the Local Business Rate relief.
- 6.5 It is noted that there are no planned changes to the WG's Small Business Rate Relief Scheme.
- 6.6 The financial implications of the Local Business Rate Reduction Scheme have already been factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Budget.

7. NON DOMESTIC RATES REVALUATION

- 7.1 A revaluation comprises the review of the Rateable Value (RV) of all non-domestic properties, by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), at a particular point in time. The previous revaluation took place in 2017 and reflected rental values as of 1st April 2015.

- 7.2 Every non-domestic property will be assigned a new RV, based upon its estimated annual rental value as of 1st April 2021. The VOA have recently published a draft of the new rating list. If ratepayers have questions about their valuations, they should contact the VOA.
- 7.3 Revaluation is carried out to maintain fairness in the NDR system, by redistributing the total amount payable between ratepayers, to reflect relative changes in the property market. Some ratepayers will see their bill increase, some will see a decrease, and some may not see any change, reflecting relative changes in the property market across the tax base.
- 7.4 Alongside the revaluation WG has taken the following action:
- The NDR multiplier will remain frozen in Wales for 2023-24, at 0.535. The multiplier is an integral part of determining ratepayers' bills and the Welsh Government's decision to maintain the multiplier at 0.535 protects ratepayers from the effects of inflationary increases.
 - A Transitional Relief scheme will come into force that will limit increases in NDR bills, as a result of the revaluation. Under the Non-Domestic Rating (Chargeable Amounts) (Wales) Regulations 2022, an eligible ratepayer will pay 33% of their additional liability in the first year (2023-24) and 66% in the second year (2024-25), before reaching their full liability in the third year (2025-26).

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

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

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 10.1 No consultation was needed on the WG RLH scheme. The Local Business Rate Reduction Scheme has been subject to previous consultation.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 11.1 The Council has already included the resource requirement in its Medium Term Financial Plan and proposed 2023/24 Revenue Budget Strategy to fund the local Business Rates Reduction scheme.
- 11.2 The Welsh Government will reimburse local authorities for the RLH relief that is provided in line with its guidance via a grant under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and section 58A of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 12.1 The RLH Relief Scheme is in accordance with the Council's statutory powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- 12.2 For the scheme to be applied in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council needs to formally resolve to adopt the scheme locally in exercise of its discretionary powers under section 47(1) (a) of the 1988 Act and the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services will administer the scheme and make the necessary determinations in accordance with the Council's 'officer scheme of delegation'.
- 12.3 The revaluation of all non-domestic properties in Wales by the VOA is required in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

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

- 13.1 The proposals are aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, one of which is 'Prosperity – create the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The adoption of the WG RLH Rate Relief Scheme and the Local Business Rate Reduction Scheme will provide further much needed financial support for local businesses to meet their 2023/24 rate liability and forms part of a wider package of support intended to create and maintain vibrant town centres across Rhondda Cynon Taf, which is something that this Council has committed to in its Corporate Plan.
- 14.2 The revaluation of all NDR properties is a cyclical event that takes place across Wales for the purposes outlined in paragraph 7 within this report.

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

Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public

- Shops (such as florists, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, stationers, off-licences, newsagents, hardware stores, supermarkets, etc)
- Charity shops
- Opticians
- Pharmacies
- Post offices
- Furnishing shops or display rooms (such as carpet shops, double-glazing, garage doors)
- Car or caravan showrooms
- Second hand car lots
- Markets
- Petrol stations
- Garden centres
- Art galleries (where art is for sale or hire)

Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public

- Hair and beauty services
- Shoe repairs or key cutting
- Travel agents
- Ticket offices (e.g. for theatre)
- Dry cleaners
- Launderettes
- PC, TV or domestic appliance repair
- Funeral directors
- Photo processing
- DVD or video rentals
- Tool hire
- Car hire
- Estate and letting agents

Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of food and / or drink to visiting members of the public

- Restaurants
- Drive-through or drive-in restaurants
- Takeaways
- Sandwich shops
- Cafés
- Coffee shops
- Pubs
- Bars or Wine Bars

We consider assembly and leisure to mean the following.

Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members of the public (including for the viewing of such activities) and for the assembly of visiting members of the public

- Sports grounds and clubs
- Sport and leisure facilities
- Gyms
- Tourist attractions
- Museums and art galleries
- Stately homes and historic houses
- Theatres
- Live Music Venues
- Cinemas
- Nightclubs

Hereditaments that are being used for the assembly of visiting members of the public

- Public halls
- Clubhouses, clubs and institutions

We consider hotels, guest and boarding premises, and self-catering accommodation to mean the following.

Hereditaments where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation as a business

- Hotels, Guest and Boarding Houses
- Holiday homes
- Caravan parks and sites

Appendix 2

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

Hereditaments that are being used wholly or mainly for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public

- Financial services (eg banks, building societies, cash points, ATMs, bureaux de change, payday lenders, betting shops, pawnbrokers)
- Medical services (eg vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)
- Professional services (eg solicitors, accountants, insurance agents, financial advisers, tutors)
- Post Office sorting offices
- Day nurseries
- Kennels and catteries
- Casinos and gambling clubs
- Show homes and marketing suites
- Employment agencies

Hereditaments that are not reasonably accessible to visiting members of the public

If a hereditament is not usually reasonably accessible to visiting members of the public, it will be ineligible for relief under the scheme, even if there is ancillary use of the hereditament that might be considered to fall within the descriptions listed under Appendix 1.

Hereditaments that are not occupied

Properties that are not occupied on 1 April 2023 should be excluded from this relief. However, under the mandatory Empty Property Rates Relief scheme, empty properties will receive a 100% reduction in rates for the first three months (and in certain cases, six months) of being empty.

Hereditaments that are owned, rented or managed by a local authority

Hereditaments owned, rented or managed by a local authority, such as visitor centres, tourist information shops and council-run coffee shops or gift shops attached to historic buildings, are exempt from this scheme.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Overview and Scrutiny

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE,
DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR T LEYSHON)**

Item:

NON DOMESTIC RATE (NDR) RELIEF SCHEMES & REVALUATION UPDATE

**Background Papers
NONE**

Officer to contact:

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

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

THE COUNCIL'S 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & GROUP DIRECTOR - FINANCE, DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN

AUTHOR: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 23rd January 2023, the Cabinet agreed draft budget proposals for the 2023/24 revenue budget strategy.
- 1.2 These proposals have now been consulted upon as part of a second phase of budget consultation and the results are now available for Cabinet to consider and amend as necessary the draft budget strategy which they would wish to recommend to Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Review and, if appropriate, amend the Budget Strategy which they wish to recommend to Council on the 8th March 2023; and
- 2.2 Recommend to Council that the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services be authorised to amend the final budget consequential to the receipt of the Final Settlement as set out in Section 4.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On the 23rd January 2023, Cabinet agreed draft proposals for the revenue budget strategy for financial year 2023/24.
- 3.2 These proposals have been subject to a second phase of consultation which ran from the 24th January to the 6th February 2023. The results of this consultation exercise are now available for Cabinet.

3.3 The proposals have been incorporated into a draft budget strategy report to Council and this is attached at Appendix A. The results of the Phase 2 consultation process is also attached to that report.

3.4 It is now for Cabinet to consider the feedback received from Phase 2 and determine whether they would wish to amend the draft budget strategy.

4.0 THE FINAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT FOR 2023/24

4.1 The timing of the Local Government Settlement for 2023/24 has followed the UK Government Autumn Statement as announced on the 17th November 2022.

4.2 The Final Local Government Settlement for 2023/24 is expected to be received during early March 2023.

4.3 There is one change planned for the final budget and that is the intention to transfer funding for the increased employer costs related to Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) pensions from a grant to the FRAs into the final local government settlement. This should be cost neutral to the Council. There are no indications of any other significant changes between the provisional and final settlement but such a risk clearly remains.

4.4 In order to ensure that Cabinet are able to recommend a balanced budget to Council on the 8th March 2023, and given the timing of the Final Settlement, it will be necessary to authorise the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services to amend the budget to deal with any change between the Provisional and Final Settlement. It is proposed that any change is dealt with by means of amending the contribution from our Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve. This reserve has a remaining balance of £2.533M and is set against the context that a 0.5% change in the level of our settlement would amount to £2.35M.

4.5 The total budget requirement / funding has been updated to reflect accounting requirements since the draft strategy was considered in January, there is no net impact.

5.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

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

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The allocation of resources, as set out in the proposed 2023/24 Budget Strategy, is based on supporting the Council's service delivery requirements and associated statutory responsibilities for the forthcoming year. In doing so, the proposed strategy is in line with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The proposed approach to budget consultation for 2023/24 was set out in the Cabinet report dated 17th October 2022. It comprised 2 phases as follows :

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

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

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS or LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget and also a legal duty under the Local Government Act 2000 for it to be reported to and approved by Full Council. The construction of the draft 2023/24 Revenue Budget Strategy in line with the "Budget and Policy Framework", as set out in the Council's Constitution, will support compliance with the above legal requirements.

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

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

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 The feedback from the second phase of budget consultation is now available for Cabinet to review and, if appropriate, amend their draft budget strategy proposals which they wish to recommend to Council on the 8th March 2023.

APPENDIX A

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022-2023

**COMMITTEE:
COUNCIL**

8th March 2023

REPORT OF:

THE CABINET

AGENDA ITEM NO.	
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THE COUNCIL'S 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY	
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**AUTHOR: Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director – Finance,
Digital and Frontline Services Tel. No. 01443 424026**

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides information on the provisional local government settlement for 2023/24 and sets out the recommendations of the Cabinet with regard to the Council's Revenue Budget and the level of Council Tax for the year ending 31st March 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the written statement from the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) and the table on the 2023/24 Provisional local government settlement, reproduced at Appendix 1;
- 2.2 Note the implications for the Council and the remaining budget gap as set out at section 5;
- 2.3 Agree a Council Tax increase for 2023/24 of 3.50%;
- 2.4 Agree the uplift to the aggregate Schools Budget as detailed at section 8;
- 2.5 Agree the budget strategy proposals as set out at paragraphs 10.2 to 10.8;
- 2.6 Agree the use of the 'Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation Reserve' as transition funding, totalling £4.115M for 2023/24;

- 2.7 Approve Tables 4 and 5 in Section 13 of the report as the basis of allocating resources to the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), to other Council Services and to meet its corporate financing requirements;
- 2.8 Agree the Council's overall budget for 2023/24 at £609.011M, in order to pass the necessary statutory resolutions to set the Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year by the statutory deadline of the 11th March 2023; and
- 2.9 Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services to amend the final budget consequential to the receipt of the Final Local Government Settlement as set out at para 10.13.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Council meeting on the 18th January 2023, the Council's audited accounts were presented which reported General Fund Balances amounting to £10.292M.
- 3.2 Given the continuing financial pressures the Council is working under, it remains the view of the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services (Section 151 Officer) that the Council should hold a minimum of £10M as General Fund Balances, (i.e. its working balance). This level is set given the context of the need for continued strong financial management that is felt to be essential to ensure that the Council maintains financial flexibility and stability going forward.
- 3.3 It is pleasing to note the level of reserves have been replenished to the minimum level following their utilisation to support our residents and businesses in the immediate aftermath of Storm Dennis.
- 3.4 Members will be aware that in addition to General Fund Reserves, the Council also holds a number of earmarked reserves that are kept under continuous review and are assessed each year by Audit Wales. Members will be aware that included in these Reserves is a Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve that has successfully supported transitional funding as part of the Council's Medium Term Service Planning arrangements. It has achieved this through helping to smooth the delivery of budget savings over a number of years, whilst still allowing an annual balanced budget to be delivered. The starting point for the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve as at the 31st March 2022 is £3.645M. As part of our ongoing strategy, we have continued to identify and deliver savings in-year which means we have been able to increase the level of transitional funding available and the latest position is that this reserve has now increased to £6.648M (additional in year savings to date of £3.003M).

- 3.5 Audit Wales continue to emphasise that we must remain disciplined, if we are to maintain our long-term goal of driving forward continuous improvement of key services, though this becomes increasingly harder to achieve following a period of such severe financial pressures. For the current financial year, these pressures amount to over £21M, and it is against this backdrop that the 2023/24 budget requirement is being assessed.
- 3.6 The Audit Wales assessment is an accurate one and it is clear that Members continue to take their fiduciary duty extremely seriously as evidenced by the positive reports received from the regulators and the track record of budgetary control across services. The challenge, therefore, is to construct a prudent, equitable and fair revenue budget for the financial year ending the 31st March 2024. This must involve an approach which publicly demonstrates sound financial stewardship; which does not take unnecessary risks; which maximises income generation; continues to deliver (as far as possible, and where available) year on year efficiency savings and which delivers the services that are needed and we can afford, as well as protecting as many jobs as possible.
- 3.7 In the context of this overall financial position and Medium Term Financial Planning projections, the Cabinet, assisted by the Senior Leadership Team was able to commence early and initial work on its budget strategy for 2023/24. The broad objectives of next year's proposed strategy are to:
- (i) Support the delivery of our key strategic priorities -
 - People – Are independent, healthy and successful
 - Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play
 - Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper
 - (ii) Retain the support of Audit Wales for the approach the Council has adopted to securing strong financial management;
 - (iii) Continue with the delivery of our key services and protect as many local jobs as possible whilst continuing to maximise efficiency; and
 - (iv) Take a responsible approach to the level of Council Tax.

4.0 THE 2023/24 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT

- 4.1 On the 14th December 2022, the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) announced the Provisional 2023/24 Local Government Settlement. The Minister's statement and key data table is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The "headlines" of the 2023/24 Provisional Settlement are as follows:-

- a. The overall increase in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) funding for 2023/24 (of unhypothecated funding) at an all Wales level, after adjusting for transfers is 7.9% (+£403M).
- b. The settlement for Rhondda Cynon Taf, amounts to an increase of 6.6% which is below the average all Wales increase. Settlement figures across Wales range from 6.5% to 9.3%.
- c. No 'floor' protection has been included for 2023/24.
- d. The Settlement figures for 2023/24 include a transfer into the settlement in respect of the Coastal Risk Management Programme (not applicable to this Council).
- e. The Settlement also provides an indicative all Wales settlement level for financial year 2024/25 at 3.1%. This is indicative only and dependent on current estimates of NDR income and on 2024/25 UK budgets.
- f. Provisional figures and indicative estimates for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are also included for specific grants, at an all Wales level. The Social Care Workforce Grant is set to continue at the current level. This continues to fund our core base budget.
- g. The Council's General Capital Funding allocation has increased by £2.287M to £13.886M (having reduced by £2.165M for this financial year).

5.0 COUNCIL BASE BUDGET REQUIREMENT 2023/24

- 5.1 In anticipation of the 2023/24 local government settlement, the Council's service managers have constructed the base budget requirements for next financial year. Those initial calculations provided for:-
 - Estimated national wage awards, pension costs and National Insurance Contribution levels;
 - Non-pay (i.e. goods and services) inflation, including energy and fuel;
 - Corporate financing requirements and levies; and
 - Full year effects of any additional burdens imposed on the Council and the implications of demand led pressures.
- 5.2 The Council's updated budget requirement was presented to Council on the 15th December 2022 alongside the implications of the Provisional Local Government Settlement which was announced on the 14th December 2022.

- 5.3 After taking into account the updated budget requirement and the provisional settlement increase of 6.6%, in addition to the Council's updated Tax Base, the Council was faced with a **remaining budget gap of £38.326M**.
- 5.4 It was against this position which the Cabinet have considered their further budget strategy options for 2023/24.

6.0 DEVELOPING AN EQUITABLE, DELIVERABLE AND BALANCED BUDGET FOR 2023/24

- 6.1 Whilst the Provisional Settlement is at a higher level than the range modelled in the most recent Medium Term Financial Plan having regard to some of the intense funding and inflationary pressures which are being experienced, it does also recognise the challenge which local government will face, as per the following extract from the Minister's statement.

"While this is a relatively good Settlement, building on improved allocations in recent years, I recognise that the rates of inflation we have experienced over the last few months and the forecasts from the OBR of continuing significant levels of inflation means that local government will still need to make difficult decisions in setting their budgets."

- 6.2 It also follows a sustained period of real term reductions to our funding levels and more recently significant storm damage and the pandemic, and it is against this context that we need to develop a balanced budget for next year. There remain significant pressures upon many of our services together with a limited ability to increase Council Tax income, and a low tax base. Within these parameters, we will therefore need to take appropriate decisions to ensure that next year's budget is equitable for all, does not compromise our financial stability and protects and develops our key services.
- 6.3 The Council's overall financial position was set out at Section 3 of the report. It is vital that we continue with the strategy we have adopted to date that takes account of the importance of sound financial management, including the level of General Fund balances and appropriate use of the "Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve" as transitional funding, whilst targeting any available resources toward our high priority, customer-focused public services.
- 6.4 Every year, there are certain corporate financial provisions that must be "top sliced" locally, before service budgets can be allocated. Next year will be no different. There will be a requirement for:
- a) A provision to meet levies from External Bodies;
 - b) A provision for Capital Charges;

- c) A provision for all other “Miscellaneous Finance” items (Audit Fees, Insurance Costs, Bank Charges, etc.) which are non-specific to any particular Service; and
- d) Resources to fund the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

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

6.6 The Council also continues to monitor the financial implications of the recovery from the pandemic and the impact of significant inflationary pressures on the Council services and contractors, including energy costs as a result of the conflict in Ukraine. There will be a need to continue to use flexibility afforded within available reserves to transition any permanent additional costs into the base budget over the medium term.

7.0 COUNCIL TAX LEVELS

7.1 This Council has always acted reasonably when setting its Council Tax, balancing the impact upon services and the ability of the public to pay, recognising that those eligible will receive support through the Welsh Government’s Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). The proposal is to increase Council Tax in 2023/24 by 3.50%. This proposed increase equates to 70p per week for a person living in a Band A property and £1.05 per week for a person living in a Band D property (42% of properties in Rhondda Cynon Taf are Band A). Increasing Council Tax by 3.50% will reduce the remaining budget gap by £1.433M.

7.2 Members will be aware that the cost of the CTRS is impacted by changes in caseload and by changes to the level of Council Tax. This impacts on the net income generated through any increase in Council Tax. A 1% increase in Council Tax will generate an additional income for the Council of £1.211M (at the 2023/24 tax base level) but will also cost £0.256M in additional CTRS requirements. It therefore follows that a 1% increase generates a net additional income of £0.955M, or stated another way, 21% of any Council Tax increase is lost to support the increased costs associated with Welsh Government’s CTRS.

8.0 SCHOOLS BUDGET (ISB)

8.1 Members have always viewed our schools as being a key priority and have ensured that they have been treated favourably in comparison with other council services.

8.2 The Schools Budget (ISB) has increased and been protected from the worst of the impact of austerity, with an increase over the last 10 years of 28%, at a time when other council budgets have increased by 11%. This would equate

to an extra £25M having been provided to schools as compared to other council services.

- 8.3 The budget gap of £38M which the Council faces equates to 7.7% of our budget, excluding authority wide budgets. Schools have previously been advised, for planning purposes, that they should prepare for a difficult period and a potential 2.75% reduction in funding after having been funded for all pay and non pay pressures. In this regard they were advised to be prepared to use the flexibility of their own reserves to assist them. For context, the aggregate level of school balances increased from £12M to £20M over the course of the last financial year (2021/22).
- 8.4 The strategy now proposed will see schools allocated funding in full to cover costs in respect of pay, inflation, energy cost increases, pupil number changes and additional pressures in respect of ALN. After adjusting the ISB to reflect lower pension and NI costs, this would provide an additional £18.0M of funding to schools.
- 8.5 The reduction of 2.75% already advised to plan for would result in a budget reduction of £5.3M. It is proposed however that an additional £0.5M be set aside as further support with the school based challenges of ALN plus a further £0.5M of general funding be allocated to schools reducing the impact on Schools to £4.3M.
- 8.6 In overall terms, the proposal would mean that the aggregate schools budget would increase by £13.7M, this representing an increase of 7.9% with the level of efficiency also reduced to 2.2%.

9.0 EFFICIENCY

- 9.1 Council services have for many years now delivered against ambitious efficiency targets, making considerable budget reductions without adversely impacting on front line service provision.
- 9.2 As part of the current year's budget strategy, efficiencies of £4.9M were identified and delivered albeit it was noted that the ongoing sustainability of delivering efficiencies at this level would need to be considered.
- 9.3 In light of the emerging financial challenge facing the Council, senior officers were charged with identifying a range of options and opportunities for budget reduction measures. Service managers were engaged across all service areas ensuring that all contributed to closing the likely budget gap which we were going to face.
- 9.4 Over a number of months, including challenge sessions with the Senior Leadership Team, options have been identified and assessed against the service level and resident impact to ensure that our vital services were

protected and maintained wherever possible. Following this assessment the Senior Leadership Team is able to propose budget reductions of £16.164M. This can be delivered from measures which would not significantly impact on service levels nor service delivery albeit would include operational service reconfiguration which might be apparent to residents and service users.

9.5 The proposals can be summarised as follows :

Table 1 : Efficiency and Service Operational Reconfiguration

	£'000
Service Restructurings and Vacancy Management	2,260
Service Redesign / Use of Technology	505
Operational Service Reconfiguration	2,041
Optimisation of Procured and Commissioned Services	2,970
Additional in-year (2022/23) efficiency Requirement	1,500
Use of External Funding / Recharging	2,507
General Efficiency Measures	4,381
Total Efficiency and Service Operational Reconfiguration	16,164

9.6 The measures proposed above can be delivered operationally and without a significant detrimental impact on our front line services.

10.0 SPECIFIC SERVICE / EXPENDITURE CHANGES

10.1 This Council has taken a proactive approach to dealing with the budget pressures it continues to face including delivery of saving proposals early with a clear focus maintained across the medium term planning horizon. The Council has continued to deliver robust, balanced budgets and taken the opportunity to use our Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve, as transition funding, to sensibly support the overall budget strategy. It is recommended that this approach is continued.

10.2 The Cabinet have also determined to review a number of services and strategy proposals and these are set out below.

a. Waste Services Strategy

Cabinet have agreed, following consultation, to progress with this proposal, namely :

- (i) The collection of residual household waste on a 3-weekly basis for all domestic waste collections.

- (ii) Presentation of waste on a 3-weekly basis will be as follows; strict volume control measures will apply to all domestic waste, namely:
 - a. a maximum of 3 black bags per household, (for those properties with existing black bag waste collections),
 - b. The “no side waste” rule continues for those households with large 240L wheelie bin collections (but 1 bag of side waste, no larger than 70L, is allowed for the standard 120L bins); and
- (iii) Initiate a trial of the use of reusable recycling sacks for the collection of dry mixed recycling, (DMR).

The implementation of the above will reduce the Council's budget by £800k (full year).

b. Community Meals

Cabinet have agreed, following consultation, to implement a service change proposal namely to reorganise the existing internal service and provide a hot/frozen Community Meal home delivery service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.

The implementation of the above will reduce the Council's budget by £427k (full year).

c. Council Run Nursery Provision

To increase the availability of a range of childcare options for families in local communities, a market testing exercise has confirmed that there are a number of experienced providers who have expressed an interest to deliver one or more of the Council run nursery settings. Cabinet have agreed that a procurement process is now to be undertaken.

The implementation of the above will reduce the Council's budget by **£322k (full year)**.

d. Council Tax Premium on Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes

Cabinet and Council have already agreed the introduction of a Council Tax Premium on long term empty properties and second homes within the County Borough. The proposal will support the Council to protect and continue with the comprehensive range of packages available to bring

empty properties back into use, through raising extra council tax, estimated to be **£1,500k** (full year).

e. Capitalisation of Spend

Expenditure has been identified which is currently funded from our revenue budgets which could, in line with accounting rules, be funded from our capital budgets. These expenditure items relate to IT software licence costs, vehicle purchases and our contribution to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.

SLT have considered the impact upon our capital programme, in the context of the overall quantum of the programme across 3 years, and concluded that a reduction in our core programme can be delivered. Opportunities will be taken to top up any specific areas of demand or particular impact, using the flexibility provided by the increased capital resources made available as part of next year's settlement, in addition to any one off investment funding opportunities going forward. The Council's updated 3 year capital programme 2023/24 to 2025/26 will set out full details.

The proposal would reduce the revenue budget by **£4,000k**.

f. Fees and Charges

It is proposed that all Fees and Charges are subject to a 5.0% standard increase, with the Council absorbing the implications of not applying an uplift in line with the CPI rate of inflation recognising the significant increase in our cost base and subsequent level of subsidy. A number of areas are proposed to be subject to specific treatment, as set out in the [Fees and Charges Proposals 2023/24](#) already considered by Cabinet and now consulted upon.

These proposals would generate additional income of **£750k**.

- 10.3 The financial implications (including part-year impact) of the above proposals are shown in the following table.

Table 2 : Specific Service / Expenditure Changes

	£'000
Waste Services - Residual Waste Collection	- 600
Community Meals Service	- 320
Council Run Nursery Provision	- 188
Council Tax Premium (Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes)	- 1,500
Capitalisation	- 4,000
Fees and Charges	- 750
Total Specific Service / Expenditure Changes	- 7,358

Note, part year savings have been assumed where appropriate.

10.4 ENERGY

- 10.5 The latest available forecasted increases for our energy costs for next year show a 283% increase for gas and a 147% increase for electricity. The financial implications of these increases are built into the budget requirement as set out above.
- 10.6 It is apparent from latest available forecasts however, that the likely costs for the year after (2024/25) will be lower and that there is the opportunity to utilise one off funding to smooth the one year spike in energy costs. It is clearly important that we continue to monitor movements in forecasts on a regular basis recognising the extreme volatility in the market at the moment and the most recent announcement regarding the Energy Bills Discount Scheme (EBDS) and the extent of its applicability for non-domestic consumers is being assessed.
- 10.7 It is proposed therefore that a contribution from reserves of £5.0M is made to smooth the impact for financial year 2023/24.
- 10.8 The combined impact of the aforementioned budget strategy components are now set out below.

Table 3 : Impact of the Budget Strategy Components

	£'000
Revised Budget Gap at Provisional Settlement	38,326
<u>Budget Strategy Components</u>	
Schools	- 4,256
Council Tax at 3.5%	- 1,433
Total Service Efficiencies and Operational Service Reconfiguration Savings	- 16,164
Total Specific Service / Expenditure Changes	- 7,358
Remaining Budget Gap	9,115
Energy Reserve	- 5,000
Remaining Budget Gap	4,115

10.9 *Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve (Transitional Funding)* – We have for many years used our transition funding reserve sensibly as part of our balanced budget strategy, at a level which does not compromise the robustness of our budget and which can be replenished with some certainty, given our ongoing strategy of delivering savings early.

10.10 As previously referenced the reserve currently stands at £6.648M, having been replenished during this year (2022/23) by £3.003M to quarter 2. Accordingly, to address the remaining budget gap, it is proposed that an allocation of £4.115M is made from this reserve for 2023/24. This would facilitate a balanced budget for 2023/24 and would leave £2.533M in the reserve (subject to the year-end assessment of reserves). Processes are now sufficiently well embedded to ensure that savings are achieved in-year and that this reserve can continue to be replenished.

	£'000
Remaining Budget Gap	4,115
Use of Transition Funding	- 4,115
Remaining Budget Gap 2023/24	-

10.11 The above provides a robust and balanced budget strategy for financial year 2023/24 which is now recommended to Council.

10.12 The Final Local Government Settlement for 2023/24 is expected to be received during early March 2023. There is one change planned for the final settlement and that is the intention to transfer funding for the increased employer costs related to Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) pensions from a grant to the FRAs into the final local government settlement. This should be cost neutral to the Council. There are no indications of any other significant changes between the provisional and final settlement but such a risk clearly remains.

10.13 It is proposed that the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services be authorised to amend the budget to deal with any change between Provisional and Final Settlement. Any change to the net budget requirement is proposed to be dealt with by means of amending the contribution from the Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve.

11.0 SERVICE PRIORITIES

11.1 Even after a period of significantly reducing resources and hence financial pressure on all services, this Council remains committed as far as it possibly can to continue to deliver its key services, stronger communities and social justice.

11.2 The Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 sets out that our key purpose is to provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous.

11.3 In addition to our revenue base budget requirements, opportunities also continue to be taken to deliver investment in key strategic areas through one off funding made available via a risk based review of earmarked reserves and through the early identification of opportunities to deliver in-year savings. The Council has already invested over £146M (over and above the normal Capital Programme) in areas supporting key Corporate Plan priorities since October 2015, the latest investment (£2.725M) being agreed by Council in September 2022.

11.4 A report setting out the updated capital programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 will be reported for Members consideration alongside this revenue budget strategy.

12.0 THE 2023/24 BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION PROCESS

12.1 As in previous years, the Council has been keen to consult with the public and other interested stakeholders on its general budget strategy and how services are delivered.

12.2 The approach to budget consultation for 2023/24 was set out in the Cabinet report dated 17th October 2022. It comprises 2 phases as follows:

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

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

12.3 The Phase 1 Consultation report was considered by Cabinet on the 23rd January 2023 alongside the initial budget proposals which were then consulted upon as part of Phase 2.

12.4 The Phase 2 Consultation report is now attached at Appendix 2. The phase 2 consultation process ran from the 24th January 2023 to the 6^h February 2023 and included:

- On-line questionnaire and Poll via the Let's Talk website;
- Email to all Key stakeholders;
- Young person's engagement through Instagram and face to face engagement at a Secondary School;
- Promotion through social media;
- A telephone consultation option through the Council's Contact Centre and a freepost address for postal responses;
- Meetings with:
 - Older Persons Advisory Group;
 - The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
 - School Budget Forum; and
 - Joint Consultative Committee.

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

13.0 THE 2023/24 MACRO REVENUE BUDGET

13.1 In arriving at a strategy for 2023/24, the Cabinet has taken into consideration its key commitments, its views on service delivery and relevant charges for services and the need to minimise the tax burden on local residents. Consequently, and after careful deliberation, the Cabinet has concluded that it can now propose a balanced revenue budget which will meet all of the fundamental requirements of its preferred strategy **and** minimise the Council Tax increase for next year.

13.2 Table 4 below illustrates how the revenue resources available to the Council could be utilised, with a Council Tax increase of 3.50%:

Table 4: Proposed Resources in 2023/24

	£'000
2023/24 Net Revenue Spending	609,011
LESS: Revenue Support Grant & NDR Contribution	470,847
LESS: Social Care Workforce Grant	3,668
Sub total	134,496
LESS: Energy Reserve	5,000
LESS: Release of Earmarked Reserves	4,115
To be met from Council Taxpayers	125,381

- 13.3 Table 5 below, shows the overall effect on services of applying the principles of the Cabinet's recommended outline 2023/24 budget strategy.

Table 5: Application of the 2023/24 Outline Budget Strategy

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS	2022/23	2023/24	Increase/ (Decrease)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Corporate Requirements</u>			
Capital Financing	21,308	21,708	400
Levies	13,202	14,502	1,300
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	25,587	25,682	95
Miscellaneous	15,008	12,844	(2,164)
	75,105	74,736	(369)
<u>Individual School Budgets (ISB)</u>			
Individual School Budgets	174,745	186,976	12,231
<u>Other Council Services</u>			
Community & Children's Services	182,177	202,458	20,281
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services	65,269	71,176	5,907
Chief Executive's	35,822	37,975	2,153
Education & Inclusion Services	33,674	35,690	2,016
Net Revenue Spending	566,792	609,011	42,219

14.0 SPECIFIC GRANTS

- 14.1 For next year, the Welsh Government is to provide over £1.3Bn in Specific Revenue Grants to Welsh Local Authorities.

- 14.2 Whilst specific grants dilute local accountability, such funding does enable us to undertake projects and deliver services that otherwise may not have been possible. Whilst we will continue to make representation for such funding to be transferred into the Revenue Support Grant, until they do so then specific grants will continue to supplement our base revenue budget.
- 14.3 By their nature, specific grants are often directed toward specific spend areas or policy objectives and are not certain in terms of their ongoing continuation nor value, presenting uncertainty in terms of forward planning.
- 14.4 The allocation of specific grants, however, remains a key feature of the annual local government settlement, albeit there is a commitment to reduce such hypothecation. There are also a number of specific grants which have been introduced to deal with recurring cost pressures (eg Social Care Workforce Grant) and it is important that we seek to ensure their continuation beyond 2023/24.

15.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY IMPLICATIONS

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

16. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 The allocation of resources, as set out in the proposed 2023/24 Budget Strategy, is based on supporting the Council's service delivery requirements and associated statutory responsibilities for the forthcoming year. In doing so, the proposed strategy is in line with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

17.0 CONSULTATION

- 17.1 Consultation and engagement has been undertaken as part of formulating the recommended 2023/24 Revenue Budget Strategy, the detail of which is set out in Section 12 of the report.

18.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

19.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

19.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget and also a legal duty under the Local Government Act 2000 for it to be reported to and approved by Full Council. The recommended 2023/24 Revenue Budget Strategy and its reporting to full Council ensures compliance with these legal duties.

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

20.1 The recommended 2023/24 Revenue Budget Strategy has been formulated to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, as set out within the Corporate Plan "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024. The plan is aligned to the goals and principles included within the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

21.0 CONCLUSIONS

21.1 The Council's overall financial position remains sound, with General Reserves now restored to the recommended minimum level of £10M.

21.2 On the 14th December 2022, the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) announced the Provisional 2023/24 Local Government Settlement which showed this Council's increase in resources was set at 6.6%.

21.3 The Cabinet's proposals properly address the corporate financial requirements of the Council and allocate an adequate financial uplift to the Individual Schools Budget. The remaining resources available are allocated to fund all other services and to support our key priorities in 2023/24.

21.4 The Cabinet has recommended setting the 2023/24 revenue spending and budget at £609.011M which will require a Council Tax increase of 3.50% for the financial year ending the 31st March 2024.

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

DRAFT



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Provisional Local Government Settlement 2023-24**
DATE **14 December 2022**
BY **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government**

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

Adjusting for transfers, the core revenue funding for local government in 2023-24 will increase by 7.9% on a like-for-like basis compared to the current year. No authority will receive less than a 6.5% increase. In 2023-24, local authorities will receive £5.5bn from the Welsh Government in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and non-domestic rates (NDR) to spend on delivering key services.

In addition to this, I am publishing information on revenue and capital grants planned for the following two years. For 2023-24, these amount to over £1.3bn for revenue and over £925m for capital. We are providing these indicative grant values now so local authorities are able to plan their budgets efficiently. This information will be further updated in the final settlement.

The indicative Wales-level core revenue funding allocation for 2024-25 is £5.69bn – equating to an uplift of £169m (3.1%). This figure is indicative and dependent on both our current estimates of NDR income and any 2024-25 UK budgets.

As in recent years, this Government's priorities continue to be health and local government services. In making decisions about the level of funding for local government I have responded to the need to support key front-line services. In particular I have included funding to enable authorities to continue to meet the additional costs of introducing the Real Living Wage for care workers and to support pressures in education. I have again taken the decision to provide all the available funding up front and not hold back funding for in-year recognition of the 2023/24 teachers' pay deal. Authorities' budget planning must therefore accommodate these costs.

I know local government has been facing significant pressures and has sought to recognise the impact of inflation on the living standards of those who work in local government as well as the broader community. I hope that this increased Settlement enables local authorities to

continue to deliver the services communities need as well as supporting national and local ambitions for the future.

This Settlement provides local authorities with a stable platform on which to plan their budgets for the coming financial year and beyond. We have worked closely with local government, and we appreciate the pressures local government is facing. I will continue to engage closely with local government through the WLGA.

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

In line with our focus on countering the effects of poverty, we remain committed to protecting vulnerable and low-income households from any reduction in support under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes, despite the shortfall in the funding transferred by the UK Government following its abolition of council tax benefit. We will continue to maintain full entitlements under our Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2023-24 and are again providing £244m for CTRS in the Settlement in recognition of this.

As announced on 12 December, I am providing a package of non-domestic rates support worth more than £460m over the next two financial years. I am maintaining the approach taken in previous years and freezing the non-domestic rates multiplier for 2023-24. This ensures there will again be no inflationary increase in the amount of rates businesses and other ratepayers are paying.

I am also introducing a £113m, fully funded, transitional relief for all ratepayers whose bills increase by more than £300 following the UK-wide revaluation exercise, which takes effect on 1 April 2023.

Finally, the NDR support package also provides over £140m of non-domestic rates relief for retail, leisure, and hospitality businesses in Wales. Eligible ratepayers will receive 75% non-domestic rates relief for the duration of 2023-24, capped at £110,000 per business across Wales. Our approach means that businesses in Wales will receive comparable support to that provided in other parts of the UK.

I set out the position on capital funding for the Welsh Government as part of my budget statement on Tuesday. The settlement we received from the UK Government was disappointing and is not sufficient to meet our ambitions to invest in Wales' future, with our overall capital budget 8.1% lower in real terms than the current year.

Following a review of our capital budgets, general capital funding for local government for 2023-24 has been confirmed at £180m and will remain at £180m for 2024-25. Even as we meet the challenges posed by inflation, we must not lose sight of the need to maintain our focus on responding to the climate and nature emergency and contributing to the Net Zero Wales plan we have developed together. Separately I am providing £20 million capital in each year to enable authorities to respond to our joint priority of decarbonisation.

Attached to this statement is a summary table setting out the Settlement allocations (Aggregate External Finance (AEF)) by authority. The allocations are derived using the formula agreed with local government. As a result of the formula and related data, the table shows the range of the funding allocations, from a 6.5% increase over the 2022-23 settlement to a 9.3% increase. Given the significant increases, I am not proposing to include a floor this year and have allocated all the available funding in this Settlement.

Further details will be sent to all local authorities and published on the Welsh Government's website: <https://gov.wales/local-government-revenue-and-capital-settlement-2023-2024>

While this is a relatively good Settlement, building on improved allocations in recent years, I recognise that the rates of inflation we have experienced over the last few months and the forecasts from the OBR of continuing significant levels of inflation means that local government will still need to make difficult decisions in setting their budgets. It is important they engage meaningfully with their local communities as they consider priorities for the forthcoming year.

The setting of budgets, and in turn council tax, is the responsibility of each local authority. Authorities will need to take account of the full range of funding sources available to them, as well as the pressures they face, in setting their budgets for the coming year.

This announcement commences the formal seven-week consultation on the Settlement. This will end on 2 February 2023.

Summary Table

2023-24 provisional Settlement – comparison of 2022-23 AEF (adjusted for transfers) and 2023-24 provisional AEF, and distribution of the 2022-23 Council Tax Reduction Schemes funding (distributed within AEF) (£000s)

	<i>£000s</i>				
Unitary authority	Adjusted 2022-23 final AEF*	2023-24 provisional AEF	Change (£000)	Change (%)	Rank
Isle of Anglesey	114,490	123,555	9,064	7.9%	12
Gwynedd	213,017	227,843	14,826	7.0%	19
Conwy	184,915	198,413	13,498	7.3%	16
Denbighshire	173,596	187,871	14,275	8.2%	10
Flintshire	232,336	251,747	19,410	8.4%	8
Wrexham	207,279	224,621	17,342	8.4%	7
Powys	210,090	228,388	18,298	8.7%	5
Ceredigion	119,238	129,050	9,812	8.2%	9
Pembrokeshire	196,776	212,415	15,639	7.9%	11
Carmarthenshire	311,585	338,017	26,432	8.5%	6
Swansea	388,409	417,775	29,366	7.6%	14
Neath Port Talbot	258,174	276,397	18,223	7.1%	17
Bridgend	232,109	249,895	17,786	7.7%	13
The Vale Of Glamorgan	185,931	202,535	16,604	8.9%	3
Rhondda Cynon Taf	441,596	470,847	29,251	6.6%	21
Merthyr Tydfil	110,704	118,497	7,793	7.0%	18
Caerphilly	317,789	339,610	21,821	6.9%	20
Blaenau Gwent	131,057	139,597	8,540	6.5%	22
Torfaen	160,218	172,223	12,005	7.5%	15
Monmouthshire	112,020	122,490	10,470	9.3%	1
Newport	265,502	289,211	23,709	8.9%	4
Cardiff	543,810	592,891	49,081	9.0%	2
Total Unitary Authorities	5,110,643	5,513,888	403,245	7.9%	

Note: Total may not sum correctly due to rounding

1. 2023-24 AEF adjusted transfers of £3.040m (at 2022-23 prices) into and out of the Settlement and for the latest 2023-24 tax base.

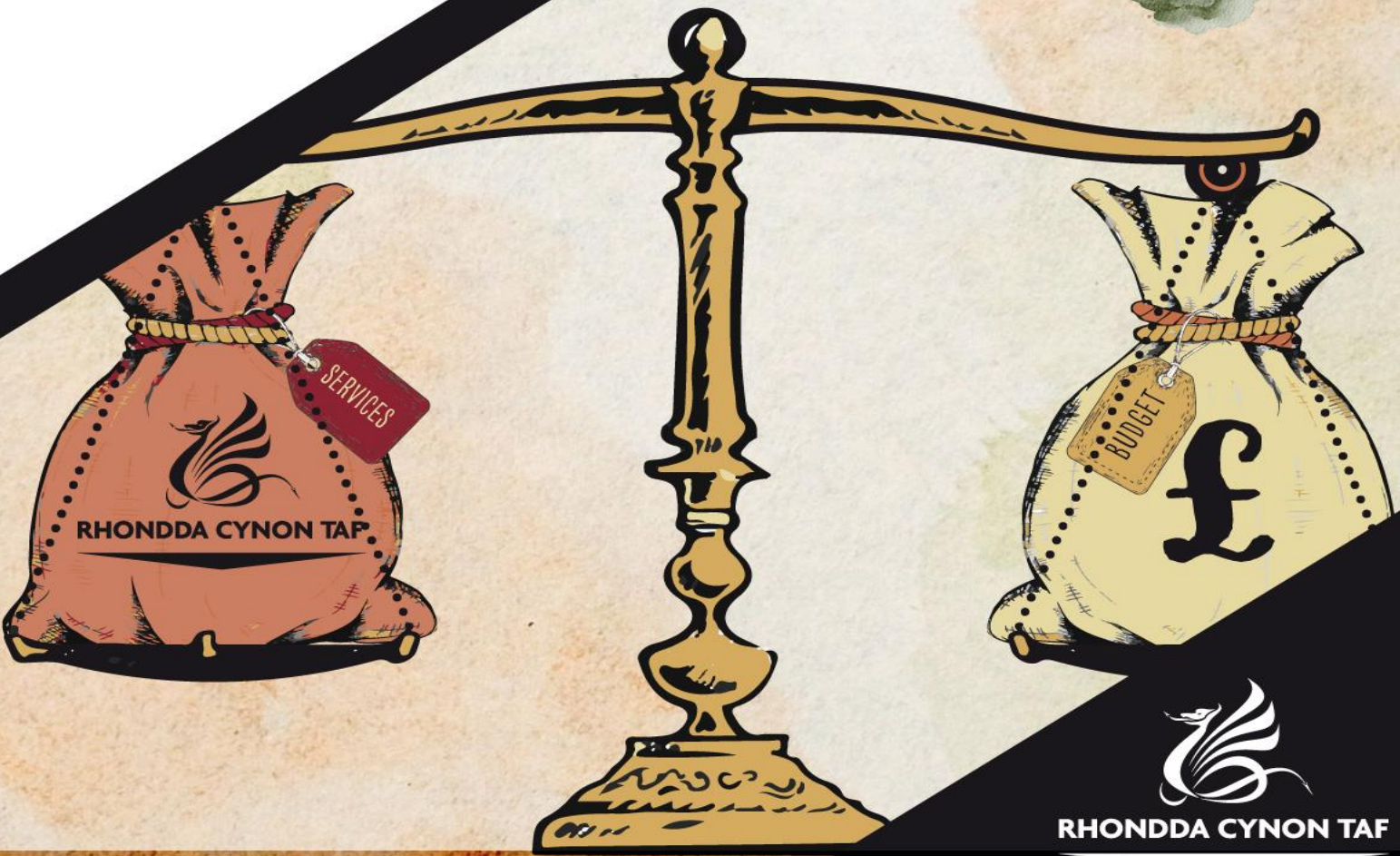
2023/24 BUDGET (PHASE 2)

Dewch i
siarad RhCT
Let's talk
RCT

Budget Consultation

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

February 2023



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the main findings from the Phase 2 Budget Consultation 2023/24.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf's 2023/24 Budget Consultation is a phased approach, so that we can ensure residents and stakeholders have as much opportunity as possible to provide views on the budget and to make sure that views are informed by the most up to date and relevant information.
- Phase 1 provided residents and stakeholders with the opportunity to feedback their views on some of the key strategic building blocks used to construct the Council's budget. The [Phase 1 consultation report](#) was available to support the preparation of the budget strategy proposals and was presented to Cabinet on the 23rd January 2023, where a draft budget strategy was agreed.
- This report presents the findings of **phase 2** of the budget consultation, which asked for views on the draft budget strategy for 2023/24. Phase 2 of the consultation started on the 24th January and ended on the 6th February 2023.
- The Council is proposing that Council Tax be increased by 3.5% for next year, likely to be one of the lowest increases in Wales. 64.3% of respondents felt that the increase was not reasonable compared to 30.8% who fed back the proposed increase was reasonable. The Poll question on the Let's Talk Budget Engagement site was completed by 181 people, with 61.3% in opposition to the proposal.
- The main reasons provided by respondents who disagreed with the proposed increase in Council Tax were: paying more for less of a service with specific references to the recent waste service changes and the current United Kingdom wide cost of living crisis and that people were finding it difficult financially, with the increasing price of food, energy etc.
- The respondents who thought that the proposed increase in Council Tax was reasonable indicated that they understood the need for an increase in Council Tax and the level suggested was fair. The Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG) members agreed that this is a reasonable increase in Council Tax compared to likely Council Tax increases in other Local Authorities across Wales.
- The Schools Budget next year is once again being prioritised and will contribute a far lower efficiency saving than other Council Services. It is proposed to increase the Schools Budget by £13.7 million, an increase of 7.9% compared to the 6.6% increase in funding the Council has received from Welsh Government. 66.3% of respondents agreed with the approach to continue to prioritise our schools and the proposed increase to the Schools budget for 2023/24.

- Significant work has been undertaken across all Council Services and budget reduction measures totalling £16.16 million for 2023/24 have been identified which can be delivered without impacting on our front-line services. 70.0% of respondents agreed that the Council should continue to maximise efficiency and pursue these efficiency savings for next year.
- 55.3% of respondents agreed with the proposals for fees and charges.
- 67.6% of respondents agreed with the proposed approach for the use of the Council's reserves.
- Over 900 people were engaged in the phase 2 budget consultation. Overall (including Phase 1) over 2,300 people were engaged in the Council's budget setting process.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Phase 2 Budget Consultation 2023/24.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background to the consultation process.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results of the Let's Talk engagement tools and the feedback received from the OPAG.
- 1.5 Section 5 provides feedback on the young persons' engagement.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council undertakes a comprehensive approach to its annual budget consultation, involving a large number of residents and key stakeholders.
- 2.2 The widespread approach we use and the range of views we capture provides senior managers and Cabinet Members with the necessary information they need to set the budget for the year ahead.
- 2.3 Rhondda Cynon Taf's 2023/24 Budget Consultation is a phased approach, so that we can ensure residents and stakeholders have as much opportunity as possible to provide views on the budget and to make sure that views are informed by the most up to date and relevant information.
- 2.4 Phase 1 provided residents and stakeholders with the opportunity to feedback their views on some of the key strategic building blocks used to construct the Council's budget.
- 2.5 The [Phase 1 consultation report](#) was available to support the preparation of the budget strategy proposals and was presented to Cabinet on the 23rd January 2023, where a draft budget strategy was agreed.
- 2.6 This report presents the findings of **phase 2** of the budget consultation, which asked for views on the draft budget strategy for 2023/24.
- 2.7 Phase 2 of the consultation started on the 24th January and ended on the 6th February 2023.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the methodology used for the Phase 2 Budget Consultation 2023/24. The consultation was conducted in-house.
- 3.2 The consultation period ran from the 24th January and ended on the 6th February 2023.
- 3.3 The approach included the following methods to consult with a range of stakeholders:
- Publication of information on the Rhondda Cynon Taf [“Let’s Talk”](#) website, which included
 - A survey
 - “Quick Polls”
 - A simplified “Easy Read” document that could be downloaded and printed for use by any audiences that felt unable to engage with the full survey format
 - Key background documents
 - Promotion through social media
 - A face-to-face meeting with the OPAG
 - [Overview & Scrutiny Committee virtual meeting](#)
 - School Budget Forum virtual meeting
 - Joint Consultative Committee virtual meeting
 - A face-to-face session with young people and engagement through Instagram
 - An email sent to key stakeholders.
- 3.4 The Council provided a number of alternatives to online engagement, as it is important to continue to consider hard to reach groups, those having reduced or no access to the internet and those who prefer to engage through traditional methods. A telephone consultation option was also in place, through the Council’s contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address was available for postal responses.
- 3.5 The Team designed an Easy Read/Plan English Document in paper format and online, to simplify some of the consultation materials.
- 3.6 Over 900 people were engaged in the phase 2 budget consultation. Overall (including Phase 1) over 2,300 people were engaged in the Council’s budget setting process.

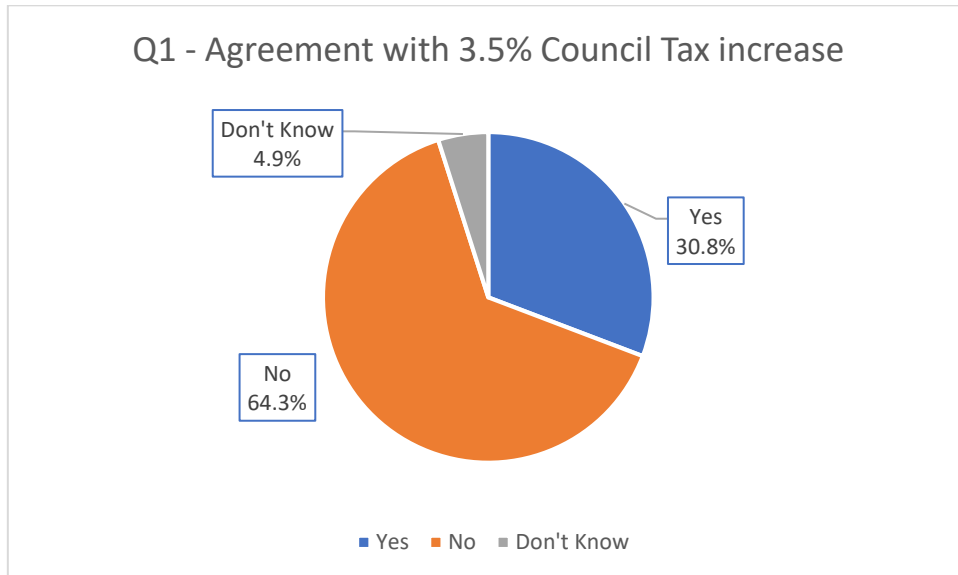
4. Consultation Findings

4.1 The following section outlines the results from the phase 2 budget consultation questionnaire, which received 510 responses, and also includes the feedback received from the Older Persons Advisory Group.

A selection of comments are provided, and the full list of comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.

Council Tax

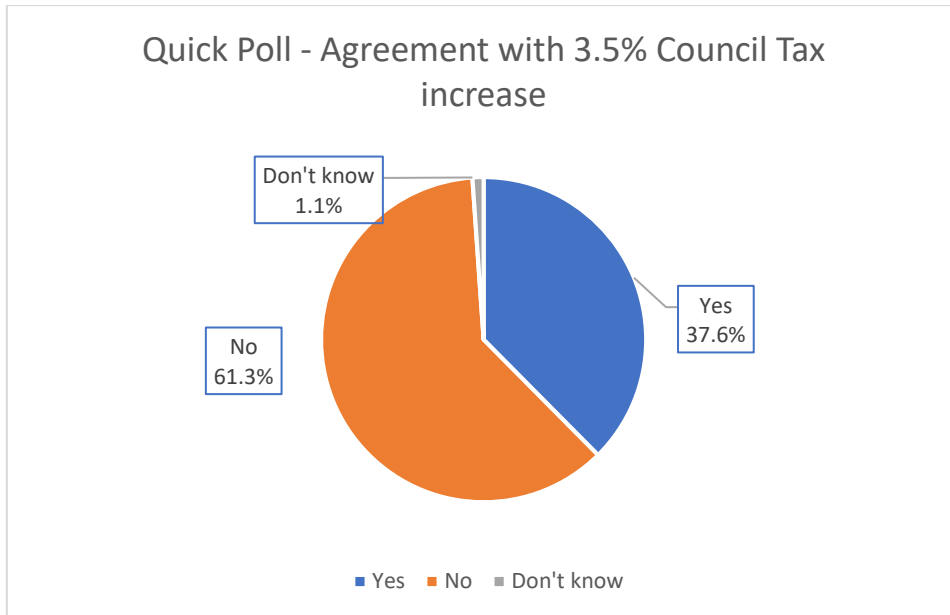
4.2 The Council is proposing that Council Tax be increased by 3.5% for next year. The majority of respondents to the questionnaire felt that the increase was not reasonable (64.3%).



	Number	%
Q1 - Do you agree that 3.5% is a reasonable increase in Council Tax?	Yes	157 30.8%
	No	328 64.3%
	Don't know	25 4.9%
	Total	510

Figure 1 – Council Tax

4.3 The Poll question on the Let’s Talk Budget Engagement site was completed by 181 people, with 61.3% in opposition to the proposal.



Quick Poll: Do you agree with the proposed Council Tax increase of 3.5%?	Number	%
Yes	68	37.6%
No	111	61.3%
Don't know	2	1.1%
	181	

Figure 2 – Council Tax Quick Poll

4.4 The comments received on Council Tax can be placed under a number of themes, as follows:

Disagreement/Removal of services

4.5 A large number of comments disagreed with an increase in Council Tax, as respondents felt that they were paying more for less of a service, most of these comments were in relation to the recent waste service changes:

“You’re dropping collections, we’re all struggling with bills, you want more money from us for a drop in service!”

“You have reduced bin waste removal so what are we paying council tax for exactly? I think we need a reduction not increase”

“We seem to be asked to pay more towards a council delivering less and less”

“You can’t increase when you are decreasing services left right and centre!”

Cost of Living

- 4.6 Another reason cited for disagreement with the suggested increase in Council Tax was the current cost of living crisis and that people were finding it difficult financially, with the increasing price of food, energy etc.

“With the current cost of living, the increase in income tax and the reduction of services by the council I don’t think it’s reasonable to ask individuals to pay more”

“With the cost of living some residents will not be able to afford to pay the increase”

“With the cost of living increased, across the board from energy, food and inflation rises, wages not increasing yet you want to put up council tax? Think a more realistic approach is required. People on benefits would be less affected by this than people working”

“With the cost of living crisis this puts further pressure on families!”

Fair increase

- 4.7 A number of respondents said that they understood the need for an increase in Council Tax and the level suggested was fair.

“Very reasonable taking into account inflation, another pressure for households but could be much worse”

“This is neither too high or too low, it enables front line services to be protected, for this year at least. Those who would find this difficult may be eligible for CTRS”

“Prepared for an increase if services need to be paid for”

“Probably could manage a bit higher if this helps safeguard services”

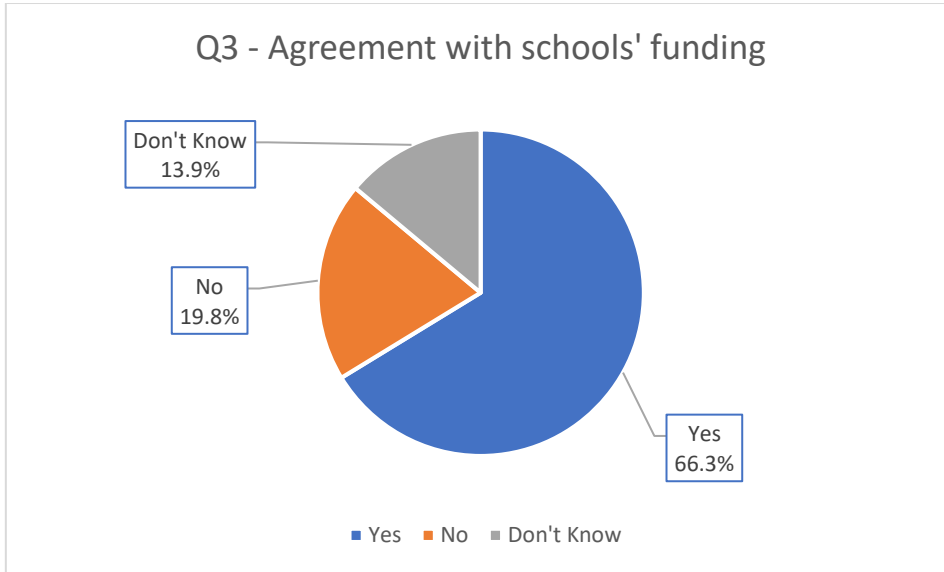
“A small increase seems inevitable to avoid cuts in services”

- 4.8 OPAG members agreed that this is a reasonable increase in Council Tax when compared to likely Council Tax increases in other Local Authorities across Wales. The group noted the increase in the cost of living and the increase in Council Tax is expected.

Schools Funding

4.9 The Schools Budget next year is once again being prioritised and will have to contribute a far lower efficiency saving than other Council Services. It is proposed to increase the Schools Budget by £13.7 million, an increase of 7.9% as compared to the 6.6% increase in funding the Council has received from Welsh Government.

66.3% of respondents agreed with the approach and the proposed increase to the Schools budget for 2023/24.



		Number	%
Q3 - Schools	Yes	338	66.3%
	No	101	19.8%
	Don't know	71	13.9%
	Total	510	

Figure 3 – Schools

4.10 The majority of comments welcomed the approach for funding schools.

“The schools teach the future generation and need to be fit for purpose”

“The education of our children is important for the future”

“Schools should have unlimited funding”

“Schools need more money - more than this really”

4.11 Of those who were not in support, the main reason was that respondents thought that the funding should be provided to other service areas, mainly social care:

“With the NHS in crisis I believe our social care system needs greater investment”

“Unless social care has the same level of protection against efficiencies”

“Social care services are just as essential. There is limited scope for efficiencies across the councils, don't think schools should be protected”

- 4.12 Some of the comments raised concerns over the efficiency within schools.

“Schools management needs to be more prudent across the board, in particular with regard to the staffing levels of agency / supply teaching staff”

“I am sure schools can be more efficient but they must be a priority”

“A lot of school funding is completely wasted by the schools”

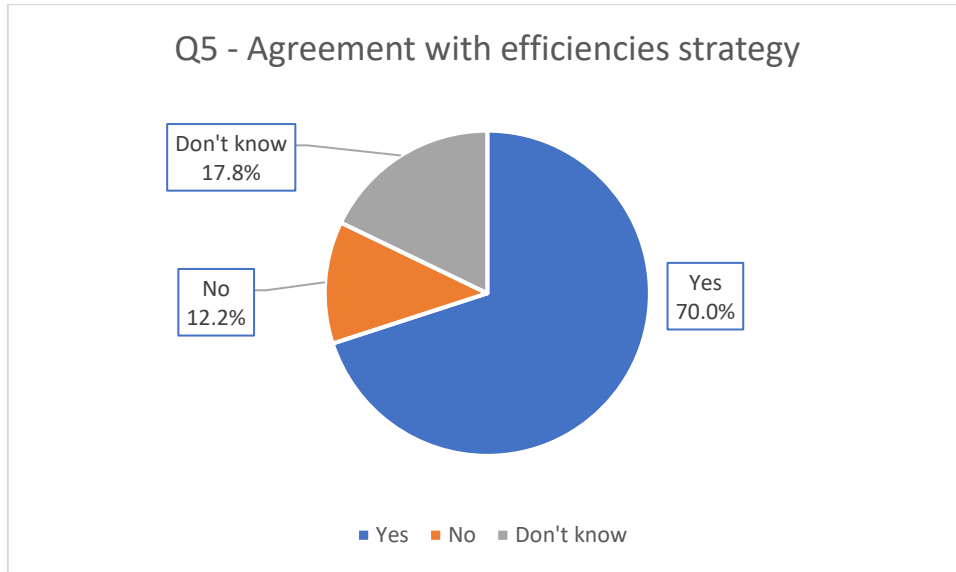
“Needs better management of finances”

- 4.13 The OPAG agreed with the proposal, urging the importance of education for the current and future generations. A question was raised regarding the expectation of schools as they are receiving extra funding and feedback was provided that the additional funding will cover increases in costs that are being experienced by schools as a result of rises in the cost of living, amongst other things.

Efficiencies

4.14 Significant work has been undertaken across all Council Services and budget reduction measures totalling £16.16 million for 2023/24 have been identified which can be delivered without impacting on our front-line services

70% of respondents agreed that the Council should continue to maximise efficiency and pursue these efficiency savings for next year.



		Number	%
Q5 - Efficiencies	Yes	357	70.0%
	No	62	12.2%
	Don't know	91	17.8%
	Total	510	

Figure 4 – Efficiencies

4.15 Many of the responses were in agreement with the need for efficiencies:

“Reducing waste and making efficiencies should always be the starting point when budgets are tight.”

“Maximise efficiency but do not reduce essential services”

“Making efficiencies is a must for all organisations and the council should be no different”

“It's to your credit that Council is still driving hard on savings through efficiencies”

4.16 Some of the comments on this proposal noted that efficiencies should not be found at the expense of staffing levels or support.

“This should take place although not at the expense of additional roles or recruitment to look at budget reductions”

“Only if it doesn't impact on staff and the quality of the services you provide”

“Efficiency- yes but not if it means putting pressure on the workforce and more is expected of them for the same money”

“As long as there are no pay cuts or increased workload due to a decrease in staff for front line workers”

- 4.17 A number of suggestions for efficiencies and savings were made in the comments, including:

“Covid lockdown has demonstrated that many council and related services can be delivered via home or hybrid working, reducing the need for many buildings across the borough which could be sold off and used for other means, building more schools, housing or community hubs, rather than us paying to heat large office spaces which are surplus to requirements in the 21st century working environment”

“With technology advancements to improve the efficiency of processes, I think this should be continued to look at efficiencies. Also the move to three weekly waste collections will save and hopefully improve the waste management in residential properties across the region.”

“For example do we need libraries in Abercynon and Hirwaun when there are libraries in Aberdare and Mt Ash etc.”

“Efficiencies should be sort but not to the detriment of front line services I would suggest introducing a streamline structure and a dynamic team”

“Service levels should be maintained through smart working”

- 4.18 A number of comments called for cuts to managers and Councillors:

“It is vital to maintain your workforce as much as possible, however have less people sitting at the top receiving stupidly high wages and employ more people to get things done efficiently”

“Every penny counts. Maybe look at how many managers you employ or those on high wages”

“Less councillors”

- 4.19 A number of respondents queried the statement outlined in the question that the efficiencies could be made without impacting upon frontline services. This was mainly in relation to the recent service changes (NB:

the savings that will be realised from the recent service changes do not form part of the £16.1M efficiencies proposals).

“The waste collection moving to 3 weeks is not an efficiency saving, it is a cost cutting as you are removing a service. Call it what it is”

“How can you say this will not impact front line services when clearly it will, one such service is cutting hot meals from May 2023 and cutting hours of staff delivering those meals to the most vulnerable people in our society”

“You have cut extremely valuable front line services to do this.”

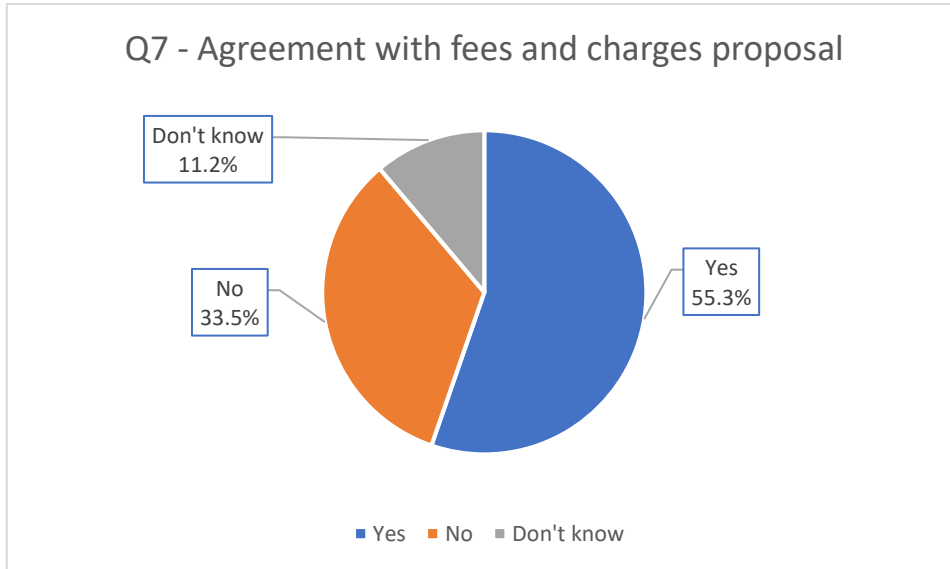
- 4.20 The OPAG agreed that the Council should continue to maximise efficiency and pursue those efficiencies for the year to follow.

Fees and Charges

- 4.21 The Council reviews the level of fees and charges on an annual basis in the context of the rate of inflation. The current level of inflation (Consumer Prices Index to December 2022) is 10.5%. It is proposed that for the year ahead, the general rate of increase across our fees and charges is set at 5% with the Council absorbing the implications of not applying an uplift in line with inflation. A number of areas are proposed to be subject to specific changes, as shown in the table below:

Area of Charge	Specific Fees and Charges Proposals
Car Park Charges	Freeze
Licenses (Hackney Carriage / Private Hire)	Freeze
Cinema Entrance Fee	Freeze
School Meals (Primary and Secondary Schools)	£2.70 Primary School (per meal) £2.95 Secondary School (per meal)
Leisure for Life – Membership / Pay and Play	Membership £37.50 (with further proposals set out in the full Fees and Charges Review)
Bereavement Services (Burial and Cremation fees)	Cremation Fee £812.90 Burial Fee £2,116.40
Rhondda Heritage Park	£9.95 Adult Entry (with further proposals set out in the full Fees and Charges Review)
Lido (Pontypridd)	£3.00 Adult Entry (Children Under 16 remain free)
Dare Valley Country Park (Caravan Pitch charge)	£28.00 per caravan pitch
Day Services – Meal price	£4.55 per meal
Home Care Hourly Charge / Day Centre Daily Charge	£20 Home Care Hourly Charge £20 Day Centre Daily Charge
Bulky Waste Collection	£17.00 (for up to 3 items)
Residential Parking	£12.00 (first permit), £17.50 (second permit) and £60 (for subsequent additional permits)
Registrar (non-statutory fees)	For example, Marriage and Civil Partnership fee at an approved premises Monday – Friday £435.00
Building Regulations	For example, Domestic Extension: Single storey extensions <10m2 £346.00
Non-Statutory Food Export Health Certificates	£35.75

4.22 All of these changes would generate additional income of £750k per year. **55.3% of respondents agreed with the proposals for fees and charges.**



		Number	%
Q7 - Fees and Charges	Yes	282	55.3%
	No	171	33.5%
	Don't know	57	11.2%
	Total	510	

Figure 5 – Fees and Charges

4.23 Overall there were a wide range of comments on all the areas of fees and charges proposals, based on services used and people’s understanding of each of the services.

There was some general agreement with the overall approach:

“Seem very reasonable to me”

“This is an appropriate set of steps to take”

“Inflation makes these charges necessary, so they are reasonable.”

“I agree because these services deserve to be priced equal to other similar s revives across Wales. But consideration needs to be taken that footfall may drop”

4.24 In addition there was some general disagreement, with many comments referring to the cost of living crisis.

“You are proposing an increase in costs when many of us have had a real term pay cut for a dozen years.”

"If my pay increases to compensate for the last 12 years and also matches or, god forbid, exceeds inflation, then by all means go ahead. Until then, no."

"People's income is not increasing so why would you impose more fees"

"Again it will affect struggling families who are unable to claim any help"

- 4.25 The following areas received the most comments and a selection of those comments are provided.

Lido Charge

"Lido would benefit from a membership or being brought within the L4L scheme"

"Why not make the lido fees exactly the same as the rest of the leisure pools in Rct. This would stop people booking and not turning up and increase funds"

"The lido charge is far too low. It is a highly popular attraction visited by more people outside the borough who benefit from a great attraction at a low price. . Minimum charge of £7.50 an adult in line with LC2 etc."

"Lido fee seems rather low when considering how much it costs to run. Shouldn't it be self-funding?"

Leisure

"Should be encouraging use of sports facilities by lowering the cost of leisure for life to help reduce obesity and ill health."

"I would've liked to see a reduction in cost for the Leisure for Life fitness subscription to encourage more people to take up fitness activities."

"Do not increase cost to use leisure centres as this will detract from their usage and prevent people living healthier."

School Dinners

"I believe that school meals should be free"

"I do for the majority but not for the school meal increase. Lots of the school meals provided are pretty abysmal considering this is the only hot meal some children will be having."

"Apart from school dinners. It's very expensive when you have more than one in school and needing to pay. An increase isn't great"

“An increase on school meals cost, when families are already struggling with the cost of living”

Bulky Waste

“Increase non-essential such as cinema fees. The bulky waste collection increase will only mean more fly tipping”

“I think the bulky collection rate is a bit high, surely reduce or freeze this and then hopefully reduce the fly tipping costs”

“I feel that some of the optional activities should cost more and things like bulk waste disposal less to help reduce fly tipping.”

“I don't agree with the bulky waste increases currently sitting at £12.5. Increased will push even further an already high level of people dumping their stuff wherever they can”

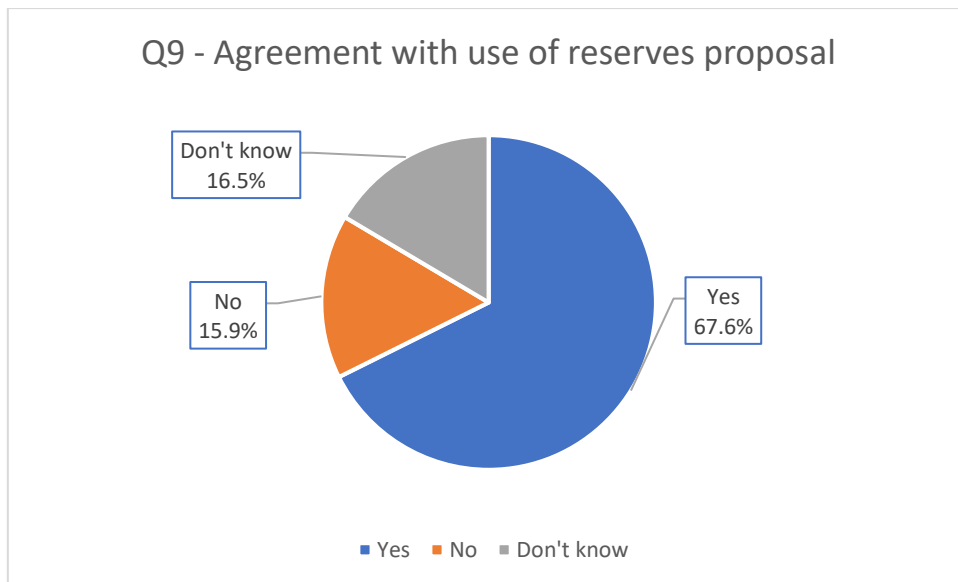
- 4.26 The OPAG noted increases in fees and charges are expected, however advised the Council to consider the increases in entrance cost of the Lido to £3. A member of the group noted the importance of the Lido to older people as a means of exercising and socialising.

Use of Reserves (Transitional Funding)

4.27 The latest estimates for the Council’s energy costs in 2023/24 show an increase of 283% for gas and 147% for electricity. It is proposed that a contribution from the Council reserves of £5 million is used to reduce the impact of these increases and that we continue to monitor the volatility closely and consider any temporary government support which might be available.

The Council is also proposing to use a further £4.1 million of reserves (transition funding) to balance the budget for next year.

67.6% of respondents agreed with the proposal to use the Council’s reserves in this way.



		Number	%
Q9 - Use of Reserves	Yes	345	67.6%
	No	81	15.9%
	Don't know	84	16.5%
	Total	510	

Figure 6 – Use of Reserves

4.28 A number of respondents were happy with the proposed use of reserves suggested:

“We need to ensure the continuity of services i.e.. Social services, education etc.”

“Use reserves instead of hiking tax and costs on public”

“This is sensible financial management”

"I would expect the reserves to be used this way"

4.29 There were a number of suggestions for savings:

"Some reserves could be used this way, however wherever possible, staff in my view should be working from home, less money spent on traveling of staff, and a saving to energy usage"

"Yes in principle, however it would not be a prudent allocation of resources if other measures were not being used in conjunction, for example, increasing insulation in public buildings, good care and maintenance etc - in the same way that households are expected to do to manage energy costs."

"Please close the unnecessary offices that the council has and move employees to working from home."

"Measures should be taken to reduce gas and electricity consumption e.g. staff working from home, downsizing premises"

"Do you really need the amount of buildings you have? Especially when a large proportion of your workforce are now working from home?"

4.30 The question on reserves stated that the latest estimates for the Council's energy costs in 2023/24 show an increase of 283% for gas and 147% for electricity. As a result, there were a number of comments on the Council's energy costs:

"Unprecedented times as far as energy concerned - but energy efficient measures need to be continually reviewed"

"This needs to be reviewed in line with the prices as prices are reducing. Need to implement energy saving plans during the Sumner period to help keep winter costs to a minimum."

"The council should make sure all premises are managed correctly i.e. energy saving. Knocking lights off etc. Minimise the use to save on bills"

"Try turning lights and heating down like the rest of us, wasted lighting on buildings is unbelievable. How about using some of those reserves to help us out with our council tax."

4.31 There were also calls for the Government to help out with more assistance and for the Council to request further support from central government.

"The government need to do more"

“The council should also ask for further assistance from the Welsh and UK governments to limit the reliance on reserves”

“So much more needs to be done to counteract the ridiculous increases in fuel costs but, unfortunately, it's not at your level.”

“Balance the reserves? Councils and governments need to stand up to energy companies”

“Need to get more funding from government- England”

- 4.32 The OPAG commented on the importance of reserves within the Council and agreed with the proposed use of the Council reserves as outlined.

Other Comments

- 4.33 A wide range of general comments were received regarding the budget. Some of the most frequent themes are described below, with relevant quotes.

Appreciation for the current budget climate

“I understand councils do not get adequate funding from government but a lot of people are struggling with bills so a more sympathetic approach would help, also explore more options for people who are struggling to pay with council tax etc.”

“I suppose they are doing their best, but if the funds are not available they are between a rock and a hard place”

“Overall the council does a very good job given the circumstances and it’s resident profile which I trust will continue even with the restrictions on budgets.”

“The council is stuck between a rock and a hard place and I don’t envy you these decisions”

Recent changes to Waste Management

“Leave the bin collections alone, nobody wants 3 weekly collections and recycling sacks. Listen to the residents”

“The budget will need to consider the treatment of extra vermin and litter in the Rhondda with the new bin collection time scales”

Calls for the Rhondda Fach Bypass and Investment

“Desperately need a new bypass from Pontygwaith to Maerdy, the current road system is not suitable for the amount of traffic”

“Where is the commitment to fulfilling the promise to complete the Rhondda Fach (known locally as 'the forgotten valley' for obvious reasons) relief road reflected in the budget?”

“New bypass needed in Rhondda Fach, from Pontygwaith to Maerdy. Will enable traffic to flow easier in busy times. Especially with new Welsh school due to be built in Maerdy”

“Spend some money on the Rhondda Fach. Extend the bypass to maerdy”

Councillor and Management Costs/ Levels

“Review the pay structure of councillors and consider paying them the living wage for the little they contribute to the community. RCT are a disgrace , rises in council tax for less services when everyone is struggling to even eat”

“Cut the pay for the leaders”

Key areas for investment or protection

“look to increase money provided for the care sector. This is an area that has lacked improvement and requires addressing.”

“... Please ensure the young and old have something to look forward too. We are all in a struggle and need to work together .. More food banks ,more coffee mornings . And a cheap run club for children from ages 2 to 10... I'd even volunteer”

- 4.34 A number of comments described feelings that people are not listened to during the Council's consultations. This feeling was mainly due to the recent service change on waste services and the feeling amongst respondents that they were not listened to.

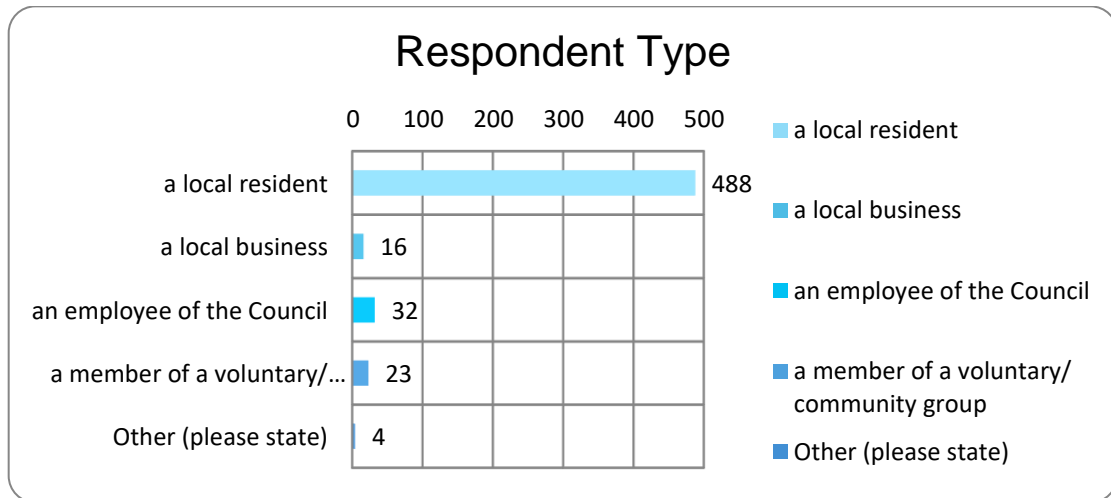
“Detail is required along with clear reasoning to better inform decisions from the public on budget related surveys.”

“I debated whether to complete this survey or not as I genuinely believe you don't listen to our concerns.”

“It won't matter what residents say because the decisions have already been made.”

About You

4.35 The majority of respondents to the survey were residents (96.1%).



Note: This was a multiple response question.

Figure 7 – Respondent Type

4.36 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents were asked how the proposals affect them because of:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. Disability
5. Sexuality
6. Religion / belief
7. Gender identity
8. Relationship status
9. Pregnancy
10. Preferred language

4.37 The most frequent theme in the comments was age, with a number of respondents expressing concern over the impact of rising costs and indicated pensions and other income remaining static.

Other comments also referred to the recent change proposed to the waste collection frequency across RCT and reiterated concerns about the impact of this change on large families and those with disabilities.

Single-adult families facing rising costs were also mentioned in a number of comments.

The following are a selection of the comments received.

"I will have even more less money which is already now quite hard as a single parent."

"As a single person with 2 young children an increase to council tax is a worry especially with the cost of living crisis. I am already struggling"

"Bin collection 3 weekly will be a serious problem as we can be 6 people in 1 house"

"My son has an ALN which is not being supported appropriately due to lack of funding"

"I will no longer afford to heat my house because of the increase in council tax and service fees, as an old age pensioner my health will be affected"

"I am a pensioner and my income is being eroded by higher costs of living and I am unable to earn extra."

- 4.38 With regards to the proposals, and the impact they may have, respondents were asked how they could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive, Negative or Neutral) and if, in any way, it treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language, and how neutral effects could become positive, how positive effects could be increased, or negative effects be decreased.

A number of respondents commented on Welsh language education, from early years through to adult education. They stressed the importance of Welsh language provision at all ages and expressed concern that schools might not be able to offer full support through the medium of Welsh if facing budget reductions.

Multiple comments stated the importance of community activities and spaces that promote the Welsh language and provide social space for using the Welsh language.

Many comments stated that there was no effect on the Welsh language or shared the view that too much money is spent on current bilingual/ Welsh language communications and services.

The following are a selection of the comments received.

"Welsh schools need better resources and bigger budgets to encourage children to attend. There needs to be more Welsh language cylch meithrin's in the area to promote being bilingual."

"I can't see any way the strategy negatively affects use of the Welsh Language. As a Welsh Language learner, I strongly believe that the

Welsh language should continue to be promoted/used as much as possible.”

“I do not feel the Welsh language is being promoted at all but this does not need to cost money. Just setting up a local group of people who want to learn Welsh and who already speak Welsh and getting them conversing via local walking tours of RCT would be a perfect way. We live in a beautiful area of the world with a deep multilingual heritage and culture. We are quite unique and have a wonderful sense of community. This does not cost money to promote but initiatives always seem to cost money”

“Welsh language should be prioritised in all aspects, more information regarding the school budgets would assist on how much the council are putting into Welsh schools in RCT.”

“There is a severe lack of Welsh language early education, childcare and holiday provision in RCT. This goes against the Wellbeing Act, the Welsh Language and children's rights.”

“I am for the development of the Welsh language but perhaps we need to reconsider all signs/paperwork etc in both languages as it costs so much and the majority speak and read English. When we have lots of cash great but could this be a way of saving?”

“It will affect my son attending Welsh medium education, because we may need to move him to an English language school if he is not supported appropriately”

“If more cuts to community centres are cuts and to schools, the opportunity to speak Welsh will become affected. As a Welsh speaker I don't feel there's a lot opportunity to speak Welsh and feel that a lot of English schools has more funding than Welsh”

“People are taking an interest in the language so more free classes would be appreciated thus promoting the language”

The detailed comments received for the above 2 questions have been made available to officers for the development of the associated impact assessments.

5. YOUNG PERSONS ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 A presentation was delivered to 12 students at the Ysgol Nant Gwyn School on the 31st January at 11am. During the session, we aimed to gather students' thoughts towards the Council's budget for 2023/24.
- 5.2 The presentation gave some background on the Council's budget, including where the Council get its money from, the budget for 2023/24, what Council Tax is and the views received in the Phase 1 consultation.
- 5.3 The questions were centred around Council Tax levels, Efficiencies, Fees and Charges and School budgets.
- 5.4 The following comments were provided by the students:

Slide 7: Council Tax

Do you think it is fair to increase Council Tax by 3.5% to help pay for services?

All students agreed that the Council Tax increase was fair due to the increase in the cost of living.

Slide 8: Fees and Charges

Which ones would you freeze/decrease/increase and why?

Students agreed to freeze leisure centre membership / pay and play and Lido entry. However, the students choose to decrease Car Parking charges and Cinema fees. Lastly, the students agreed to decrease the Bulky Waste Collections fee as a means of deterring people from littering.

Slide 9: Efficiencies

Do you think the Council should continue working this way?

All students agreed that the Council should continue operating this way.

Slide 10: Schools

Do you think we should increase the money schools get so we can cover all the costs that have gone up?

All students agreed that the Council should continue providing funding for schools as there are a number of resources which the schools requires and areas which need improvement.

The students commented on the need for more printers within the schools as there are currently only 3. This presents difficulties for the school as students need the printers for course work etc.

The students also expressed a need to improve Wi-Fi connection within the school as its weak and impacts on completing work and getting access to the internet for work.

Lastly, the students commented on the need for more classes in order to reduce the number of children in one class.

Instagram and Facebook

- 5.5 Budget content involving information followed by polls were created and shared on the YEPS' Instagram account. Two separate decks of Instagram 'stories' were posted on February 1st and 2nd, advertising the Budget Consultation. Specifically focusing on school funding and Council efficiencies detailing how young people could take part. There was a link to the Consultation's Let's Talk website which had a dedicated Budget project page consisting of web polls, an 'Idea' tool and the Council's main survey.
- 5.6 The Council's Budget Content was also shared by YEPS' Facebook account. The information shared on the decks of stories can be seen in the table below:

Schools			
First Story	Second Story	Third Story	Fourth Story
BUDGET 2023/24 - SCHOOLS	The Schools Budget next year is once again being prioritised and will contribute a far lower efficiency than other Council Services.	The school's budget is proposed to increase by £13.7 million, an increase of 7.9% as compared to the 6.6% increase in funding the Council has received from Welsh Government.	Do you agree that 7.9% is a reasonable increase?

Post Four: Efficiencies			
First Story	Second Story	Third Story	Fourth Story
BUDGET 2023/24 - EFFICIENCIES	Significant work towards budget reduction measures has been undertaken across all Council Services	The total budget reduction measures for 2023/24 equal £16.16 million	Do you agree with this approach? - Yes - No - Don't Know

- 5.7 The following table shows the engagement and views from YEPS, totalling 350 views and 34 responses.

Story	Views	Votes		
Schools	182	Yes - 9 (39%)	No - 8 (35%)	Don't know - 6 (26%)
Efficiencies	168	Yes - 4 (36%)	No - 1 (9%)	Don't know - 6 (55%)

5.8 As evidenced in the graph below, the responses had mixed views on whether the school’s budget should increase at the proposed rate, with a slight majority of 39% of respondents stating that they agree with the proposed funding increase.

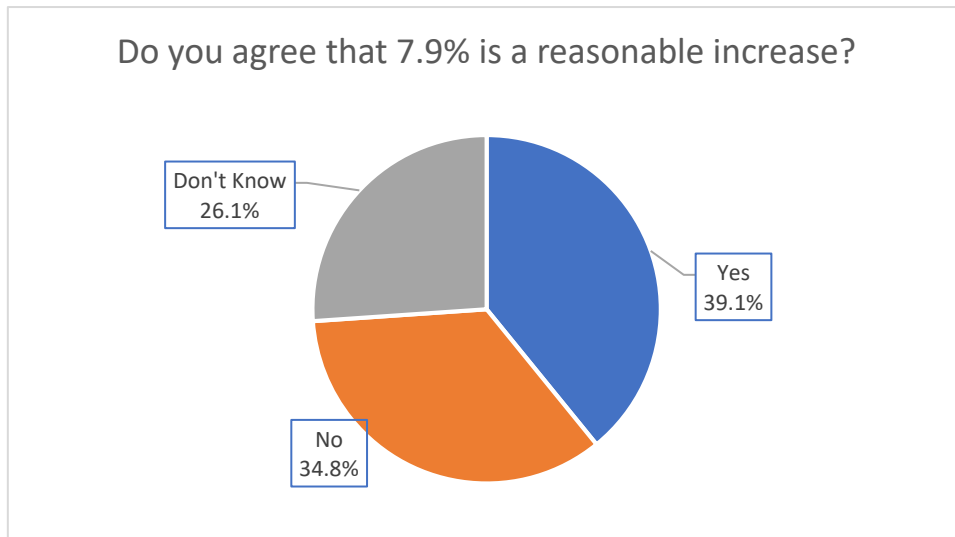


Figure 8 - YEPS Instagram: *School Funding*

5.9 As evidenced in the graph below, the majority of responses were not sure on whether the Council’s approach to efficiencies across its services was an approach that they agreed with. However, more people agreed than not with the proposed approach..

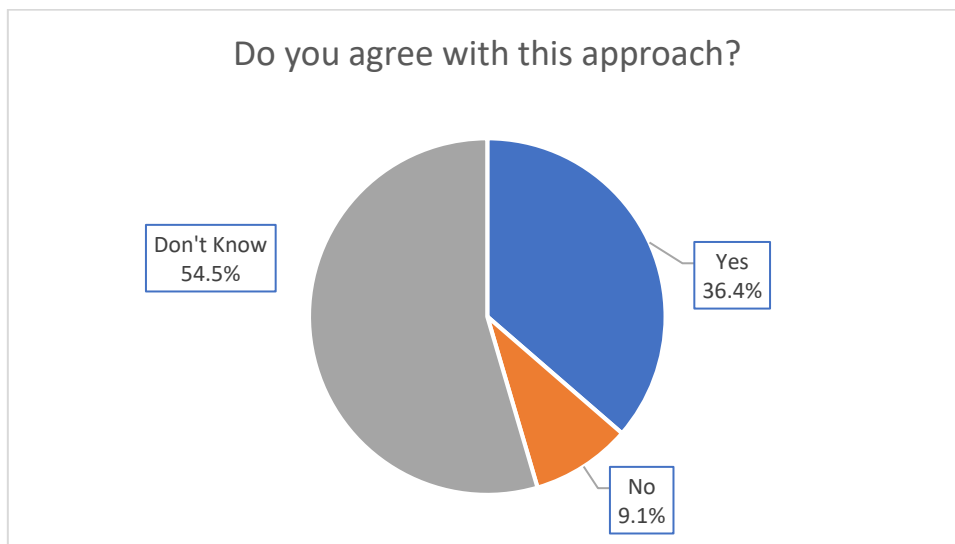


Figure 9 - YEPS Instagram: *Efficiencies*

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PHASE 2 BUDGET CONSULTATION (2023/24)
(EXTRACT OF DRAFT MINUTES – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on
Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 5.00 pm.

County Borough Councillors – Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members in
attendance virtually:

Councillor J Edwards – Chair

Councillor J Brencher – Vice Chair

Councillor M Ashford

Councillor J Bonetto

Councillor Sheryl Evans

Councillor G Hughes

Councillor C Middle

Councillor K Morgan

Councillor G Warren

Councillor W Owen

Councillor K Webb

Councillor G Williams

Officers in attendance virtually:

Christian Hanagan

Paul Griffiths

Sarah Daniel

Extract from the minutes

Budget Consultation 2023/24 (Phase 2)

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services provided Members with an overview of the Budget Consultation 2023/24 (Phase 2) and updated the Committee on the following areas: Introduction – 2023/24 Draft Revenue Budget Strategy; The Council's Current Financial Position (2022/23); Phase 1 Budget Consultation – Headlines; Provisional Local Government Settlement 2023/24 – Headlines/Implications for Rhondda Cynon Taf; Cabinet Proposed Budget Strategy 2023/24; and Next steps and key dates.

Further to the Service Director's overview of the Cabinet's proposed Budget Strategy for 2023/24, a Member sought feedback on what opportunities are available to review the methodology for the allocation of funding from UK Government to Welsh Government and thereafter to local authorities, linked to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's provisional settlement of +6.6% compared to the all Wales average local authority settlement of +7.9%. The Service Director fed back that with regard to the process for the allocation of funding from Welsh Government to local authorities across Wales, a designated group is in place comprising Welsh Government and local government representatives to ensure the basis for the allocation of funding is representative of need and that the data sets underpinning the allocations are appropriate and accurate. The Service Director provided assurance that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is part of these arrangements to inform and challenge data sets and the basis for the allocation of funding.

The Service Director then invited Members to provide feedback on the following areas of the Cabinet's proposed Budget Strategy for 2023/24.

Council Tax – 3.5% proposed increase

- Taken into consideration the Council's approach to setting Council Tax levels in recent times, Rhondda Cynon Taf being the lowest average Band D increase in Wales for 3 out of the past 4 years, the majority of Members agreed the proposed increase is a pragmatic and sensible approach.
- A Member fed back that the proposed percentage increase of 3.5% is likely to be on the lower end when compared with other local authorities in Wales; however, the Council knew budget challenges have been present but still set Council Tax at a 1% increase for 2022/23 compared to a proposed 3.5% increase for 2023/24.

Schools Budget

- A Member fed back that it is an inevitable requirement for schools to review their budget and the amount they hold in reserves to support financial planning due to the challenging funding position, and noted that the level of reserves will be different across schools linked to the plans schools have in place for the utilisation of such reserves.
- Another Member fed back that it is important the message is conveyed to schools that they will not be fully funded for 2023/24. The Service Director fed back that the proposed Budget Strategy allocated funding in full to cover school costs, with the requirement for schools to then make a 2.2% efficiency saving, this being less than the indicative target of 2.75% provided to schools in autumn 2022 and less than the efficiency requirement for non-school services of 7.7%.
- Another Member noted that some schools are older with resultant higher energy costs and requested clarity around what opportunities are there to make efficiencies in these schools. The Service Director fed back that the Council undertakes an on-going programme of building surveys across schools, that include identifying opportunities to install energy efficiency measures to reduce energy consumption. The Service Director added that the Council has, for a number of years, provided funding for an invest to save fund, with school and non-school based projects funded from this resource.

Efficiencies

- Members agreed with the Council's approach to continue to maximise efficiency savings and commended officers on delivering year-on-year efficiency savings and an on-going approach to find new ways of working.
- A Member endorsed this approach and noted that in delivering efficiencies, this should not result in service delivery becoming less effective and on-going review is required to monitor impact.
- Another Member sought assurance around the staffing implications of delivering efficiencies. The Service Director fed back that detailed planning is undertaken to support the delivery of efficiencies and, where staffing changes are required, these are managed via natural staff turnover, redeployment and the Council's voluntary redundancy / retirement schemes, and through close working with Trade Union colleagues.

Fees and Charges

- The majority of Members agreed that the fees and charges proposals are realistic, in line with what the Council needs to do to achieve a balanced budget and demonstrate that charges for Council services remain competitive and provide value for money compared to neighbouring areas.

- A Member felt there were some contradictions in the proposals compared to the feedback received from the public as part of the phase 1 budget consultation process. In particular, the public highlighted that services such as social care and leisure services were important to them and the budget strategy is proposing increases to fees and charges in these areas, which could result in a false economy.
- Another Member noted if the option to charge a higher fee for the Lido (Pontypridd) for non-Rhondda Cynon Taf residents could be considered to help manage the number of block bookings and 'no shows'. The Service Director noted the feedback.

Use of Reserves

- Members agreed with the proposed approach to the use of reserves.
- A Member sought clarity on how reserves will be replenished in future years. The Service Director fed back that Council officers review base budget requirements and saving opportunities on an on-going basis and has a track record of delivering in-year savings that are then allocated to the Council's Transitional Funding reserve. The Service Director added that for the current financial year, in-year savings of £3.003M have been identified, as at September 2022, and have been transferred to the Transitional Funding reserve. In addition, the Service Director fed back that the Council applies a prudent and sensible approach in the utilisation of its reserves.

SCHOOL BUDGET FORUM MEETING – 31ST JANUARY 2023

THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY – PHASE 2 CONSULTATION

Extract from the minutes

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24 (PHASE 2)

With the aid of a PowerPoint Presentation, the Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services provided Members with an update in respect of the Council's Budget Consultation 2023/24 and covered the following areas: Introduction – 2023/24 Draft Revenue Budget Strategy; The Council's Current Financial Position (2022/23); Phase 1 Budget Consultation – Headlines; Provisional Local Government Settlement 2023/24 – Headlines/Implications for Rhondda Cynon Taf; Cabinet Proposed Budget Strategy 2023/24; and Next steps and key dates.

Following the overview by the Service Director, Forum Members were informed that their feedback would be considered by Cabinet, alongside feedback received from all other stakeholders, as part of Cabinet meeting later in February 2023 to finalise its recommended Budget Strategy.

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

Council Tax

The majority of Members indicated that the Council Tax level proposed within the budget (3.50% increase) was reasonable. One Member commented that due to the pressures on School Budgets, the Council Tax level should be increased further to offset this pressure.

Schools Budget

Members of the Forum recognised the protection given to School budgets by the Council and fed back that in light of the level of inflation and efficiency saving requirement, 2023/24 will be challenging for schools.

One Member fed back that within the context of the challenging operating environment, it is difficult to see how schools can continue to make efficiency savings and protect service delivery over the long term.

Another Member fed back that they could not support the school budget proposals and that the current levels of service could not be maintained. In respect of the school efficiency saving requirement, the Forum Member noted that the efficiency percentage was applied to the total budget compared to the pay award percentage uplift applied to the employee budget.

Forum Members sought clarity on the pay awards and whether these would be funded by the Council. The Service Director confirmed that the 2022/23 pay award is fully funded as part of the proposed 2023/24 budget strategy and a modelled pay award for 2023/24 has been built in based on the forward planning assumption for 2023/24 recommended by the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body. A Forum Member also sought clarity in respect of the current industrial action and, if the outcome resulted in an increased teacher pay award for 2023/24, whether this would be funded by the Council. The Service Director fed back that the Council's proposed budget strategy has aimed to maximise the level of funding allocated to schools, within the parameters of the resources available, and should the 2023/24 teachers pay award be increased, Rhondda Cynon Taf will need to engage with Welsh Government to seek additional funding to cover the additional cost.

Efficiencies

Forum Members agreed with the Council's approach to efficiency savings for 2023/24.

Fees and Charges

Forum Members agreed with the standard increase of 5%, in the context of the current rate of inflation being 10.5%, and the proposed treatment of specific areas.

Use of Reserves

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

One Forum Member sought clarity on how the proposed £5M one-off energy reserve would be used. The Service Director fed back that the one-off reserve would be used to smooth the forecasted spike in energy costs for 2023/24, with the current forecast for energy expenditure levels to be lower for 2024/25 and more in line with the on-going / base budget funding that is proposed to be put in place for the forthcoming year. The Service Director added that this will continue to be a volatile area and will be closely monitored.

The Service Director– Finance and Improvement Services thanked Forum Members for their time and feedback and advised on next steps and key dates. The Service Director also noted the budget consultation event that had taken place in Ysgol Nantgwyn that morning and thanked all that were involved.

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm

Cllr R Lewis
(Chair)



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee held on Tuesday, 7 February 2023 at 12.00 pm (draft, subject to approval).

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor A Crimmings Councillor R Lewis
Councillor M Webber (Chair)

Officers in attendance

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

Trade Unions

Mr P Crews, Representing Unison
Mr W Bond, Representing GMB

Apologies

Councillor A Morgan
Ms L Davies- Unite

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct there were no declarations of interest pertaining to the agenda.

Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee held on the 10th February 2022 were a true reflection of the meeting.

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24 (PHASE 2)

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services provided Members with an overview of the Budget Consultation 2023/24 (Phase 2) and updated the Committee on the following areas: Phase 1 Budget Consultation – Headlines; Provisional Local Government Settlement 2023/24 – Headlines/Implications for Rhondda Cynon Taf; Cabinet Proposed Budget Strategy 2023/24; and Next steps and key dates.

Members of the Committee thanked the Service Director for his overview of the

Cabinet's proposed Budget Strategy for 2023/24 and provided the following comments:

- The Unison representative fed back that although the need to deliver efficiency savings is recognised, further information was requested to provide assurance that the savings can be delivered without the need for compulsory redundancies. The Service Director provided assurance that agreed efficiency savings would be delivered via natural staff turnover, redeployment and the Council's voluntary redundancy / retirement schemes, and through close working with Trade Union colleagues. The Director of Human Resources also fed back that where agreed efficiency savings are staffing related, these will be discussed with the recognised Trade Unions.
- A question was raised in relation to the implications of the cessation of European Social Funding (ESF) on some service areas and specifically grant funded posts, and further information was requested on the posts that would be affected. The Service Director indicated that information will be compiled and fed back to Trade Union colleagues.
- The Unison representative acknowledged the challenging funding position and commented that under these difficult circumstances it is important to continue to recognise the key roles undertaken by Council staff. The representative made specific reference to Social Care, an area of increasing demand, and noted the need for on-going discussion between the Council and Trade Unions on the challenges within this area. The Service Director noted the feedback and indicated that the Cabinet's proposed 2023/24 budget strategy aims to continue to prioritise the allocation of additional resources to social care and schools in particular.
- A request was made for any planned changes to office accommodation arrangements to be provided in a timely manner to alleviate staff concerns. The Director of Human Resources fed back that timely updates will be provided, as and when agreed by the Senior Leadership Team, and also discussed with Trade Union colleagues. The Service Director, Democratic Services & Communication added that the Cabinet is scheduled to consider the Council's updated Office Accommodation Strategy in due course.
- The GMB representative commented that in such challenging times, it was more important than ever for the Council and Trade Unions to work together.
- The Chair reinforced the open-door policy between the Trade Unions and the Council.

This meeting closed at 12.50 pm

**Cllr M Webber
Chair.**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28th FEBRUARY 2023

THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 – 2025/26

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE, DIGITAL & FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN

Author: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with a proposed three year capital programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 that if acceptable, will be presented to Council for approval.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Review, and if acceptable propose the attached three year capital programme at Appendix A to Council on 8th March 2023 which includes:
- 2.1.1 A proposed allocation of new resources as detailed in paragraph 5 of the attached report;
 - 2.1.2 Proposed investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 6.2 of the attached report;
 - 2.1.3 The Council's core capital programme; and
 - 2.1.4 The Council's total capital programme including additional non core funding.
- 2.2 Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services to amend the level of Council Resources required to fund the Core Three Year Capital Programme as shown at Appendix 2 as a consequence of any change to the Council's capital resource levels announced in the Final Local Government Settlement.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree that the report at Appendix A is acceptable and is proposed by Cabinet to Council on 8th March 2023.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Corporate Plan “Making a Difference” 2020-2024 reinforces the need to continue to live within our means, deliver an efficient and effective Council, maximise opportunities and have a shared responsibility. The draft report at Appendix A expands on this and proposes the Council’s three year capital programme commencing 1st April 2023.

5.0 THE PROVISIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT FOR 2023/24

5.1 The timing of the Local Government Settlement for 2023/24 has followed the UK Government Autumn Statement as announced on 17th November 2022, with the provisional settlement being announced on the 14th December 2022.

5.2 The Final Local Government Settlement for 2023/24 is expected to be received during early March 2023.

5.3 There are no indications of any significant changes between the provisional and final settlement, but such a risk clearly remains.

5.4 In order to ensure that Cabinet are able to recommend a balanced capital programme to Council on the 8th March 2023, and given the timing of the Final Settlement (early March 2023), it will be necessary to authorise the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services to amend the programme to deal with any change between Provisional and Final Settlement. It is proposed that any change is dealt with by means of amending the contribution from Council Resources across the 3 year programme, providing the opportunity to rebalance as necessary into future years.

6.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

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

7.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

8.0 CONSULTATION

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

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

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

12.0 CONCLUSION

12.1 The draft report at Appendix A sets out the proposed capital programme from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022-2023

COUNCIL

8th MARCH 2023

THE COUNCIL'S THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 – 2025/26

REPORT OF THE CABINET

AUTHOR: BARRIE DAVIES, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE, DIGITAL & FRONTLINE SERVICES (01443) 424026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report sets out the Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26, following receipt of the provisional local government settlement for 2023/24.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the detail of the provisional 2023/24 local government settlement for capital expenditure, reproduced at Appendix 1;
- 2.2 Agree to the proposed reallocation of existing resources, and allocation of new resources as detailed in paragraph 5;
- 2.3 Agree to allocate the funding identified in the report to the investment priorities as detailed in paragraph 6.2;
- 2.4 Agree the proposed 'core' three year programme detailed at Appendix 2;
- 2.5 Agree the proposed total three-year Capital Programme, detailed at Appendices 3 (a) to (e), which includes the following non core capital funding:
- Prudential borrowing to support Sustainable Communities for Learning Schemes (formerly 21st Century Schools) and Highways Improvements schemes;
 - Capital grants for specific schemes;
 - Third party contributions; and
 - The investment priorities detailed in paragraph 6.2.

2.6 Authorise the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services to amend the final programme consequential to the receipt of the Final Local Government Settlement as set out at para 3.8.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 Members will be aware that each year the Council is allocated a sum of unhypothecated “Supported” borrowing and General Capital Grant from the Welsh Government (WG). Details of the draft allocation for 2023/24 are shown at Appendix 1. The funding for 2023/24 has increased by £2.287M and totals £13.886M (£180M all Wales).

3.2 WG’s draft budget includes indicative General Capital Funding maintained at £180M (all Wales) for 2024/25, with a further £20M (all Wales) in respect of decarbonisation for 2023/24 and 2024/25. It is proposed that any additional resources are considered as part of future Investment Priority reviews outside of our Core Programme.

3.3 Members have continued to receive regular updates on the projections of the Council’s revenue budget position to 2025/26. The Revenue Budget Strategy for 2023/24 includes a proposal to capitalise expenditure which is currently funded from our revenue budgets which in line with accounting rules, is actually capital in nature. The expenditure relates to following:

Nature of Expenditure	£M
ICT Software Licences	1.000
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Contribution	1.000
Vehicle Purchases	1.200
Carbon Reduction Programme	0.350
Highways Improvements	0.350
Improvements to Schools	0.100
Total	4.000

3.4 These items are now proposed to be included in our core programme allocations. The allocations are shown at Appendix 2 which proposes a core programme totalling £14.180M.

3.5 To set the core programme at this level, and in light of latest capital receipt forecasts and use of capital reserves, would leave a remaining balance of £2.206M of WG General Capital Funding which can be used to contribute toward funding Investment Priorities over and above the core programme as set out at paragraph 6.2.

3.6 The wider overall capital programme however includes approved prudential borrowing, specific grants and agreed additional investment in our key priorities.

3.7 The Final Local Government Settlement for 2023/24 is expected to be received during early March 2023. There are no indications of any significant changes between the provisional and final settlement, but such a risk clearly remains.

3.8 It is proposed that the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services be authorised to amend the programme to deal with any change between Provisional and Final Settlement. Any change would be dealt with by means of amending the contribution from Council Resources across the 3 year programme, providing the opportunity to rebalance as necessary into future years.

4.0 THE NEW THREE YEAR PROGRAMME (2023/24 TO 2025/26)

4.1 The proposed new 3 year capital programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 represents a total investment of **£187.320M**. This comprises:

- A Core programme of £42.540M over the next 3 years;
- Prudential borrowing of £21.454M to support the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and Highways Improvements schemes;
- Specific grants of £73.141M;
- Third party contributions of £0.057M;
- Earmarked reserves and revenue contributions previously allocated to schemes and investment priorities of £30.947M;
- Capital resources, in addition to the 3 year core allocation, of £12.081M; and
- If agreed, reallocated earmarked reserves of £4.894M and reallocated core funding of £2.206M, to fund the proposed investment priorities detailed in paragraph 6.2.

4.2 Having due regard to the level of available capital resources, both from WG and from our own capital receipts, the new core programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 is set at £14.180M per year. This represents a fully funded £42.540M core programme across the 3 years.

4.3 There remains a risk that the projected capital receipts are less than anticipated and projections will continue to be closely monitored.

4.4 Whilst allocating core resources for three years, there remains the requirement for us to continue to review and challenge any commitments made into years two and three, to robustly monitor capital receipt projections and to position ourselves to respond as appropriate and necessary as we move forward.

4.5 Given the timing of external funding approval processes, it will be necessary to maintain flexibility of funding across individual schemes in order to ensure the most efficient delivery of the overall programme.

4.6 Details of the overall capital programme for the 3 year period are set out in Section 7 of this report.

5.0 FURTHER AVAILABLE FUNDING

5.1 The Council has maintained an Investment/Infrastructure reserve for a number of years to fund the cost of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough. The balance of this reserve at 31st March 2022 was £19.800M, against which £5.725M has already been released, leaving £14.075 available to

fund further investment priorities.

- 5.2 In addition, the increase in WG General Capital Grant funding provides further available funding as shown in the table below:

Available Funding	£M
Infrastructure Reserve 2023/24	14.075
General Capital Grant 2023/24	2.206
Total Additional Funding	16.281

6.0 INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- 6.1 The Cabinet believe that the most appropriate use of these one off resources is to continue to invest in our infrastructure and to support the aspirations and priorities of the Corporate Plan.
- 6.2 In being able to support the above objectives, Cabinet have identified the following specific areas which it is proposed that Council agree to be invested in:

Investment Priority	£M
Highways Maintenance	2.500
Unadopted Roads	0.300
Highways Structures	2.400
Drainage	0.500
Parks Structures	0.250
Parks & Green Spaces	0.750
Play Areas	0.200
Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)	0.200
Total Council Investment	7.100

- 6.3 The above investment priorities can be funded from the resources identified at paragraph 5.2, with the remaining resource amounting to £9.181M being retained in our Investment/Infrastructure reserve to fund future priorities.
- 6.4 Further details on these investments are included in section 7.

7.0 THE THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 – 2025/26

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

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S GROUP

- 7.2 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £4.162M for the Chief Executive's Group in 2022/23.
- 7.3 The total resources for 2023/24, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £3.785M.

- 7.4 As part of the Council's on-going programme to ensure high standards of health and safety and operational efficiency within its premises, appropriate resources continue to be allocated to our operational accommodation, the management and remediation of Asbestos and Legionella and resources for energy efficiency/carbon reduction measures across our property estate. We await details of the £20M allocated by WG for decarbonisation.

PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND FRONTLINE SERVICES

- 7.5 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £80.735M for Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services in 2022/23.
- 7.6 The total resources for 2023/24, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £67.702M.
- 7.7 As identified in 6.2 additional investment has been provided in Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services in the following areas:
- Highways Maintenance - £2.500M
 - Unadopted Roads - £0.300M
 - Highways Structures - £2.400M
 - Drainage Improvements - £0.500M
 - Parks Structures Improvements - £0.250M
 - Parks & Green Spaces - £0.750M

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

PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

Regeneration

- 7.8 A budget of £3.760M for 2023/24 has been allocated to the next phase of Regeneration.
- 7.9 The Council's Capital Programme continues to provide a long-term funding commitment to the economic regeneration of the County Borough and in doing so supports one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper'.
- 7.10 In addition to the above, sustained investment has been maintained across a range of funding streams, supported by external funding and the Corporate Plan Investment Priorities. This has enabled a wide range of regeneration activity to be delivered to benefit the local economy.
- 7.11 The Council will continue to work with partners to develop and progress exciting and innovative schemes such as:

- The redevelopment of key sites in the Southern Gateway Quarter in Pontypridd town centre including the former Bingo Hall site and former M&S, Burton and Dorothy Perkins site;
- Townscape Enhancements across our key town centres – a targeted approach to acquiring, redeveloping and upgrading town centre buildings for increased business and commercial use and continuing to improve the quality of the townscape providing business investment and employment growth. This will be supported by the development and delivery of strategies and placemaking plans for our key town centres;
- Development of a new integrated Transport Hub at Porth as part of the Porth Town Centre Regeneration Strategy;
- New sources of funding are being accessed to bring forward investment such as the UK Government Levelling Up Fund where successful bids have been made for the Muni Arts Centre Redevelopment, Porth Transport Hub and A4119 Dualling projects and also the UK Government Shared Prosperity (SPF) Fund where delivering the RCT SPF Local Investment Plan will be a priority;
- Strategic Opportunity Areas – a number of Strategic Opportunity Areas have been developed to deliver economic growth and job creation in Rhondda Cynon Taf. These areas are:
 - Cynon Gateway – Energising the Region;
 - The Wider Pontypridd, Treforest – Edge of the City, heart of the Region;
 - Pontypridd Town – Pivotal in the Region;
 - A4119 Corridor – Regional Rhondda Gateway; and
 - Llanilid on the M4 – Driving the Regional Economy.

7.12 The programme of regeneration projects will add value to the significant regeneration investment that has already taken place and will act as a catalyst for further regeneration activity.

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

7.13 A budget of £1M per year is allocated for an estimated annual contribution to Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.

Planning and Countryside

7.14 A budget for 2023/24 of £0.078M has been allocated to the Planning and Countryside programme, this will enable the Council to continue to develop and progress schemes which improve the countryside. Supported by external funding, the Council will continue working on schemes which improve access to and on the Public Rights of Way network, open access land and green and blue spaces.

Private Sector Housing

7.15 A budget for 2023/24 of £11.720M has been allocated and the programme comprises the following schemes to contribute to one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'People – Are independent, healthy and successful':

- Disabled Facilities Grants;
- Maintenance Repair Assistance Grants;
- Renovation Grants in Exceptional Circumstances;

- Empty Homes Grants scheme and the delivery of the National Scheme led by RCT from April 2023 to March 2025;
- Shared Prosperity Fund Heating Grant and Solar Panel Grant which provides financial support for residents to make their homes more energy efficient;
- Affordable Housing through the Social Housing Grant; and
- Tackling Poverty Fund.

FRONTLINE SERVICES

Highways Technical Services

- 7.16 A budget for 2023/24 of £10.725M has been allocated to the next phase of the Council's Highways Improvement programme and in doing so supports one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play'. Schemes comprise:
- Road surface treatments and resurfacing – £4.800M
 - Car park improvements – £0.045M
 - Major repairs to structures such as bridges and walls – £4.450M
 - Parks Structures Improvements - £0.780M
 - Street lighting replacement and upgrades – £0.540M
 - Traffic Management - £0.110M

Strategic Projects

- 7.17 A budget for 2023/24 of £16.940M has been allocated to Strategic Projects for major economic infrastructure investment and a programme of multi-modal transport enhancements ranging from sustainable travel initiatives to encourage walking and cycling, park and ride facilities, "making better use" enhancements, road safety and drainage improvements. Allocated as follows:
- Major Economic Transport Infrastructure investments and associated transportation enhancements – £16.190M
 - Drainage Improvements – £0.750M
- 7.18 There remains uncertainty with regard to the level of WG grant funding for 2023/24. It is anticipated that further substantial funding will be made available to implement the Welsh Government Default 20mph speed limit initiative. Road Safety Revenue will be available but Road Safety Capital funding is suspended in favour of the 20mph initiative. In addition, the implications of the outcome of the Roads Review will need to be considered. A number of individual grants, such as Resilient Roads fund, have now been incorporated into the Local Transport Fund grant. Bids for various funds returned during January and February are expected to be confirmed during March. Bids have also been submitted for "Small Scale" flood alleviation schemes with the upper limit of funding for individual schemes set at £0.200M.
- 7.19 A supplementary report on the detail of proposed schemes for Highways, Transportation & Strategic Projects will be presented to Cabinet shortly.

Storm Dennis Flood Recovery

- 7.20 Following the unprecedented weather events of Storm Dennis in February 2020,

the Council will have already spent £25M on repairing, replacing and improving infrastructure damaged by this exceptional storm event by the end of March 2023.

- 7.21 Funding for the recovery work is provided by WG on an annual basis and the Council continues to work closely with WG to ensure funding is increased and secured during the financial year to maintain the momentum of the recovery programme. Formal confirmation of the funding for 2023/24 is awaited from WG, however the Council has previously had assurance from WG to continue with recovery works. In anticipation of the funding for 2023/24 being confirmed a total budget for 2023/24 of £20.109M is now included.
- 7.22 There are a significant number of schemes ongoing to repair and replace bridges, river walls and retaining walls, as well as a work programme to deal with coal spoil tip safety, including the remediation process following Tylorstown landslip.

Parks

- 7.23 Investment in Parks infrastructure in 2023/24 totals £0.820M to fund a rolling programme of improvements to drainage, pavilions, buildings and other infrastructure such as seating, fencing, paths and walls.

Waste Strategy

- 7.24 The budget for 2023/24 is £1.200M. This relates to the Eco Park at Bryn Pica and consideration of the feasibility of implementing a transfer station to reduce operational costs associated with hauling waste and recycling, and to reduce the carbon footprint associated with the significant operation.

Fleet

- 7.25 The 3 year rolling programme for replacement vehicles continues. The 3 year allocation is £4.400M. This service area is subject to ongoing assessment and continuous review of requirements.

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

- 7.26 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £64.985M for Education & Inclusion in 2022/23.
- 7.27 The total resources available to Education & Inclusion for 2023/24, as outlined in the proposed three-year Capital Programme is £38.368M and will support one of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities: 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper'. This investment will also support the delivery of Strategic Priority 5: Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities, of the Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan.

Schools

- 7.28 The Council will continue to deliver and support its long-term strategic investment

programme of modernisation to create school environments that meet the needs of our communities and provide the best learning provision and outcomes for young people and the wider community. The programme of capital investment is supported with Council funding, WG Sustainable Communities for Learning (previously the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme) and Section 106 funding.

7.29 The following key school projects are either in progress or planned, and are included in the overall strategic programme and include a combination of refurbishments, remodelling, demolitions and new buildings:

- YGG Llyn Y Forwyn – to create a brand new school on a new site in the Rhondda Fach, increasing Welsh medium capacity and providing community facilities;
- Y Pant Extension – phase 1 will deliver a four-classroom extension to increase the capacity at the school to accommodate growth as a result of housing developments in the area;
- YG Rhydywaun – to construct a new teaching block to increase the capacity at the school plus an element of remodelling and refurbishment of the existing school building to provide brand new learning environments including sports facilities that will be available for the wider community;
- Creation of a new 3-16 school in Hawthorn – to construct a new teaching block providing exciting new learning environments for all pupils of the new school;
- Creation of a new 3-16 school in Pontypridd – significant remodelling and refurbishment will be carried out throughout the new school, providing new learning environments for all pupils and delivering new sports facilities that will be available for the wider community;
- Creation of a new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin – to construct a brand new school, increasing the Welsh medium capacity in the area, and delivering exciting new learning environments internally and externally, and providing facilities that will be available for the wider community; and
- Bryncelynog Comprehensive School – to construct 2 new teaching blocks and undertaking extensive remodelling and refurbishment work in the existing school buildings, delivering brand new learning environments and sports facilities, and increasing the capacity of the school including the sixth form.

7.30 In addition to the above schemes being delivered through capital funding, the Council has been successful in securing funding via WG's Mutual Investment Model (MIM) programme, which is the revenue funding element of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. The Council has entered into a 25-year contract for the design, build, funding and building maintenance of three schools as follows:

- Pontyclun Primary School (by early 2025) – All existing buildings (including temporary classrooms) will be demolished to construct a new two-storey school building, sports and recreation facilities. Hard play areas will be provided externally, along with two (MUGAs) and other informal grass play areas;
- Llanilltud Faerdref Primary School (by spring 2024) – A new single-storey building will be constructed on the existing grassed playing field area on the eastern part of the site. Externally, there will be landscaped areas and hard

and soft play areas set around the school. Two MUGAs will be built, along with a grass sports pitch (5-a-side) and a 40-metre grass sprint track; and

- Penygawsi Primary School (by summer 2024) – All existing buildings will be demolished to construct a new two-storey building at the north-east corner of the site. Hard play areas will be provided externally, along with a grass sports pitch (7-a-side), two MUGAs and informal play areas at the southern end of the site.

Planned Capital Works

- 7.31 The planned capital works programme allocation for 2023/24 is £5.808M. The allocation includes an on-going rolling programme for kitchen refurbishments/remodelling, window & door replacements, essential works, electrical rewiring, fire alarm upgrades, toilet refurbishments, Equalities Act/compliance works, access condition surveys, boiler replacements, roof renewals, asbestos remediation works, 21st Century classroom upgrades, external improvements, capitalisation of IT hardware/software & licences and improvements to schools. Also included is funding to support capital expenditure in relation to the Universal Primary Free School Meals initiative.
- 7.32 A supplementary report detailing proposals of works for consideration within the above-mentioned programme will be presented to Cabinet shortly.

COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 7.33 The latest projections show expected full year capital spend of £8.391M for Community and Children's Services in 2022/23.
- 7.34 The total resources available to Community and Children's Services for 2023/24, as outlined in the proposed three year Capital Programme, is £10.887M.
- 7.35 As identified in 6.2 additional investment has been provided in Community and Children's Services in the following areas:
- Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) - £0.200M
 - Play Areas - £0.200M

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

Adult & Children's Services

- 7.36 The programme for Adult and Children's Services includes a budget of £7.105M in 2023/24. This will continue to fund the essential refurbishment and improvement works to the Council's Adult & Children's Services establishments, including the extra-care programme, in line with care standards and health & safety legislation. Also included are additional costs associated with Telecare Services.
- 7.37 In December 2022, Cabinet considered and determined to consult on major proposals to invest and modernise residential care services in Rhondda Cynon Taf including three new facilities offering Extra Care and residential dementia care, a fourth new accommodation for adults with learning disabilities, and the retention of

five Council care homes. The consultation was carried out between 12th December 2022 and 27th January 2023.

- 7.38 A further report following conclusion of the consultation will be presented to Cabinet in relation to the preferred options for the future provision of accommodation for older people in the Council's residential care homes.
- 7.39 The capital funding requirements to deliver the proposals for investment in new facilities will also subsequently be considered by Cabinet. This will include reviewing all opportunities to secure any available external (Welsh Government) sources of finance to support the timely delivery of the strategy.
- 7.40 These investments will support one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'People – Are independent, healthy and successful'.

Public Health & Protection

- 7.41 The Public Health and Protection programme has a budget of £3.782M in 2023/24. This budget is allocated across the ongoing rolling programmes for Cemeteries and Community Safety measures. Also included in this budget are allocations for investment and improvement works at Leisure Centres and Play Areas. The redevelopment of the Muni Arts Centre is also included in this programme. These areas of investment support one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play'.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

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

9.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

10.0 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Consultation and engagement has been undertaken as part of formulating the revised programme and this was also built into the wider consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the recommended 2023/24 Revenue Budget Strategy, particularly in respect of investment priorities and community benefits.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 The Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 complies fully with all legal requirements.

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

13.1 The Council's proposed Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 has been formulated to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, as set out within the Corporate Plan "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024, with these documents being aligned to the goals and principles included within the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

14.0 CONCLUSIONS

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

14.2 This report sets out the capital investment priorities for the Council through to March 2026. It represents an ambitious and significant level of investment (£187.320M) over the next 3 years.

14.3 The programme includes some element of slippage identified throughout 2022/23, which is subject to change when final spend for the capital programme is known and the 2022/23 accounts are finalised. Any changes to slippage will be reported as part of the Council's quarterly performance reports.

14.4 This report has also identified the opportunity to invest £7.100M of additional resources in our local area and infrastructure in order to improve the services and facilities which are available to our residents.

14.5 As the year progresses, changes will be made to the programme, for example where new schemes can be supported by specific grants. Approval from Members will be sought as these opportunities arise throughout 2023/24.

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Table 2a: Breakdown of General Capital Funding (GCF), by Unitary Authority, 2023-24 (£000)**Provisional Settlement**

Unitary Authority	General Capital Funding 2023-24	of which: General Capital Grant	of which: Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing
Isle of Anglesey	4,376	2,217	2,159
Gwynedd	8,233	4,172	4,061
Conwy	6,923	3,508	3,415
Denbighshire	6,129	3,105	3,024
Flintshire	8,159	4,134	4,025
Wrexham	7,046	3,570	3,476
Powys	9,298	4,711	4,587
Ceredigion	5,860	2,969	2,891
Pembrokeshire	7,595	3,848	3,747
Carmarthenshire	11,989	6,075	5,914
Swansea	12,882	6,527	6,355
Neath Port Talbot	8,971	4,545	4,426
Bridgend	8,008	4,057	3,951
The Vale of Glamorgan	6,997	3,545	3,452
Rhondda Cynon Taf	13,886	7,036	6,850
Merthyr Tydfil	3,168	1,605	1,563
Caerphilly	9,772	4,951	4,821
Blaenau Gwent	3,859	1,955	1,904
Torfaen	5,410	2,741	2,669
Monmouthshire	4,925	2,495	2,430
Newport	8,423	4,268	4,155
Cardiff	18,091	9,166	8,925
Total unitary authorities	180,000	91,200	88,800

PROPOSED "CORE" THREE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME

2023 / 2026

SERVICE GROUPS	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
	£M	£M	£M
Chief Executive's Group	2.435	2.435	2.435
Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services	8.255	8.255	8.255
Education & Inclusion Services	2.875	2.875	2.875
Community & Children's Services	0.615	0.615	0.615
Total Capital Expenditure	14.180	14.180	14.180

Estimated Resources Required to Fund Capital Programme

Welsh Government General Capital Funding

Supported borrowing	6.850	6.850	6.850
General Capital Grant	7.036	7.036	7.036
Total WG Funding	13.886	13.886	13.886

WG capital funding allocated to fund Investment Priorities	-	2.206	-	2.206	-	2.206
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Total Available to fund the Core Programme	11.680	11.680	11.680
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Council Resources

Council Resources	2.500	2.500	2.500
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Total Resources Required to Fund the "Core" Capital Programme	14.180	14.180	14.180
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Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2023 - 2026			
	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	2025/2026 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

Finance & Digital Services

CIVICA Financials	260	260	260	780
Capitalisation of Computer HW/SW & Licences	1,200	1,200	1,200	3,600
Total Finance & Digital Services	1,460	1,460	1,460	4,380

Corporate Estates

Major repair/refurbishment and/or rationalisation of Service Group Accommodation	541	110	110	761
Strategic Maintenance	40	40	40	120
Asset Management Planning	40	40	40	120
Asbestos Management	125	125	125	375
Asbestos Remediation Works	40	40	40	120
Legionella Remediation Works	195	195	195	585
Legionella Management	125	125	125	375
Carbon Reduction Programme	635	300	300	1,235
Electric Vehicles Charging	347	0	0	347
ULEV – WLGA third party grant for Local Authority EV charging infrastructure	237	0	0	237
Total Corporate Estates	2,325	975	975	4,275

Group Total	3,785	2,435	2,435	8,655
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Chief Executive
Service Director - Finance Services

Paul Mee
Martyn Hughes

Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2023 - 2026			
	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	2025/2026 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

Prosperity & Development

Regeneration

Enterprise Investment Fund	140	140	140	420
Transforming Towns Place Making Grant	580	690	0	1,270
Regeneration Investment	598	290	290	1,178
Porth Interchange Metro+ LTF	504	0	0	504
UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund	1,938	14,752	0	16,690
Total Regeneration	3,760	15,872	430	20,062

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000
Total Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	1,000	1,000	1,000	3,000

Planning & Countryside

Countryside	78	78	0	156
Total Planning & Countryside	78	78	0	156

Private Sector Housing

Disabled Facilities Grants/Adaptations (DFG)	3,375	3,375	2,875	9,625
Maintenance Repair Assistance (MRA)	250	250	250	750
Renovation Grants Exceptional Circumstances & Home Improvement Zones	350	250	250	850
Empty Properties Grants Investment	1,940	0	0	1,940
National Empty Homes Grant Scheme	2,395	2,395	0	4,790
Affordable Housing	2,910	500	0	3,410
Tackling Poverty Fund	200	0	0	200
Community Regeneration	300	100	100	500
Total Private Sector Housing	11,720	6,870	3,475	22,065

Total Prosperity & Development	16,558	23,820	4,905	45,283
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Frontline Services

Highways Technical Services

Highways Improvements	4,800	1,000	1,000	6,800
Car Parks	45	45	45	135
Structures	4,450	210	210	4,870
Parks Structures	780	0	0	780
Street Lighting	540	440	340	1,320
Traffic Management	110	110	110	330
Total Highways Technical Services	10,725	1,805	1,705	14,235

Strategic Projects

Transportation and Travel Schemes	17	0	0	17
Transportation Infrastructure	16,173	7,980	25	24,178
Drainage Improvements	750	100	100	950
Total Strategic Projects	16,940	8,080	125	25,145

Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2023 - 2026			
	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	2025/2026 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Storm Dennis Flood Recovery				
Storm Dennis Flood Recovery	20,109	0	0	20,109
Total Storm Dennis Flood Recovery	20,109	0	0	20,109
Parks				
Parks	820	70	70	960
Total Parks	820	70	70	960
Waste Strategy				
Waste Strategy	1,200	0	0	1,200
Total Waste Strategy	1,200	0	0	1,200
Fleet				
Vehicles	1,200	1,600	1,600	4,400
Total Fleet	1,200	1,600	1,600	4,400
Buildings				
Buildings	150	50	50	250
Total Buildings	150	50	50	250
Total Frontline Services	51,144	11,605	3,550	66,299
Group Total	67,702	35,425	8,455	111,582

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

Simon Gale
 Roger Waters
 Martyn Hughes

Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2023 - 2026			
	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	2025/2026 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

Schools

School Modernisation Rhondda and Tonyrefail	2,957	0	0	2,957
School Modernisation	3,091	100	100	3,291
Ffynnon Taf Primary Refurbishment and Extension	73	0	0	73
Y Pant Extension	648	0	0	648
SRIC - School Modernisation Programme	182	0	0	182
Childcare Facility Improvements	36	0	0	36
21st Century Schools Band B				
YG Rhydywaun School Modernisation	186	0	0	186
YGG Aberdar School Modernisation	22	0	0	22
Hirwaun Primary School	148	0	0	148
New Welsh Medium Primary School Rhydfelin	5,106	440	0	5,546
3-16 Hawthorn School Modernisation	10,958	7,711	0	18,669
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School Modernisation	8,653	343	0	8,996
Mutual Investment Model Projects	500	250	0	750
Total	32,560	8,844	100	41,504

Supplementary Capital Programme

Planned Kitchen Refurbishments	280	140	140	560
Window & Door Replacements	110	110	110	330
Essential Works	420	290	290	1,000
Capitalisation of Computer HW / SW & Licences	235	180	180	595
Roof Renewal	844	500	500	1,844
Boiler Replacement	412	180	180	772
Equalities Act/Compliance Works	357	165	165	687
Education & Inclusion Services Condition Surveys	40	40	40	120
Electrical Rewiring	140	140	140	420
Asbestos Remediation Work	640	640	640	1,920
Fire Alarm Upgrades	115	70	70	255
Toilet Refurbishments	250	250	250	750
21st Century Classroom Upgrade	71	0	0	71
Universal Primary Free School Meals Capital	1,824	0	0	1,824
Improvements to Schools	70	70	70	210
Total	5,808	2,775	2,775	11,358

Group Total	38,368	11,619	2,875	52,862
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Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Service Director - Finance Services

Gaynor Davies
Stephanie Davies

Community and Children's Services

Appendix 3d

Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2023 - 2026			
	2023/2024 Budget	2024/2025 Budget	2025/2026 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

Adult & Children's Services

Modernisation Programme (Adults)	6,472	100	100	6,672
Modernisation Programme (Childrens)	162	25	25	212
Asbestos Remediation	125	25	25	175
Telecare Equipment (Inc of Carelink Equipment)	346	150	150	646
Total Adult & Children's Services	7,105	300	300	7,705

Public Health, Protection & Community Services

Leisure Centre Refurbishment Programme	102	60	60	222
Play Areas	779	50	50	879
Cemeteries Planned Programme	115	95	95	305
Community Safety Initiatives	171	2,154	50	2,375
Community Hubs	183	0	0	183
Culture	20	20	20	60
Muni Arts Project	2,372	0	0	2,372
Buildings	40	40	40	120
Total Public Health, Protection & Community Services	3,782	2,419	315	6,516

Group Total	10,887	2,719	615	14,221
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Interim Director of Social Services
 Director of Public Health, Protection &
 Community Services
 Service Director - Finance Services

Neil Elliott
 Louise Davies
 Neil Griffiths

Appendix 3e

Capital Programme from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026

Group	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
	£M	£M	£M	£M
Chief Executive	3.785	2.435	2.435	8.655
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	67.702	35.425	8.455	111.582
Education and Inclusion Services	38.368	11.619	2.875	52.862
Community and Children's Services	10.887	2.719	0.615	14.221
Total	120.742	52.198	14.380	187.320

Estimated Resources Required to Fund Capital Programme

Supported Borrowing	6.850	6.850	6.850	20.550
Unsupported Borrowing	12.762	8.692	0.000	21.454
Total	19.612	15.542	6.850	42.004

Capital Grants

General Capital Grant 2023/24	7.036	7.036	7.036	21.108
WLGA Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles Grant	0.237			0.237
WG National Empty Homes Grant Scheme	2.395	2.395		4.790
WG Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant	0.127			0.127
WG Flood Recovery Grant	20.109			20.109
WG Sustainable Communities for Learning	18.257	0.802		19.059
WG Access Improvement Grants	0.078	0.078		0.156
UK Government Levelling Up Fund	8.461			8.461
UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund	1.938	14.752		16.690
Grantscape Windfarm Community Benefit Fund	0.017			0.017
WG Transforming Towns	0.580	0.690		1.270
WG PRS Lease Scheme	0.121	2.104		2.225
Total	59.356	27.857	7.036	94.249

Third Party Contributions	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057
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Council Resources

Revenue Contributions	27.886	7.755	0.200	35.841
General Fund Capital Resources	13.831	1.044	0.294	15.169
Total	41.717	8.799	0.494	51.010

Total Resources Required to Fund Capital Programme	120.742	52.198	14.380	187.320
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