



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

**COMMITTEE SUMMONS**

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

Meeting Contact: Yula Kampouropoulou - Council Business Unit, Democratic Services (07747485569)

**YOU ARE SUMMONED** to a hybrid meeting of **GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE** to be held on **WEDNESDAY, 7TH DECEMBER, 2022** at **5.00 PM**.

Non-Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by Monday, 5 December 2022 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

**AGENDA**

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No's**

**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 previous meeting of the Governance and Audit

Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

	<b>5 - 12</b>
<b>3. AUDIT WALES ASSURANCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT SUMMARY REPORT</b>	
	<b>13 - 26</b>
<b>4. AUDIT WALES - TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME BOARD - BASELINE GOVERNANCE REVIEW - CWM TAF MORGANNWG REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD</b>	
	<b>27 - 50</b>
<b>5. COUNCIL PROGRESS UPDATE - IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS REPORTED BY AUDIT WALES</b>	
	<b>51 - 72</b>
<b>6. 2021/22 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS - PROGRESS UPDATE</b>	
	<b>73 - 82</b>
<b>7. DRAFT ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT (INCORPORATING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT)</b>	
	<b>83 - 124</b>
<b>8. PROGRESS AGAINST THE INTERNAL AUDIT RISK BASED PLAN 2022/23</b>	
	<b>125 - 138</b>
<b>9. INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
	<b>139 - 146</b>
<b>10. GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE</b>	
<b>11. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING UNDER-MENTIONED RESOLUTION:</b>	
“That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) for the next item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.”	
<b>12. PROGRESS UPDATE AGAINST THE ANTI-FRAUD, BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23</b>	
	<b>147 - 162</b>
<b>13. URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency	

**Circulation:-**

**County Borough Councillors:**

Councillor G Hopkins, Councillor M Maohoub, Councillor S Rees,  
Councillor B Stephens, Councillor L A Tomkinson, Councillor P Evans

**Lay Member:**

Mr C Jones  
Mr M Jehu  
Mr J Roszkowski

**Officers:**

Lisa Cumpston, Group Audit Manager  
Paul Mee, Chief Executive  
Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services  
Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services  
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Ian Traylor, Service Director – Pensions, Procurement & Transactional Services  
Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services

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## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on Wednesday, 7 September 2022 at 5.00 pm.

### **County Borough Councillors:**

Councillor M Maohoub (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor L A Tomkinson  
Councillor B Stephens  
Councillor S Rees

### **Lay Member:**

Mr C Jones – Chair  
Mr J Roszkowski  
Mr M Jehu

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr P Griffiths, Service Director, Finance & Improvement Services  
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Ms S Davies, Service Director: Financial Services  
Mr M Gibson, Audit Wales  
Mr C Rees, Audit Wales

### **1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed Members to the Hybrid Governance and Audit Committee. The Chair extended his condolences to the passing of Cllr T Burnell who was a Member of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillor G Hopkins.

### **2 Declaration of Interest**

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

### **3 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

### **4 Matters Arising**

Agenda Item No.6 (Audit Wales 2022 Audit Plan RCT): The Service Director, Finance and Improvement Services confirmed that a project brief on the review of unscheduled care, as requested by Members in the previous meeting, had been circulated via email on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Agenda Item No.9 (Annual Governance Statement 2021/22): The Service Director, Finance and Improvement Services confirmed the inclusion of further narrative within the updated Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 to confirm the adequacy of the arrangements in place.

## **5 Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22**

The Service Director, Finance Services presented the report to the Governance and Audit Committee and fed back that the report constituted the statutory requirement to provide Members with information relating to the Council's Treasury Management activity during 2021/22 and the actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2021/22. The Service Director indicated that the report provided Members the opportunity to scrutinise the Annual Treasury Management Review presented to Council on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

The Service Director, Finance Services directed Members to paragraph 4.2 of the report at Appendix 1; Members were provided with the assurance that the Council has complied with all relevant Codes of Practice, regulations and guidance throughout the last financial year.

Members were then directed to section 6 of the report which detailed revisions to the CIPFA Codes and updated Public Works Loan Board lending guidance (PWLB). The Service Director, Finance Services advised Members that the Council's most significant portion of borrowing is from the PWLB and it was noted that in August 2021 the criteria changed to prohibit borrowing where Local Authorities were purchasing investment assets primarily for return.

The Service Director, Finance Services informed Members that in the previous financial year, CIPFA updated their Code of Practice relating to Treasury Management and this was in line with the PWLB rule changes. The Service Director added that the changes to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance and Treasury Management Code related to permitted reasons to borrow, knowledge and skills and the management of non-treasury investments.

The Service Director, Finance Services went on to provide Members with information in relation to the Council's borrowing. It was noted that other than temporary short-term borrowing to manage cash flow volatility, no external long-term borrowing was undertaken during the year other than £82.4Million repayable funding from Welsh Government to support investment in Rail Infrastructure.

The Service Director, Finance Services advised Members that the Council continues to maintain a low-risk investment strategy to minimise the exposure to credit risk and that the net capital charges for the year were within budget.

Members were directed to section 10 of the report which detailed the Council operated within the approved limits as set out in the reports 'Capital Strategy Report Incorporating Prudential Indicators' and 'Treasury Management Strategy'. Lastly, the Service Director, Finance Services directed Members to section 13 of the report and Members were advised that future updates in respect of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme will be reported within Treasury Management reports.

The Chair fed back that based on the report, the Local Authority is well placed in

terms of its risk management and financial position.

Mr M Jehu requested assurances that the Council are borrowing and investing money with ethical businesses in order to eliminate the risk of compromising the Council's reputation. The Service Director, Finance Services reassured Members that the Council invests its surplus funds with the Debt Management Office, which is a UK Government own facility, or other public bodies.

A Member raised a query in respect of interest rates and the extent of interest rate exposure when the Council borrows money. The Service Director, Finance Services advised that the majority of the Council's borrowing is fixed rate and as a result the Council has a low risk of exposure to interest rate changes on its borrowings.

Following discussion, the Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

Consider whether they wish to receive further detail on any matters contained within the report.

## **6 Audit Wales Work Programme and Timetable**

The Audit Wales Officer presented the report to Members and Members were informed of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 whereby the Auditor General for Wales is required to produce a timetable for each Local Authority covering both Audit Wales functions and those of relevant regulators such as Care Inspectorate Wales and Estyn. To discharge this duty an updated work programme has been produced for each quarter as highlighted within the report.

The Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Note the content of the report

## **7 Audit Wales Reports**

The Audit Wales Officer presented three Audit Wales reports to Members, namely, Springing Forward - Strategic Asset Management – Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council; Springing Forward – Workforce - Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council; and Direct Payments for Adult Social Care.

The Audit Wales Officer directed Members to paragraph 4 of the Springing Forward Asset Management report and the Officer provided a breakdown of the three main aims of the project. These included: -

- To gain assurance that Councils are putting in place arrangements to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services;
- To explain the actions that Councils are taking both individually and collectively to strengthen their arrangements as well as further embed the sustainable development principle; and
- To inspire Councils and other organisations to further strengthen their arrangements through capturing and sharing notable practice examples and

learning and making appropriate recommendations.

The Audit Wales Officer advised Members of the reviews which were undertaken to measure the Council's strategic approach to managing its assets, strategically plan the use of the assets as well as how it monitors, evaluates and reviews the effectiveness of those arrangements.

Overall, it was noted that the Council has good arrangements to deliver its current corporate asset management strategy, however the Audit Wales Officer advised that the Council needs to ensure the asset management strategy is fully shaped by the sustainable development principle.

Following the overview of the report, the Chair referred to Members for questions.

A Member queried the Committee's role to ensure the recommendations reported by Audit Wales are implemented and whether Audit Wales will provide follow up reports to update the Committee on progress.

The Audit Wales Officer advised that the Council has been developing its response to the Springing Forward Asset Management report and Springing Forward Workforce report and updates are scheduled to be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Mr M Jehu requested reassurance on the Council's adoption of new ways of working with partner organisations and support of the Senior Leadership Team.

The Audit Wales Officer advised that there is a clear commitment to new ways of working with partner organisations, with this being supported by the Senior Leadership Team.

Following discussion of the Springing Forward – Strategic Asset Management RCT, the Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- To note the content of the report

The Audit Wales Officer continued by presenting the Springing Forward – Workforce - Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council report. It was advised that Audit Wales have reviewed how the Council strategically plans for its workforce requirements both now and in the future, how it monitors its workforce and how it reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of its arrangements.

Following the review, it was concluded that the Council has a clear vision and effective planning arrangements for its workforce but as it renews its workforce strategy, the Council will need to ensure that this is shaped by the sustainable development principle. It was also noted that the Council has made good progress delivering its current workforce strategy, has a good understanding of the current challenges and is dealing with the impact that the pandemic has on its workforce; and that the Council has arrangements to monitor and review its workforce and, whilst it does engage with other organisations to share knowledge and experience, examples of active and meaningful benchmarking are few.

Following discussion of the Springing Forward – Workforce - Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council report, the Governance and Audit Committee



**RESOLVED** to:

- To note the content of the report.

The Service Director- Finance and Improvement Services fed back that the Council has considered the recommendations set out in the Direct Payments for Adult Social Care national report and, where appropriate, will incorporate into existing service planning arrangements. The Service Director added that with regard to the Strategic Asset Management and Workforce reports, the Council is currently formulating responses to the recommendations and updates will be reported to Members in the autumn, including to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

With regard to the Direct Payments for Adult Social Care national report, the Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Note the content of the report

**8 Draft Statements of Account 2021/22 (including an overview of Accounting Policies)**

The Service Director, Finance Services provided Members with a presentation covering an overview of the Accounting Policies and critical judgements applied in preparing the draft statements of Accounts, to aid the Committee in its role in the approval process of the Council's Statement of Accounts.

The Service Director, Finance Services provided an overview of the following areas: Governance Framework; Timescales; What is an Accounting Policy?; Accounting Policies Disclosed; Critical Judgements in applying Accounting Policies; Assumptions about the future and other sources of estimation uncertainty; and Impact of Covid-19.

The Service Director, Finance Services continued by presenting a report to provide Members with the opportunity to consider the certified draft Statements of Account for the 2021/22 financial year in respect of the Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund, Central South Consortium Joint Education Service Joint Committee and the Annual Return for Llwydcoed Crematorium Joint Committee.

The report also provided Members with an update of the continued impact of Covid-19 on proposed plans for earlier production and audit of the Statements of Account in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.

Members were directed to sections 3 and 4 of the report that highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on the timescales for the production and audit of the accounts, the dates that the draft Statements of Account were certified by the Director of Finance and Digital Services and the target dates for completion of the external audit and reporting to full Council / relevant Joint Committee.

Members were then directed to Section 5 of the report which referred to the Local Government Measure 2011 and the responsibilities of the Audit Committee in respect of the approval process of a Council's Statement of Accounts. The Service Director referred Members to Appendix 5 of the report that set out a tool kit which Members can utilise as part of the scrutiny

of the draft Statements of Account.

Mr Mel Jehu thanked the Officer for the extensive report and presentation and commended the team for the effective financial management arrangements within the Local Authority.

The Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Consider and note the presentation and report.

## **9 Audit Wales - Verbal Update on the Progress of the Audit of the Draft Statement of Accounts 2021/22**

The Audit Lead provided Members with a brief overview of the current work undertaken by Audit Wales.

Members were advised that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has operated well in producing the draft Statements of Account despite the on-going impact of the pandemic.

The Audit Lead recognised the pressures which the Finance Team are under and commended them for their effective work. Overall, Members were advised that Audit Wales are pleased with the quality of the Statements of Account produced by Rhondda Cynon Taf and no significant matters have been identified through the external audit process of the accounts, to date, to bring to the attention of the Committee. The Chair thanked the Officer for the positive feedback received and commended the Finance Team for all their hard work.

The Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Note the verbal update received.

## **10 Governance & Audit Committee Draft Work Programme 2022/23**

The Service Director, Finance and Improvement Services presented the report to Members that set out the draft work plan for the 2022/23 Municipal Year to enable the Committee to effectively fulfil its Terms of Reference.

The Service Director referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report, the draft Governance and Audit Committee Work Plan for 2022/23. The Service Director fed back that the workplan sets out its Terms of Reference together with a timetable for bringing reports and information updates before Committee for review and challenge.

The Service Director went on to feedback that the workplace will be kept under on-going review during the year and where further areas are identified, these will be reported to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration and, if deemed appropriate, incorporation into the work plan.

The Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Consider the report and determine whether there are other areas/themes to incorporate within the work plan to aid the effective discharge of the Governance and Audit Committee's responsibilities.

- Approve a work plan for delivery during the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

## 11 Governance and Audit Learning and Development

The Service Director, Finance and Improvement Services presented the report to Members that set out proposed arrangements to update the learning and development plan for the Governance and Audit Committee in line with its terms of Reference.

Members were advised of the work undertaken previously to support learning and development for the Committee, as set out in the Background Section of the report, with the need for the learning and development plan to be refreshed to ensure it remains relevant to Members of the Committee and in line with a recommendation reported within the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

The Service Director, Finance and Improvement Services referred Members to Section 5 of the report that set out the proposed approach to undertaking an on-line training needs analysis, with the results reported back to the Committee for review and to inform the compilation of an updated Learning and Development Plan.

Members were requested to consider the draft Training Needs Analysis questionnaire at Appendix 1 of the report and to note that the questionnaire had been compiled in line with the CIPFA Practical Guidance Notes and having key regard to the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

It was advised that Council Officers will be available to provide support to Members as part of completing the exercise to ensure all relevant feedback is taken account of in producing an updated Learning and Development Plan.

Mr J Roszkowski requested further guidance to be included for each question in the questionnaire to aid completion, and the Service Director fed back that this will be reviewed and the questionnaire updated accordingly prior to circulation to Committee Members.

The Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- Review the draft Training Needs Analysis questionnaire (Appendix 1) and subject to updates to incorporate into the document, instruct Council Officers to progress the training needs analysis exercise to enable results and a draft learning and development plan to be reported to the November 2022 Governance and Audit Committee meeting.

**This meeting closed at 5:57 pm**

**Mr C Jones  
Chairman.**

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## Assurance and Risk Assessment Review – Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Audit year: 2021-22

Date issued: November 2022

Document reference: 3263A2022

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with Section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh.

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## What we reviewed and why

- 1 We undertook this project to identify the level of audit assurance and/or where further audit work may be required in future years in relation to risks to the Council putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources. This project also helped us to assess the extent to which the Council is applying the sustainable development principle in taking steps to meet its well-being objectives.
- 2 This report summarises our findings in the areas where we have undertaken more detailed Assurance and Risk Assessment work. We will also produce an Annual Audit Summary in the autumn of 2022 that will summarise our audit work undertaken since our last Annual Audit Summary in February 2022.
- 3 We focused on the following areas at the Council:
  - Financial position
  - Implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
  - Self-assessment arrangements
  - Carbon reduction plan
- 4 This report also summarises the findings from our digital strategy work, which we did during 2021-22.
- 5 The Assurance and Risk Assessment project has been ongoing throughout the year. We held a workshop with the Council's Leader and Senior Leadership Team in March 2022 to gather their perspectives on the key audit risks in relation to the Council and to inform our forward planning.



## Financial position

### **The Council is now facing significant financial pressures, but remains well-placed to respond to these**

- 6 We have been reviewing the Council's financial position during the year. This has included consideration of the Council's financial reserves position, the delivery of savings and performance against the planned budget for the year.
- 7 We also published a [Local Government Financial Sustainability Data tool](#) in February 2022. This includes a range of financial data for councils, national parks and fire and rescue authorities in Wales.

### **Financial strategy**

- 8 The Council is now experiencing significant financial pressures due to the current economic climate. However, we remain assured about the Council's financial position and its arrangements to help it address these pressures.
- 9 The Council has recently updated its medium-term financial plan. Based on the indicative settlements provided by the Welsh Government, the Council is now forecasting a £77.79 million budget gap over 2023-24 to 2025-26. This consists of £36.47 million for 2023-24, £21.7 million for 2024-25 and £19.5 million for 2025-26. The updated medium-term plan provides a much worse position than forecast a year ago. At that time, the Council was forecasting a maximum budget gap of just under £52 million over the three years. This was based on a 2% annual settlement increase. The increase in the forecast budget gap underlines the significant challenges the Council is facing due to the current economic climate. This includes a range of inflationary pressures, including rising energy costs. The Council is estimating these will cost it an extra £63.6 million over the next three years.
- 10 The Welsh Government's indicative funding settlements on an all-Wales basis of 3.5% and 2.4% respectively for 2023-24 and 2024-25 provide a degree of funding certainty over the medium term. Medium-term financial planning will continue to rely on a range of assumptions. The changing socio-economic landscape and economic uncertainty mean planning for financial resilience and future budget rounds will continue to be challenging for the Council.
- 11 The Council has identified broad areas to help it address its budget gap. This includes identifying further efficiencies, digitisation, transforming social services, and reviewing its assets. The Council's strategy continues to be to protect front line services. To date, it has been able to invest in areas linked with its corporate priorities. But the Council's updated MTFP makes clear that this strategy may not be sustainable if it is to address the significant budget gap being predicted. Exploring service reductions is now part of its programme to address its financial challenges. The Council has not yet set out in detail how it will meet the increased budget gap. However, overall, we remain assured that the Council has a solid financial position

and arrangements to help it prepare for the pressures it is facing. It continues to have a range of options available to it to manage its budget pressures.

## Usable reserves

- 12 We have continued to find no major concerns about the Council's management of its reserves. As shown in **Exhibit 1** below, the Council increased its level of usable reserves considerably in 2020-21 and 2021-22. This is partly due to the additional grant funding provided by the Welsh Government towards the end of the financial year. It continues to have a healthy reserves position. This gives the Council a degree of resilience to help it manage its budgetary pressures.

### Exhibit 1: amount of usable reserves versus annual budget

This exhibit shows the amount of usable reserves the Council had at the end of 2021-22 and the previous five years as a proportion of the net cost of the services the Council delivers.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (draft position, subject to audit)
Net cost of services in £ millions <sup>1</sup>	472.1	477.1	491.5	505.6	532.1	551.5
Total usable reserves in £ millions <sup>2</sup>	138.9	143.5	119.5	119.9	171.3	229.2
Total usable reserves as a percentage of net cost of services	29.4%	30.1%	24.3%	23.7%	32.2%	41.5
Comparison with the other councils of Wales	3/22	3/22	6/22	6/22	7/22	Not yet available

- 13 The Council used some of its general fund balance reserves to help it manage the costs of Storm Dennis during the spring 2020. In 2021-22, the Council has been able to increase its general fund balance reserves from £8.5 million to £10.2 million. This

<sup>1</sup> Value used is the net cost of services charged to the general fund from the Expenditure Funding Analysis, less any Housing Revenue Account cost of services, plus precepts, levies and debt interest.

<sup>2</sup> By usable reserves, we mean the total general fund balance, together with earmarked reserves that councils are not legally prevented from redirecting to use for another purpose.

is now in line with the minimum level recommended by the Council's Section 151 officer.

- 14 For 2022-23, the Council plans to use £0.963 million from its Service Transformation reserve to fund the budget gap. This would leave £3.644 million in the Service Transformation reserve. This was clearly communicated to members in the revenue budget report in March.

### **Savings delivery**

- 15 The Council's approach of identifying and delivering savings early and removing these from base budgets has continued to be effective. In 2021-22, the Council identified and delivered £4.6 million in efficiency savings. As part of its 2022-23 budget strategy, it has identified and removed £4.9 million from its base budget requirements. However, the updated MTFP highlights that this approach will be increasingly challenging without impacting on front line services. As it is now facing significant financial challenges, it is having to find further efficiencies in year to help it address these.

### **Performance against budget**

- 16 We have continued to find that the Council has a good track record of generally delivering its services within budget. For 2021-22, the Council is reporting a small overspend of £213,000 against its revenue budget. But this is after it has transferred over £65 million to its reserves. This is primarily due to the receipt of additional grants and funding from the Welsh Government towards the end of the financial year. Most of the £30 million additional costs and income losses incurred by the Council during 2021-22 due to the pandemic were covered by the Welsh Government Hardship Fund.
- 17 In 2021-22, there were no significant overspends in individual service areas.
- 18 However, as at June 2022, the Council is forecasting a £10.4 million overspend against its 2022-23 revenue budget. This is mainly due to inflationary pressures and the ongoing impact of the pandemic on income in areas such as leisure. The largest overspend forecast (£7.6 million) is in Community and Children's services. This is due to increased costs and demands. The £10.4 million overspend does not include any potential pay awards over and above the current figures it has already budgeted for. With a large number of staff, this would have a major impact on the Council's budget. The Council is reviewing its expenditure and income to identify ways to help it reduce the overspend. This includes using its earmarked reserves and identifying further efficiencies.

## Implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

### **The Council is making good progress developing its arrangements to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, but has not yet agreed its approach for engaging the public**

- 19 We have been monitoring the Council's progress in responding to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 over the course of the year.
- 20 The Council has established its Governance and Audit Committee and membership in line with the requirements of the Act.
- 21 The Act requires councils to keep performance under review, consult, and report on performance through self-assessment. Councils must make and publish a self-assessment report once in respect of every financial year.
- 22 The Council is building on and strengthening its existing self-evaluation arrangements to meet the self-assessment requirements. The Council's self-evaluation arrangements are well-embedded in the organisation and supported by robust corporate challenge. The Council intends to strengthen its data and evidence to underpin its self-assessment.
- 23 The Council has not yet agreed its public participation strategy. Cabinet is due to consider this in November.

## Carbon reduction plans

### Context

- 24 In July 2022, the Auditor General published Public Sector readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030, which looked at decarbonisation actions in 48 public bodies, including all councils. This report found uncertainty that the collective ambition for a net zero public sector by 2030 will be met. Our work identified significant, common barriers to progress that public bodies must collectively address to meet the collective ambition. We found that while public bodies are demonstrating commitment to carbon reduction, they must now significantly ramp up their activities, increase collaboration and place decarbonisation at the heart of their day-to-day operations and decisions.
- 25 In the report, the Auditor General makes the following five calls for action from public bodies:
  - strengthen your leadership and demonstrate your collective responsibility through effective collaboration;
  - clarify your strategic direction and increase your pace of implementation;

- get to grips with the finances you need;
  - know your skills gaps and increase your capacity; and
  - improve data quality and monitoring to support your decision making.
- 26 The following paragraphs set out the findings of our local audit work on the Council's decarbonisation action plan. These findings sit within the wider context of the Auditor General's July 2022 report that calls for increased pace and stronger leadership across Wales in reducing carbon emissions.

### **The Council is taking forward its plans to meet the challenge of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030, but recognises that further work is needed to identify resources to deliver its plans over the longer term**

- 27 The Council's 'Think Climate' strategy was agreed by Cabinet in June 2022. The strategy provides a clear vision of what the Council wants to achieve by 2030. It demonstrates that the Council has thought about the wider impacts that its plans for tackling climate change have. These wider impacts include how the Council's plans contribute to the seven national well-being goals under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Also, how its 'Think Climate' strategy connects to, and supports, its three main corporate priorities related to People, Places and Prosperity.
- 28 The Council is increasing its capital and revenue spending on the decarbonisation agenda. But it recognises that it has not yet determined the long-term resource implications of delivering its decarbonisation plans, including its staff resources. Furthermore, there is a significant skills gap nationally that is a barrier to achieving the 2030 target. The Council intends to partially mitigate this through its graduate and apprenticeship programmes. To meet its net zero ambition, the Council needs to fully cost its action plan and ensure it is aligned with its Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 29 The Council understands the significant challenge that is facing it. It is taking its net zero agenda forward, with a range of climate-change-related initiatives planned or already underway. The Council understands the risks and opportunities that present themselves from the challenge of achieving net zero carbon status by 2030. The Council's strategic risk register includes two risks related to decarbonisation and climate change.
- 30 The Council intends to take forward a staff training programme following the publication of its 'Think Climate' strategy. The member induction programme will include training on the decarbonisation agenda. Work is underway to improve the quality of the data used for the annual carbon footprint calculations submitted to the Welsh Government.
- 31 The Council has cited good examples of current partnership working in relation to decarbonisation and the Council is taking steps to build its community links. The Council is represented on the Local Government Decarbonisation Strategy Panel

and on various all-Wales officer groups. The Council has been proactive in its community leadership role and has facilitated dialogue with residents. This includes through the Let's Talk RCT web pages that seek residents' views. The Council intends to produce an engagement plan once the strategy goes live. It is looking at different ways it can involve residents further, including ensuring the views of the diversity of the population are considered.

- 32 The Council has governance arrangements in place to drive its decarbonisation agenda. There was a Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group, that had an advisory role to Cabinet, and had been in place since 2019. The Steering Group received reports such as updates on the Carbon Footprint Project, measuring and understanding the Council's annual carbon footprint. In May 2022, a Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee with decision making powers replaced the Steering Group. The Council also monitors its decarbonisation agenda through its existing arrangements. This includes via the budget monitoring process and through its corporate risk management arrangements. The Council intends to monitor the strategy via the Council's quarterly performance reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny. Climate change and the net zero agenda are part of the Council's service self-evaluation and delivery planning processes.

## Recommendation

### Exhibit 2: recommendation

The table below sets out the recommendation that we have identified following this review.

Recommendation	
R1	In order to meet its net zero ambition the Council needs to fully cost its action plan and ensure that it is aligned with its Medium Term Financial Plan.

## Digital Strategy

### **The Council has invested in its digital team and processes and has built on its previous digital strategy and the progress made during the pandemic to develop its new strategy and was developing its arrangements to support its implementation**

- 33 This work considered whether the Council has effective arrangements to support the development and implementation of its digital strategy. At the start of our work, the Council was in the process of developing its second digital strategy. The Council agreed its new digital strategy in March 2022.
- 34 Our work included monthly discussions with senior officers of the Council, observing relevant governance meetings, and document reviews. We provided feedback to the Director of Finance and Digital Services, and the Service Director ICT and Digital Services, during our work.
- 35 Overall, we found that the Council has invested in its digital team and processes and has built on its previous digital strategy and the progress made during the pandemic to develop its new strategy and was developing its arrangements to support its implementation.
- 36 We reached this conclusion because:
- the Council has, in its recently approved Digital Strategy 2022-26, set out its digital vision, strategic aims and guiding principles. This builds on its previous digital strategy which it agreed in 2017. The new strategy also builds on the significant progress made during the pandemic, which accelerated the development of its digital processes and solutions. It also draws on the national digital standards.
  - the Council's digital team played a key role during the pandemic supporting services, residents and staff. This included developing digital processes to support the delivery of business grants and self-isolation payments. The team also provided IT equipment to digitally excluded pupils and care homes, and supported the mass vaccination centres.
  - there is corporate support and drive for the Council's digital agenda. The Council has invested in its digital team and support. It has set up a new data centre and the digital team has been pro-actively working with services to explore digital solutions. The Council has also looked at how other organisations are doing this to learn from practice elsewhere.
  - the Council's Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee had considered the draft digital strategy before it was agreed. This Committee had also previously considered the Council's progress in implementing its previous digital strategy.

- during our work, the Council was developing its governance arrangements to support the development of the digital strategy and its implementation, including:
  - i. finalising its digitisation work programme to deliver its digital Strategy.
  - ii. planning to set up a Strategic Digital Delivery Board to oversee the delivery of the strategy.
  - iii. developing a project methodology for assessment and delivery that utilises the five ways of working<sup>3</sup> to ensure that the sustainable development principle is at the heart of its digitisation programme. We will be keen to see the Council's progress with this and its impact.
  - iv. the Council has a cyber assurance project underpinning its security aspects. The Council has been taking account of the findings from our Cyber and Use of Data reports in its work.
- work is ongoing to determine how it will deliver its Digital strategy. At the time of our work, the Council had not determined the resources needed to implement its strategy. It intends to develop delivery plans to include explicit links with funding of the digitisation programme over the course of the strategy. This will be essential to ensure that the programme is affordable and pace of delivery is as planned. The Council's medium-term financial plan updated in September 2022 highlights that its digital strategy will be key to help it address its budget gap and maintain the resilience of its services.
- the Council recognised that achieving its digital ambition will require a more integrated approach. We recently issued reports to the Council following our work on the Council's workforce planning and asset management arrangements. In these, we raised the need for planning to be more integrated.

37 During our work, we particularly challenged the Council to more fully apply the sustainable development principle in the development of its digital strategy. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act has now been in place for over seven years. Therefore, we would now expect that public bodies are able to demonstrate how the Act is shaping what they do. Some of the areas we discussed with the Council during our work included:

- greater alignment with the Digital agenda in Wales and the digital standards being developed by the Centre for Digital Public Services.
- determining how the digital strategy will help contribute to each of the seven national well-being goals and the Council's well-being objectives.
- opportunities for collaboration.
  - understanding how the Council's digital vision has been developed. For example, who was involved in this, how it was shaped by service user needs and views.



- how it was going to work with groups to minimise the risk of digital exclusion.
  - exploring future trends.
  - developing the culture to support the implementation of its strategy.
  - developing measures to help monitor progress.
  - building on learning from elsewhere.
- officers responded constructively to our challenges during our work. This included strengthening the Council's application of the sustainable development principle in the development of its strategy.



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Transformational Leadership Programme  
Board – Baseline Governance Review –  
Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional  
Partnership Board

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# Summary report

## Introduction

- 1 Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) have been established to manage and develop services to secure strategic planning and partnership working between local authorities and Local Health Boards.
- 2 Following a ministerial decision in 2018<sup>1</sup>, Bridgend County Borough Council moved from the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (CTM RPB) in April 2019. The boundary change has provided a fresh opportunity for partners to learn from one another and develop more cohesive partnership arrangements to deliver better outcomes for people across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.
- 3 The CTM RPB has established a governance framework (**Appendix 2**) which includes a Transformation Leadership Programme Board (TLPB). The purpose of the TLPB is to oversee the transformation, development, and delivery of identified regional services as directed by the RPB. The TLPB has senior representation from Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTM UHB), Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf councils, the third sector and regional carer/service user groups. The TLPB also coordinates and oversees the work of three programme boards: Children's, Adults, and a cross cutting programme board<sup>2</sup>. These programme boards are responsible for the operational delivery of the RPB's priorities.
- 4 Our review sought to gain assurance that the health board and the three councils are working together effectively through the aegis of the Transformation Leadership Programme Board to support regional integrated working across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. Our review sought to answer the question: **Are the Transformation Leadership Programme Board arrangements supporting the four bodies<sup>3</sup> to develop effective and sustainable approaches to regional working?**
- 5 We undertook fieldwork between November 2021 and January 2022 and met with key individuals from the three local authorities, the health board, as well as third sector partners. We also observed meetings of the TLPB and other sub-groups including the Children's Services Programme Board, the Adult Services Programme Board, and the Finance Sub-group. We presented our findings to representatives from CTM UHB and the three councils in March.

<sup>1</sup> Written Statement: Health board boundary change: Bridgend (25 February 2019) | GOV.WALES

<sup>2</sup> Although this was not operational at the time of our review

<sup>3</sup> Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB), Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) and Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)

## Key findings

- 6 Overall, we found **that the Transformation Leadership Programme Board is well-placed to develop stronger regional working building on the productive relationships over the past 18 months. However, it needs to ensure its planning is more integrated and longer term, strengthen aspects of its governance arrangements and be more ambitious in using its combined core resources to have a greater impact on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.**
- 7 In terms of planning arrangements, we found that:
- there was consideration of the sustainable development principle within strategic plans. However, the four bodies are named bodies under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the RPB provides a vital mechanism to help deliver the bodies' well-being objectives and the national well-being goals. As the Act has been in place for seven years, we would now expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate that the Act is integral to their thinking and genuinely shaping what they do.
  - planning was moving from a short-term basis to a more medium-term basis with an increased focus on a 5-year planning period. However, strategic plans require a more integrated approach to developing a longer-term perspective, which is supportive of partners' plans and will deliver a stronger regional identity. The TLPB needs to ensure that its planning is driven by the population's needs rather than the funding regime.
  - despite a good communications and engagement strategy in place, there is a need to improve the understanding of the RPB's purpose amongst some stakeholders.
  - there are also opportunities to improve the TLPB internal engagement arrangements, especially in relation to increasing the voices of non-statutory partners.
- 8 In terms of governance arrangements, we found that:
- there was a strong working relationship between the key partners and the Regional Commissioning Unit (RCU), which supports the RPB. However, the TLPB needs to consider how it can build capacity to support the TLPB and resolve the over-reliance on one individual within the RCU.
  - chairing of the TLPB Board meetings was effective and we saw strong synergy between the meetings we observed. However, we found some variation in the quality of meeting papers, and limited evidence of scrutiny and challenge.
  - there was a lack of maturity around key performance metrics and milestones, with the new outcomes and performance dashboard yet to be implemented.
  - the finance sub-group was well structured, with constructive discussions and there was detailed financial reporting.

- the Cross-Cutting Programme Board was not yet operational, despite this being a key part of the governance architecture designed to oversee the development and delivery of regional cross-cutting services.
- risk management is an area that needs to be strengthened with the need for better articulation of shared risks, prioritisation, and mitigating actions.

9 In terms of resources, we found that:

- the TLPB was developing its approach to the new Health and Social Care Regional Integrated Funding (RIF) regime including around tapered and match funding and has subsequently met the deadline for submission of its return to Welsh Government.
- whilst there are examples of pooled funding and shared resources, these are limited, and the public bodies need to consider how they can use their combined core resources more effectively to deliver the TLPB's plans and address the significant health and social care challenges in the region. The partners have developed stronger relationships during the pandemic and need to build on these to do this.
- like many areas in the public sector, there are significant workforce challenges in the region and there needs to be a regional and strategic approach to addressing these.

10 Our findings are set out in more detail in Appendix 1 in the form of the presentation we delivered to representatives from Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf councils on 8 March 2022. We have reflected the comments raised by these representatives during the feedback session in the material included in **Appendix 1**.

## Recommendations

11 Recommendations arising from this audit are detailed in **Exhibit 1**. The TLPB management response to these recommendations will be summarised in Appendix 3 once considered by the relevant stakeholders.

### Exhibit 1: recommendations

#### Recommendations

#### Strategic planning and applying the sustainable development principle

R1 Our work found opportunities for the TLPB to strengthen its planning arrangements and demonstrate how it is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle (as set out in the Well-being of Future



## Recommendations

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Generations (Wales) Act). The principle should be integral to the TLPB's thinking and genuinely shaping what it does by:

- a) taking a longer-term approach to its planning beyond five years,
  - b) ensuring greater integration between the long-term plans of the four statutory bodies of the TLPB, and
  - c) improving involvement of all members of the TLPB to ensure an increased voice for non-statutory partners and a better understanding of the purpose of the RPB more generally.
- 

## Governance Arrangements

R2 The Cross-Cutting Programme Board is yet to be established. It is intended to oversee the development and delivery of regional cross-cutting services and could have a role ensuring a more coherent and impactful integrated community model. The TLPB should establish the programme board to ensure that decision making arrangements are in place to help resolve cross-cutting issues and risks brought to the attention of the RPB.

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## Performance Management

R3 The outcomes and performance framework was still being finalised at the time of our review. The TLPB needs to finalise and implement the framework, ensuring it contains quantitative and qualitative measures that will enable the RPB to demonstrate outcomes and impact.

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## Risk Management

R4 Our work found areas of risk management that need to be improved, particularly in relation to regional workforce planning. The TLPB should strengthen regional risk management arrangements by improving the identification and prioritisation of shared risks and ensuring mitigating actions are robust and clearly articulated.

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## Regional Commissioning Unit

R5 Our work found that the lack of capacity within the RCU was leading to some delays in progressing actions. The work of the RCU is crucial to the continuing success of the TLPB. The TLPB needs to consider how it can build capacity and maximise resources to support the TLPB and minimise overreliance on a small team.

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## Recommendations

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### Use of Resources

- R6 Improving the health and social care outcomes of the region will require efficient and effective use of combined resources. Our work found that there had been some limited examples of pooled budgets and other arrangements for sharing resources. The TLPB needs to explore more innovative ways of sharing and pooling core resources across the region to maximise its impact and outcomes for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg population.
- 

### Regional workforce planning

- R7 Like many parts of the public sector, the region is experiencing significant workforce challenges. The TLPB needs to consider how it can facilitate a regional and strategic approach to addressing these challenges and to help it deliver its priorities.

# Appendix 1



## Transformational Leadership Partnership Board (TLPB) Baseline Governance Review

### Feedback

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health and Social Care  
Partnership

8th March 2022

## Purpose of feedback session



- To discuss and agree findings
- To discuss and agree next steps including report clearance process

## Purpose and focus of review



- To gain assurance that the health board and the three councils are working together effectively through the aegis of the TLPB to support regional integrated working across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.
- Main review question: Are the TLPB arrangements supporting the four bodies to develop effective and sustainable approaches to regional working ?

### **Areas of focus**

- Is there an effective approach to strategic planning?
- Are the governance arrangements supporting the TLPB to work effectively?
- Is the TLPB using its resources effectively to support the delivery of regional priorities?

## Overall conclusions



**Building on the productive working relationships over the past 18 months, the TLPB is well -placed to develop stronger regional working, but there needs to be more longer-term thinking, strengthening aspects of governance arrangements, and improved regional and innovative use of resources to have a demonstrable impact on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region**

- Planning is moving from a short -term basis to focussing over a 5 -year period. Strategic planning will require a more integrated approach to developing a longer -term perspective and stronger regional identity.
- Core governance arrangements are aligned and supported by strong relationships and robust support from the RCU; regional scrutiny, performance management and risk management need to be further strengthened.
- TLPB is continuing to develop its approach to regional deployment of its resources in the medium term, it now needs to build on the effective partnership working shown in the pandemic and become more ambitious; using its resources differently to leverage the impact of all partners to address the significant health and social care challenges in the region.

## Is there an effective approach to strategic planning?



Planning is moving from a short -term basis to focussing over a 5 -year period. Strategic planning will require a more integrated approach to developing a longer -term perspective and stronger regional identity

### Strengths

- Draft plans indicate a strengthening of the integration agenda and longer -term view.
- Evidence of consideration of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and sustainable development within their strategic plans.
- RCU described as the 'engine room' for coordinating plans.
- Communication and Engagement Strategy demonstrates positive intent, and is externally focused

### Challenges

- Whilst the move to a 5 year period is positive, there is still the need to focus more longer term, and align to partner organisations' longer term ambitions
- Need to strengthen demonstration of the integration of the Well -being of Future Generations (Wales) Act
- Communication and engagement strategy cited poor understanding of RPB purpose.
- Internal engagement needs to be strengthened with increased voice of non -statutory partners
- Opportunity to strengthen the regional identity

## Are the governance arrangements supporting the Board to work effectively?



Core governance arrangements are aligned and supported by strong relationships and robust support from the RCU; regional scrutiny, performance management and risk management need to be further strengthened

### Strengths

- Strong working relationships and effective chairing of Board.
- Good alignment of meetings and timeliness of papers noted.
- Systems and processes of governance and assurance in transition.
- Financial Sub-Group appears well structured with detailed financial information and reporting in evidence.
- RCU's role in governance very highly regarded by interviewees.

### Challenges

- Very few examples of challenge observed in meetings attended.
- Cross-Cutting Working Group not operational.
- Variation in quality of Board meeting papers.
- Regional risk management needs further strengthening around shared risks, prioritisation and mitigating actions.
- Lack of maturity around key regional performance metrics and milestones
- Residual lack of clarity around tapered and match funding needs swift resolution.
- RCU are key to success but dependent on one individual
- All partners need to more proactively performance manage their regional priorities



## Is the TLPB using its resources effectively to support the delivery of regional priorities?



TLPB is continuing to develop its approach to regional deployment of its resources in the medium term, it now needs to build on the effective partnership working shown in the pandemic and become more ambitious; using its resources differently to leverage the impact of all partners to address the significant health and social care challenges in the region.

### Strengths

- Delivery plans demonstrate that resources are being used against their stated aims.
- Some pooled budgets
- Internally, 'the right people are in the room'
- Externally, there is evidence of activities to strengthen public voice and input in line with WFG Act.
- Developing its approach to the new Health and Social Care Regional Integrated Funding regime

### Challenges

- Need to improve equity of input and resourcing to reflect needs of smaller non-statutory partners
- Secure further opportunities to unleash potential of 'regional' pooled budgets and mainstreaming programmes
- Need robust assurance of delivery around regional priorities within the plan; and sufficient resources to deliver across the 5 year timeline
- Opportunity to work more collaboratively to develop a regional and strategic approach to addressing regional workforce challenges

## Areas to address



### **Strategic Planning**

- Create a stronger sense of regional identity and purpose - co-created with all stakeholders
- Structures that support culture change and wider stakeholder input for longer -term planning
- Stronger consideration of the five ways of working including longer term thinking, collaboration and integration.

### **Governance**

- Increase scrutiny and challenge
- Develop regional roadmap with milestones and objectives
- Improve performance management, including performance metrics
- Strengthen regional risk management arrangements

### **Resources**

- Use resources differently and consider more innovative ways of sharing resources across the region to maximise their impact.
- Assure that you are maximising resources to enable the TLPB to deliver the priorities within the plan

## Next steps



- Reflect upon discussion and feedback from session
- Draft report
- Clear report

# Appendix 2 – Governance structure



# Appendix 3

## Management response to audit recommendations

Exhibit 1: management response

Ref	Recommendation	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
R1	<p><b>Strategic planning and applying the sustainable development principle</b></p> <p>Our work found opportunities for the TLPB to strengthen its planning arrangements and demonstrate how it is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle (as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act). The principle should be integral to the TLPB's thinking and genuinely shaping what it does by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) taking a longer-term approach to its planning beyond five years,</li></ul>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>Although the sustainable development principle is a fundamental consideration in all decision making, this will be made more explicit in reports to</p>	31 March 2023	Head of RCU

Ref	Recommendation	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) ensuring greater integration between the long-term plans of the four statutory bodies of the TLPB, and</li> <li>c) improving involvement of all members of the TLPB to ensure an increased voice for non-statutory partners and a better understanding of the purpose of the RPB more generally.</li> </ul>	<p>TLPB and RPB going forward. Transition to a new delivery plan has been completed and work will continue to integrate the long-term plans of the four statutory bodies improve involvement of non-statutory partners</p>		
R2	<p><b>Governance Arrangements</b></p> <p>The Cross-Cutting Programme Board is yet to be established. It is intended to oversee the development and delivery of regional cross-cutting services and could have a role ensuring a more coherent and impactful integrated community model. The TLPB should establish the programme board to ensure that decision making arrangements are in place to help resolve cross-cutting issues and risks brought to the attention of the RPB.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>The governance arrangements beneath the RPB will be reviewed to establish a new integrated leadership board and integrated resources group.</p>	30 July 2022	Chair TLPB

Ref	Recommendation	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
R3	<p><b>Performance Management</b></p> <p>The outcomes and performance framework was still being finalised at the time of our review. The TLPB needs to finalise and implement the framework, ensuring it contains quantitative and qualitative measures that will enable the RPB to demonstrate outcomes and impact.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>Work is ongoing in relation to the performance framework in support of the new delivery plan and this will also need to reflect changes arising from the population needs assessment.</p>	30 September 2022	Head of RCU
R4	<p><b>Risk Management</b></p> <p>Our work found areas of risk management that need to be improved, particularly in relation to regional workforce planning. The TLPB should strengthen regional risk management arrangements by improving the identification and prioritisation of shared risks and ensuring mitigating actions are robust and clearly articulated.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>Within the new governance structure there will be an integrated resources group which will be tasked to develop the risk management framework.</p>	31 March 2023	Chair TLPB

Ref	Recommendation	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
R5	<p><b>Regional Commissioning Unit</b></p> <p>Our work found that the lack of capacity within the RCU was leading to some delays in progressing actions. The work of the RCU is crucial to the continuing success of the TLPB. The TLPB needs to consider how it can build capacity and maximise resources to support the TLPB and minimise overreliance on a small team.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>Additional infrastructure has been agreed to support dementia work and NEST framework and capital. Additional capacity will also be identified from partner organisations to support the programme delivery.</p>	31 December 2022	Head of RCU
R6	<p><b>Use of Resources</b></p> <p>Improving the health and social care outcomes of the region will require efficient and effective use of combined resources. Our work found that there had been some limited examples of pooled budgets and other arrangements for sharing resources. The TLPB needs to explore more innovative ways of sharing and pooling core</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>The development of the RIF delivery plan is only one funding stream and TLPB recognises that we will need to align core budgets, for example</p>	31 March 2023	Chair TLPB



Ref	Recommendation	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
	resources across the region to maximise its impact and outcomes for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg population.	around children with complex needs. This will be addressed through the planning cycle in advance of 2023/24		
R7	<p><b>Regional workforce planning</b></p> <p>Like many parts of the public sector, the region is experiencing significant workforce challenges. The TLPB needs to consider how it can facilitate a regional and strategic approach to addressing these challenges and to help it deliver its priorities.</p>	<p><b>Agreed.</b></p> <p>Regional workforce development arrangements exist through SCWDP Board workforce development group and work is underway to strengthen links with RPB and Health</p>	31 March 2023	Chair TLPB



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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23**

<b>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>  7 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	<b>AGENDA ITEM 5</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>COUNCIL PROGRESS UPDATE - IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS REPORTED BY AUDIT WALES</b>

**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide a progress update on the implementation of proposals for improvement reported in the Audit Wales 'Annual Audit Summary 2021' and the three stand-alone reports subsequently reported to Governance and Audit Committee on [7<sup>th</sup> September 2022](#).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention by the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 2.2 Consider whether there are any matters of a performance nature that require review by the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

**3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AUDIT WALES PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT/RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Council recognises the important role that Audit Wales plays in supporting on-going improvement to governance and service delivery, with the Governance and Audit Committee having responsibility to provide independent assurance around the adequacy of the arrangements in place and Scrutiny Committees having responsibility to monitor the progress Council Services are making to implement agreed proposals for improvement reported by Audit Wales.

## **Governance and Audit Committee**

- 3.2 The Terms of Reference of the Council's Governance and Audit Committee include the following responsibilities in relation to reports from the Council's External Auditor (for the purposes of this report the External Auditor being Audit Wales):
- Point O - 'To receive and consider reports of the External Auditor in relation to matters of financial probity and corporate governance and providing the opportunity for direct discussion with the auditor(s) on these'; and
  - Point P - 'Consider national reports, for example, from Audit Wales, of relevance to the work of the Authority'.
- 3.3 To discharge the above requirements, the Council's Governance and Audit Committee has responsibility for:
- Providing independent assurance around the arrangements in place to monitor / evaluate progress against proposals for improvement reported by Audit Wales; and
  - Determining whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention.
- 3.4 As part of discharging its Terms of Reference, the Governance and Audit Committee should also take account of the conclusions and findings from each Audit Wales report when forming an opinion on the adequacy of internal control/governance arrangements in place.
- 3.5 In addition to the above, where the Governance and Audit Committee considers there are performance related matters that require further review, it is able to refer these to the designated Scrutiny Committee for review Scrutiny Committees
- 3.6 Members will note the Council's Scrutiny function has a different, albeit, complementary role, in respect of overseeing the reports issued by Audit Wales i.e. to review and challenge the progress the Council is making toward implementing agreed proposals for improvement.
- 3.7 Where a Scrutiny Committee determines there are matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further review, it is also able to refer these to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration

## **4. AUDIT WALES REPORTS**

- 4.1 At the meeting of full Council held on [19 January 2022](#), Members received the Audit Wales [Annual Audit Summary 2021](#) (AAS), with the AAS containing proposals for improvement/recommendations from published reports that were specific to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and also national reports that relate to local authorities more generally, other public bodies and also Welsh

Government. In addition, a further 2 reports have been issued since this time, namely, Springing Forward – Strategic Asset Management and Springing Forward – Workforce Planning.

4.2 Audit Wales proposals for improvement are incorporated into the Council's service delivery planning and monitoring arrangements, and the following updates have been reported further to the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 full Council meeting:

- AAS 2021 - progress update reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on [23 March 2022](#); and
- Springing Forward Reports (Strategic Asset Management and Workforce Planning) – the reports presented by Audit Wales to the Governance and Audit Committee on [7th September 2022](#) and a progress update reported to the [10th October 2022](#) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.3 As part of on-going monitoring arrangements, Council Officers have prepared a further progress updates on the above reports, and are set out at Appendix 1. The Governance and Audit Committee is requested to review the progress updates and alongside Members own lines of enquiry:

- Consider whether there are any matters of a governance, internal control or risk management nature that require further action or attention; and
- Consider whether there are any matters of a performance nature that require review by the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

## **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

5.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

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

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

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

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

- 8.1 Regular reporting of external audit reports to the Governance and Audit Committee ensures compliance with the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016' and the Committee's Terms of Reference.

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

- 9.1 The Governance and Audit Committee's role in overseeing the Council's arrangements to monitor/evaluate progress against proposals for improvement reported by Audit Wales aims to support the delivery of all priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 'Making a Difference' and in doing so aligns with the Sustainable Development principles as set out within the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

**10. CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 Audit Wales reports play an important role in supporting on-going improvement to the Council's governance and service delivery arrangements. As part of this process, the Council utilises its Governance and Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committees, in line with their Terms of Reference, to oversee the arrangements in place and monitor the progress made by Council Services to implement proposals for improvement reported by Audit Wales.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972**  
**as amended by**  
**THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985**  
**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**  
**AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
**7<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

**REPORT OF: Service Director for Democratic Services and Communication**

**Author:** Christian Hanagan

Item 5: **COUNCIL PROGRESS UPDATE - IMPLEMENTATION OF  
RECOMMENDATIONS REPORTED BY AUDIT WALES**

Contact Officer: Christian Hanagan – 01443 424005

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**Audit Wales [Annual Audit Summary 2021](#)  
Regulators' Local and National Reports  
Recommendations/Proposals for Improvement  
Report presented to Council on [19 January 2022](#)**

**Reports presented to Governance & Audit Committee [23 March](#) and also [7 September 2022](#)**

**Update - September 2022  
Local Reports**

**Audit Wales**

**[Financial Sustainability Assessment](#)** *'The Council continues to be well placed to manage its financial sustainability'*

**Published:** November 2021

<b>Proposals for Improvement</b>	<b>Governance &amp; Audit Committee March 22</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE</b>
<p><b>Planning assumptions</b> The Council needs to be assured that it has contingency plans in place to be able to manage less positive scenarios than it planned for in its medium-term financial planning.</p>	<p>The Council's latest Medium Term Financial Plan (2021/22 – 2024/25) sets out a range of forecasted budget positions over a 3-year period based on assumed differing levels of Welsh Government funding. In line with the Council's approach to refreshing its Medium Term Financial Plan, discussions are on-going with Welsh Government to inform these arrangements (including taking account of the indicative Wales-level core revenue funding allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 as set out in the 2022/23 final local government settlement) and to ensure the Council's financial planning processes continue to be based on a sound set of assumptions.</p> <p>In parallel, work is on-going across the Council to identify budget saving and efficiency opportunities and review all base budget requirements over the medium term, with the range of forecasted budget positions over the 3-year period informing this work.</p>	<p>The Council has reviewed and updated its MTFP, covering the period 2022/23 to 2025/26 (link to the latest document <a href="#">MTFP (2022/23 to 2025/26)</a>), taking into account refreshed expenditure and funding level forecasts. With specific regard to funding level forecasts, a range of funding levels have been modelled including the indicative settlement levels for 2023/24 and 2024/25 announced by Welsh Government as part of the final Local Government Settlement for 2022/23. The updated MTFP has been reported to Cabinet (26/9/22), Council (28/9/22), School Budget Forum (24/11/22), a high level overview provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (29/11/22) and key messages on the financial outlook have been relayed</p>

Proposals for Improvement	Governance & Audit Committee March 22	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<p><b>Medium Term Financial Planning</b> Discussions are ongoing about the Council's estate, workforce and digital capabilities and these need to be formalised in the Council's financial planning arrangements.</p>	<p>The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (2021/22 – 2024/25) sets out key areas that form part of an on-going programme of work to assess further budget saving opportunities whilst ensuring service resilience is maintained. This includes review of (amongst other things):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's Estate - currently being progressed as part of a Built Asset Review;</li> <li>• Workforce – on-going workforce planning arrangements that are informing service reconfigurations / restructures; and</li> <li>• Digital – an updated Digital Strategy 2022 – 26 has been finalised following a pre-scrutiny process and reported to the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 Cabinet for consideration / approval).</li> </ul> <p>Service and Finance Officers are working closely together on the financial impacts and opportunities from the above, and updates will be included within the Council's refreshed Medium Term Financial Plan in 2022.</p>	<p>by the Chief Executive to Manager Briefing Sessions – these updates ensure that officers and elected Members are fully aware of the financial challenges facing the Council and has informed the delivery of an on-going programme of work to review all service areas to identify budget reductions options for consideration as part of setting balanced and deliverable budgets over the medium term.</p> <p>The Council's updated MTFP Plan (2022/23 to 2025/26) sets out in more detail the work being undertaken in key areas that will underpin future budget strategies and how they align with medium term financial planning arrangements (i.e. Section 12 of the MTFP document 'Financial Planning and Balancing the Budget').</p>

### Audit Wales Local Reports presented to Governance and Audit Committee in September 2022

Report	Recommendations	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<a href="#">Springing Forward – Strategic Asset Management</a> Issued June 2022	The Council needs to ensure the Sustainable Development principle is driving and shaping its approach to all its assets. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Council should develop a longer-term approach to its assets; and</li> <li>• the Council will need to fully integrate its workforce and digital strategies with its longer-term plans for its assets.</li> </ul>	Report and Action Plan considered by <a href="#">Overview and Scrutiny Committee</a> on 10 October 2022
<a href="#">Springing Forward – Workforce – Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council</a> Issued July 2022	Extend existing workforce management data to include comparative benchmarking with other organisations to inform planning and strengthen the assessment of workforce initiatives	Report and Action Plan considered by <a href="#">Overview and Scrutiny Committee</a> on 10 October 2022

### Audit Wales National Report presented to Governance and Audit Committee 7 September 2022

Report	Recommendations	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<a href="#">Direct Payments for Adult Social Care</a> published April 2022	Summary extract of recommendations Local Authorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review public information in discussion with service users and carers to ensure it is clear, concise and fully explains what they need to know about Direct Payments.</li> <li>2. Undertake additional promotional work to encourage take up of Direct Payments.</li> <li>3. Ensure advocacy services are considered at the first point of contact to provide independent advice on Direct Payments to service users and carers.</li> <li>4. Ensure information about Direct Payments is available at the front door to social care and are included in the initial discussion on the available care options for service users and carers.</li> <li>5. Provide training to social workers on Direct Payments to ensure they fully understand their potential and feel confident promoting it to service users and carers.</li> <li>6. Work together to develop a joint Recruitment and Retention Plan for Personal Assistants.</li> </ol> Local Authorities and the Welsh Government: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Clarify policy expectations in plain accessible language and set out:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what Direct Payments can pay for;</li> <li>• how application and assessment processes, timescales and review processes work;</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	Report and Action Plan considered by <a href="#">Community Services Scrutiny Committee</a> on 24 October 2022

Report	Recommendations	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how monitoring individual payments and the paperwork required to verify payments will work;</li> <li>• how unused monies are to be treated and whether they can be banked; and</li> <li>• how to administer and manage pooled budgets.</li> </ul> <p>Public information should be reviewed regularly (at least every two years) to ensure they are working effectively and remain relevant.</p> <p>Welsh Government:</p> <p>8. Ensure that people who receive both NHS continuing healthcare and Direct Payments have greater voice, choice and control in decision making.</p> <p>Local Authorities and the Welsh Government:</p> <p>9. Work together to establish a system to fully evaluate Direct Payments that captures all elements of the process – information, promotion, assessing, managing and evaluating impact on wellbeing and independence.</p> <p>10. Annually publish performance information for all elements of Direct Payments to enable a whole system view of delivery and impact to support improvement</p>	

Published: November 2021 on CIW Website

Proposals for Improvement	Council’s Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<p>In March 2020, CIW suspended its routine programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to enable local authorities and providers to focus fully on responding to the challenging circumstances and focussed on two questions</p> <p>How well is the local authority discharging its statutory functions to keep people who need care and support and carers who need support, safe and promote their well being during the pandemic?</p> <p>What is the local authority doing to prevent the need for children to come into care; and are children returning home to their families quickly enough where safe to do so?</p>	<p>The findings from the Assurance check were considered by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on <a href="#">19 July 2021</a></li> <li>• Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee <a href="#">on 21 July 2021</a></li> </ul> <p>and identified many strengths and noting that the following areas for improvement are reflected and are being progressed in Service Delivery Plans for 2021/22 and 2022/23.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment &amp; retention of a stable workforce</li> <li>• Closely monitor the reduction of waiting lists</li> <li>• Placement sufficiency in Children Services</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Children’s Services - Recruitment &amp; retention of a stable workforce</u></b>                  Since the time of the assurance visit, a Workforce Strategy has been agreed and is being implemented by the Workforce Steering Group. This is being brought to <a href="#">Community Services Scrutiny Committee</a> in November.</p> <p><b><u>Closely monitor the reduction of waiting lists</u></b>                  Risk Management plan in place in Children’s Services Enquiry and Assessment Teams with frequent meetings.</p> <p><b><u>Placement sufficiency in Children’s Services</u></b>  <a href="#">Foster Wales</a> plans are being implemented. Residential Transformation Strategy is scheduled for pre –Scrutiny by the <a href="#">Community Services Scrutiny Committee</a> in November 2022.</p> <p><b><u>Recruitment &amp; Retention – Adults Services</u></b>                  We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•established a Social Care Workforce Steering Group comprising of the Group Director Community and Children’s Services, Directors of Adult and Children’s Services, Director of Human Resources and Human Resource operational leads to oversee development of a Workforce Strategy.</li> <li>•committed additional staff resource to Human Resources to develop and implement an overarching Workforce Strategy and action plan to meet the needs of social work and Social Care.</li> <li>•introduced a new pay and career structure for Social Workers in Summer 2021. The progression from social worker to experienced social worker is now embedded</li> </ul>

Proposals for Improvement	Council's Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
		<p>with staff making the appropriate career promotion after 3 years in practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•introduced allowances for our social workers undertaking Practice Educator roles. As a result, we have increased our hosting of social work students, allowing us to maintain the placements we can provide for the social work degree program.</li> <li>•improved pay and terms and conditions for other Council staff, including front line social care staff, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Report to <a href="#">Council</a> on 06/07/22</li> <li>o Report to <a href="#">Council</a> on 28/09/22</li> </ul> </li> <li>•changed our Occupational Therapy (OT) service model to reflect a growing problem in recruiting qualified OT staff, changing the skill mix and tasks appropriately to new OT Assistants and introducing a market supplement for OTs which assisted in filling vacancies.</li> <li>•increased funding available to start remodelling of our Adult Care &amp; Support Teams to better meet increased need and demand.</li> <li>•settled staff into the Council's hybrid working model, supported by the agile working framework, and flexitime has resumed from suspension through the pandemic which has had a positive response.</li> <li>•continued to invest in our long established 'Growing our Own' scheme by funding and supporting staff to access the Social Work degree course with a guaranteed Social Worker role on completion of registration.</li> <li>•started working with Cardiff University and the University of South Wales to establish a new Social Work Bursary Scheme, so that we will offer reimbursement of course fees to a number of students who are also residents of RCT. This will be in return for a commitment by the student to join the Council as a Social Worker on qualifying.</li> </ul>

Proposals for Improvement	Council's Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
		<p>•taken advantage of the Council's Apprentice programme by employing a number of apprentices across care roles, an evaluation is due to take place shortly.</p> <p>•started utilising the 'We Care' jobs platform provided by Social Care Wales to advertise all relevant care posts.</p> <p>•continued to take part, along with other Agencies from the Care sector in the Council's Virtual and more recently, reintroduced face to face Careers Fair. Human Resources staff attend and provide hands on/real time support to those who wish to make job applications. The application form has been streamlined to a minimal level to assist applicants further.</p> <p>•agreed to improve our Exit Interview process from which reasons for leaving will be better understood and will give management the ability to make changes where appropriate.</p> <p><b><u>Waiting Lists in Adult Services</u></b></p> <p>Some people continue to wait longer than we would like for us to assess and review them. Despite additional resources and prioritisation to reduce waiting lists, we continue to operate waiting lists in Care &amp; Support; ACE and Sensory Services, which have been exacerbated by increases in demand, many with higher levels of frailty and complex needs, and some staff vacancies and absences.</p> <p>All cases are prioritised based on assessed need and risk. Plans are in place to reduce waiting lists in 2022/23.</p>

**National Reports**

**Care Inspectorate Wales and Health Care Inspectorate Wales – Joint report**

**Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Annual Monitoring Report for Health and Social Care 2019-20**

**Published:** 24 March 2021 on CIW Website

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Key Findings	Council’s Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since many applications for DoLS were from care homes or older adult wards, the majority of applications continued to be for older adults, with more than 85% of applications for people over the age of 65.</li> <li>• More DoLS authorisations were made for males up to the age of 64, but after the age of 85, a significantly higher number of authorisations were in relation to females.</li> <li>• There has continued to be a year on year increase in the number of applications received by supervisory bodies, with a 28% increase received by health boards in 2019-20.</li> <li>• Nearly half of all applications were withdrawn due to the individual either moving to a different care setting, being discharged from hospital or dying before the application is reviewed.</li> <li>• Across Wales, fewer than half of applications were completed within the statutory timeframes.</li> <li>• Of those applications refused by supervisory bodies, approximately half were because the mental capacity condition was not met.</li> <li>• Health boards and local authorities continued to propose very different durations for their authorisations, with health boards proposing considerably shorter durations than local authorities.</li> <li>• Over half of applications had not been assessed within 28 days, suggesting supervisory bodies were unable to assure themselves that people’s human rights were not being breached by being deprived of their liberty unlawfully.</li> </ul>	<p>This is a national annual monitoring report of CIW and HIW on the implementation of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) in Wales, on behalf of Welsh Ministers. The report refers to activity between April 2019 and March 2020.</p> <p>DoLS will be replaced in April 2022 with the <a href="#">Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)</a> which were introduced by the <a href="#">Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act</a>.</p> <p>We will implement these changes in line with the new Codes of Practice and Regulations when they are published and our arrangements will be reflected in our Service Delivery Plan for 2022/23.</p>	<p><b><u>Children’s Services</u></b></p> <p>Internal policies have been updated, and training is being sought. At present we still await the Code of Practice which is on hold pending the publication of the new draft Mental Capacity Act 2019 Code of Practice and the draft Regulations for Wales. These were published in March 2022 for a 16 week consultation, the outcome of this consultation is not expected until late 2022.</p> <p><b><u>Adult’s Services</u></b></p> <p>Implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards to replace the existing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards planned for April 2022 has been delayed and no new date as yet been set. As a result, planning and preparation was put on hold pending the publication of the new draft Mental Capacity Act 2019 Code of Practice and the draft Regulations for Wales. These were published in March 2022 for a 16 week consultation, the outcome of this consultation is not expected until late 2022. We have established a regional</p>



Key Findings	Council's Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst most people were represented by family and friends, the number of people referred to Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCAs) increased compared to 2018-19.</li> <li>• The proportion of authorisations referred to Court of Protection also increased compared to 2018-19.</li> </ul>		<p>working group to respond to the consultation.</p> <p>In the meantime, we have directed our efforts at increasing the confidence of social care staff in the application of the Mental Capacity Act 2019 by commissioning additional training and clearing the backlog of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) applications which has accumulated over time. The DoLS waiting list currently at 386 as at end of Qtr 2 but is reducing as we continue to commission external capacity, using Welsh Government Grant, to complete assessments on the Council's behalf to supplement the work of in-house team. This work will be completed in 2022/23.</p>

## Care Inspectorate Wales

### National Overview Report of Assurance Checks

**Published:** November 2021 on CIW Website

<b>Future Challenges identified</b>	<b>Council's Response</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Unprecedented increase in demand for social care</li><li>2. Partnership working</li><li>3. Recruitment and Retention</li><li>4. Fragility within Domiciliary Support Services</li><li>5. Placement insufficiency within the childcare sector</li><li>6. Advocacy</li><li>7. Support for Carers</li><li>8. Grant funding</li></ol>	<p>This report provides a National Overview of the themes and challenges that CIW has identified during their Assurance Checks of the 22 Local Authorities between September 2020 and July 2021. We note the national challenges identified and will take account of them as part of our ongoing service improvements. However, of more direct relevance is the progress and areas for improvement that have been identified in our local (RCT) Assurance Check 2021 which has been reported to both Children's and Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committees referenced above and are being progressed in our Service Delivery Plans for both 2021/22 and 2022/23.</p>	<p>As set out in the 'Council's Response'.</p>

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### 'Let me Flourish' National review of early help, care and support and transition for disabled children in Wales

**Published:** November 2021

<b>Actions Needed by Local Authorities</b>	<b>Council's Response</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. a rights-based approach when working with disabled children and their families must be promoted and taken</li><li>2. carers' rights and entitlements must be actively promoted</li><li>3. effective arrangements must be in place for communication with disabled children. The child's preferred method of communication should be used, their voice should be consistently sought, heard and captured</li><li>4. eligibility criteria for access to statutory services must be fully aligned with the 2014 Act</li><li>5. practitioners working with disabled children must be sufficiently skilled and trained in relation to the tasks they perform/are expected to perform when working with children and their families</li></ol>	<p>The service has taken account of the actions set out in the national report. However, of more relevance is local inspection undertaken as part of the national review. This local inspection took place in December 2019 and considered Disabled Children's Service and Focused Activity in the 16+ Service.</p> <p>An update on the progress of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's</p>	<p>All aspects of the focused activity action plan have been implemented and are being monitored by internal Quality Assurance processes.</p>

Actions Needed by Local Authorities	Council's Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<p>6. opportunities for consultation with disabled children and their parent/carers should be developed and maximised</p> <p>7. review and take the necessary action to ensure sufficient and accessible information, and timely advice and assistance is available for disabled children and their families</p> <p>8. ensure the 'Active Offer' of a service delivered in the Welsh language is consistently promoted and provided</p> <p>9. ensure the 'Active Offer' of independent formal advocacy is consistently promoted and provided</p> <p>10. review and ensure effective quality assurance systems and information recording systems are in place to assess and evaluate the quality and impact of work with disabled children and their families, and for the purpose of service planning, delivery and adherence to statutory requirements</p> <p>11. safeguarding thresholds and processes must be well understood by practitioners and partners and as rigorously applied in relation to disabled children as they are for non-disabled children</p> <p>12. sufficiency of suitable local placements, and play, social, recreational, training and employment opportunities for disabled children must be maximised to meet the needs of disabled children and young people</p> <p>13. transition planning must be undertaken in a timely manner and include disabled children, their families and relevant professionals/agencies</p> <p>14. ensure adherence to the Children and Young People's Continuing Care Guidance – January 2020</p> <p>15. opportunities for greater collaboration and joint commissioning with regional partners must be maximised</p> <p>16. ensure required action is taken to comply with the requirements of the Statutory Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services</p> <p>17. ensure suitable arrangements are in place for the forthcoming implementation of and compliance with the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)</p>	<p>response to the recommendations within the local Inspection of the <a href="#">Disabled Children's Service and Focused Activity in the 16+ Service</a> which took place in December 2019, as part of the national review programme, was presented to <a href="#">C&amp;YP Scrutiny Committee</a> in September 2021.</p>	

**At your Discretion - Local Government Discretionary Services**

**Published: April 2021**

<b>Key Facts arising</b>	<b>Council's Response</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining whether a service is discretionary or statutory can be complicated and does not reflect the important work of councils</li> <li>• Despite providing essential services that people depend on, councils have had to make difficult choices on what to protect in responding to over a decade of austerity Service review processes help councils make tough choices but do not always draw on all key data                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Citizens are willing to get involved in helping shape and run services, but councils are neither effectively nor consistently involving them in decisions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Councils are not confident that they can continue to deliver all their services in the face of rising and complex demand</li> <li>• COVID-19 offers an opportunity to reevaluate and reset the role and value of local government                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of councils as key leaders in our communities who provide essential services and a safety net for people across Wales</li> <li>○ Councils need to build on their response to COVID-19 and take the opportunity to transform the way they provide services and interact with communities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The Council has well embedded Service Self-Evaluation and Service Delivery Planning arrangements that ensure its statutory responsibilities are met and also recognise the key role discretionary (and preventative) services play in contributing to statutory duties and, importantly, how they support communities and provide better outcomes for residents across the County Borough.</p> <p>These arrangements will continue to be central in informing opportunities to shape future service delivery, in consultation with citizens, to ensure the Council continues to provide good quality and affordable services in line with the needs of communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p>	<p>As set out in the 'Council's Response'.</p>

Published September 2021

Mix of Welsh Government and Local Authority Actions	Council's Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<p><b>R1</b> Non-domestic rates have not been reviewed in recent years, and the levels charged do not reflect the current rents being achieved in many town centres. <b>We recommend that the Welsh Government</b> review Nondomestic Rates to ensure the system better reflects town centre conditions when the payments holiday ends in March 2022.</p>	<p><b>Agree with recommendation</b></p>	<p>As set out in the 'Council's Response'.</p>
<p><b>R2</b> Many town-centre businesses are impacted adversely by charging for car parking, access to public transport and poor transport infrastructure. <b>We recommend that the Welsh Government</b> work with local authorities to review transport challenges facing town centres and agree how best to address these.</p>	<p><b>Agree with recommendation.</b> Transport and access issues and opportunities are key to bringing forward town centre investments and regeneration plans and strategies such as those for Pontypridd, Porth and Mountain Ash.</p>	<p>As set out in the 'Council's Response'.</p>
<p><b>R3</b> The Welsh Government has directly provided and levered in just under £900 million through 13 funding schemes to help regenerate town centres. However, some aspects of the Welsh Government's management of the funding are considered problematic. To ensure local authorities are able to maximise the impact of funding and tackle the more difficult and longstanding problems that would help transform their town centres, <b>we recommend that the Welsh Government:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consolidate funding to reduce bureaucracy by streamlining processes and grant conditions and keeping requests for information and supporting materials to a minimum;</li> <li>• move away from annual bidding cycles to multi-year allocations; and</li> <li>• rebalance investment from capital to revenue to help local authorities address staff capacity and skills shortages.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agree with the recommendations.</b> We will continue to work closely with WG colleagues to develop improved approaches to delivering funding for town centre regeneration in the most effective way. RCT is leading on the management and delivery of several regional and national WG funded initiatives which puts us in a strong position to understand where improvements can be made and to suggest how best these can be implemented.</p>	<p>As set out in the 'Council's Response'.</p>

Mix of Welsh Government and Local Authority Actions	Council's Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<p><b>R4</b> The Welsh Government has provided all 22 local authorities with training on how best to use existing enforcement, financial assistance and debt recovery powers, but they are not being consistently nor effectively utilised to support regeneration. <b>We recommend that local authorities</b> take appropriate action, using these existing powers and resources available to achieve the best possible outcome for town centres by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using alternative methods of enforcement before using Compulsory Purchase Orders as a last resort;</li> <li>• integrating enforcement strategies with wider departmental strategies across housing, environmental health, planning and regeneration teams to make more effective use of existing skills and resources; and</li> <li>• ensuring there is capacity and the right expertise to use the full range of powers, working in collaboration with other councils to achieve good outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Agree with the recommendations.</b> Staff and relevant Cabinet Members have benefitted from training funded by WG and provided by an independent expert. We have also prepared an Empty Property Action Plan which identifies priority targets for enforcement, and which includes input from all relevant Services. A good example is at Guto Square, Mountain Ash where concerted action and enforcement has led to a successful Compulsory Purchase Order resulting in the redevelopment of derelict land at the centre of the town for a new public space with multiple uses.</p>	<p>As set out in the 'Council's Response'.</p>
<p><b>R5</b> The Welsh Government's 'Town Centres First' approach looks to put the health of town centres at the heart of the decisions taken by the Welsh Government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities. This requires a high degree of integration between cross-cutting policy frameworks and decision making to promote town centres above much else. We recommend that the <b>Welsh Government</b> set out how it plans to deliver this in practice, its expectations of partners and the practical steps it will take to make this ambition a reality.</p>	<p><b>Agree with the recommendation</b></p>	<p>As set out in the 'Council's Response'.</p>
<p><b>R6</b> Town centres are changing, and local authorities need to be receptive to these changes and plan to manage these shifts. <b>We recommend that local authorities</b> use our regeneration tool to self-assess their current approaches to identify where they need to</p>	<p><b>Agree with the recommendation.</b> We continually review our approach to regenerating Town Centres to meet our Corporate priorities as part of our annual Performance evaluation and Service Self Evaluation processes. We have used the Audit Wales Self Evaluation Tool as part of our consideration to our approach to town centre regeneration</p>	<p>As set out in the 'Council's Response'.</p>

Mix of Welsh Government and Local Authority Actions	Council's Response	NOVEMBER 2022 UPDATE
<p>improve their work on town-centre regeneration (the tool is <a href="#">here</a>)</p>	<p>and are generally satisfied we meet the themes Intention, Involvement, Informed and Intervention. However, we are not complacent and will continue to adapt and improve our approach as circumstances, issues and opportunities change. For example, we intend to continue to develop appropriate strategies, placemaking plans and frameworks to cover all of our key towns, pilot new ways to improve how we monitor town centre usage through footfall related technology and ensure that we make better use of the suite of enforcement measures that are available to bring forward redevelopment. An example of this is the draft Pontypridd Placemaking plan which was considered by <a href="#">Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022</a>.</p>	

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

<b>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>  <b>7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM NO. 6</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE &amp; DIGITAL SERVICES</b>	<b>2021/22 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS – PROGRESS UPDATE</b>

Author: Paul Griffiths (Service Director, Finance & Improvement Services)

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Governance and Audit Committee with an update on the status of the recommendations included within the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement.

#### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members review the information contained within the report and:

- 2.1 Seek clarity and explanation where there are areas of concern.
- 2.2 Form an opinion in respect of whether they are satisfied with the progress made to date to implement the recommendations.

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

- 3.1 To ensure the Governance and Audit Committee discharges its responsibilities in respect of reviewing and forming an opinion on the overall control environment in place across the Council.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Council's 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement (AGS) was reported to and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting on [18th July 2022](#). The document described the governance arrangements in place, reviewed their effectiveness and where necessary provided recommendations for improvement.

- 4.2 In relation to monitoring the Council's overall governance arrangements, the Terms of Reference for the Governance and Audit Committee states:

*As a key element of new arrangements for corporate governance, designed to ensure openness, integrity and accountability, the Committee will assist the Authority in discharging its responsibility for ensuring financial probity, without taking any action which might prejudice it. The Committee will (amongst other things):-*

*Governance, risk and control*

*C. Review, scrutinise and issue reports and recommendations on the appropriateness of the Authority's risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements, and providing the opportunity for direct discussion with the auditor(s) on these.*

- 4.3 In accordance with the above Terms of Reference extract (Item C) and workplan for the Governance and Audit Committee, this report provides an update on the status of each recommendation made within the AGS. Appendix 1 provides details of each recommendation along with a summary of action taken to date to progress their implementation.
- 4.4 As part of reviewing the status of each recommendation, Members should seek assurance, in addition to their own lines of enquiry, around the adequacy of the arrangements and extent of progress to implement the recommendations.

**5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 5.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

**6. CONSULTATION**

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

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

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

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 The Council's AGS has been compiled in accordance with the CIPFA / SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016'.

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

**THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES**

- 9.1 Monitoring the status of the recommendations within the AGS aims to support the delivery of the priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 “*Making a Difference*”, in particular ‘Living Within Our Means’ through ensuring that appropriate internal controls are in place to effectively manage resources and demonstrate openness and accountability.

**WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 9.2 The Sustainable Development Principles, in particular Prevention, can be applied to the systematic reviews undertaken in order to provide assurance that risks to the achievement of objectives are being managed.

**10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 A summary of action taken to date to implement the recommendations contained within the 2021/22 AGS is provided at Appendix 1.
- 10.2 The information aims to assist Members when forming an opinion at financial year-end on the Council's overall governance arrangements for 2022/23.

**Other Information:-**

***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***  
**Not applicable.**

***Contact Officer*** – Paul Griffiths



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

**2021/22 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS –  
PROGRESS UPDATE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & DIGITAL SERVICES**

Author: Paul Griffiths (Service Director, Finance & Improvement Services)

**Item: 6**

**Background Papers**

None.

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths

## ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021/22 PROGRESS UPDATE

Core / Supporting Principle (Paragraph)	Local Code of Corporate Governance Requirement	Issue Identified	Recommendation	Timescale for Implementation	Responsible Officer(s)	Progress Update – December 2022
<b>Supporting Principles:</b>  <b>C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits; and</b>  <b>D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</b>  <b>Paragraph 5.12.1</b>	Corporate Plan and Service Delivery Plans	The collection and reporting of performance indicator information was necessarily paused during the pandemic due to the need to temporarily suspend some frontline service areas and / or change delivery arrangements.	For the 2022/23 financial year, the reporting of key performance indicator information should be reinstated to enable a full as picture as possible to be reported of performance.	September 2022	Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services	Revised Timescale – November 2022  Completed (key performance indicator information included and published within the Council's Quarter 2 Performance Report. Quarterly updates to be reported during 2022/23 to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
	Risk Management Strategy	The Council's Strategic Risk Register requires review to take account of revisions incorporated within the updated Risk Management Strategy.	The Strategic Risk Register should be reviewed and where appropriate, updated, taking into account the revisions incorporated within the updated Risk Management Strategy.	September 2022	Head of Procurement	Completed  Risk Register updated and included within the Council's Quarter 1 Performance Report. Quarterly updates to be reported during 2022/23 to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Core / Supporting Principle (Paragraph)	Local Code of Corporate Governance Requirement	Issue Identified	Recommendation	Timescale for Implementation	Responsible Officer(s)	Progress Update – December 2022
<b>Supporting Principle:</b>  <b>F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b>  <b>Paragraph 5.14.1</b>	Audit Committee and an Internal Audit function.	<p>The GAC's Learning and Development Plan was put in place in March 2021.</p> <p>No on-line library of learning and development information in respect of role / responsibilities of GAC is available for elected Members.</p>	<p>Using lessons learned from 2021/22, undertake a training needs analysis of Committee Members to inform a refreshed learning and development plan for 2022/23.</p> <p>Develop a library of on-line learning and development information for Committee Members as part of learning and development support arrangements.</p>	<p>From September 2022</p> <p>From November 2022</p>	<p>Service Director – of Democratic Services and Communication</p> <p>Service Director – of Democratic Services and Communication</p>	<p>Completed (Update to be reported to the 7/12/22 Governance and Audit Committee)</p> <p>This is an on-going programme of work</p>

Core / Supporting Principle (Paragraph)	Local Code of Corporate Governance Requirement	Issue Identified	Recommendation	Timescale for Implementation	Responsible Officer(s)	Progress Update – December 2022
<p><b>Supporting Principle:</b></p> <p><b>F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b></p> <p><b>Paragraph 5.14.6</b></p>	<p>Compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice</p> <p>Standard D - The authority applies the CIPFA/SOLACE <i>Delivering Good Governance in Local Government</i> (2016).</p>	<p>The structure of the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement has been revised to more clearly align with the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance – this process has identified areas where the Local Code can be further strengthened e.g. reflecting the Council's stakeholder engagement arrangements.</p>	<p>The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance should be reviewed and updated, and thereafter reported to the Governance and Audit Committee for consideration / approval.</p>	<p>January 2023</p>	<p>Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services</p>	<p>On Target</p>

Core / Supporting Principle (Paragraph)	Local Code of Corporate Governance Requirement	Issue Identified	Recommendation	Timescale for Implementation	Responsible Officer(s)	Progress Update – December 2022
<p><b>Supporting Principle:</b></p> <p><b>F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b></p> <p><b>Paragraph 5.14.6</b></p>	<p>Compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice</p> <p>Standard E - The financial management style of the authority supports financial sustainability.</p>	<p>To ensure appropriate arrangements continue to be in place for elected Members and Budget Holders (Council Officers) to effectively fulfil the finance roles, a refreshed programme of training should be put in place.</p>	<p>Refresh training material and deliver a programme of Officer and elected Member financial awareness training (that includes an 'Introduction to Local Government Finance', 'Understanding the Council's Budgets' and 'Treasury Management').</p>	<p>From September 2022</p>	<p>Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services</p>	<p>This is an on-going programme of work</p> <p>('Treasury Management' training session delivered (7/9/22) and 'Introduction to Local Government Finance' session delivered (3/10/22))</p>



Core / Supporting Principle (Paragraph)	Local Code of Corporate Governance Requirement	Issue Identified	Recommendation	Timescale for Implementation	Responsible Officer(s)	Progress Update – December 2022
<p><b>Principle:</b></p> <p><b>F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b></p> <p><b>Paragraph 5.14.6</b></p>	<p>Compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice</p> <p>Standard G - The authority understands its prospects for financial sustainability in the longer term and has reported this clearly to members.</p>	<p>The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan covers, on a high level basis, the key areas it will focus on as part of 'balancing the budget' in future budget strategies, for example, workforce, digitisation and Built Asset Review.</p>	<p>The information included within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) should be developed further to set out in more detail the Council's work in the key areas that will underpin future budget strategies and how they align with its medium term financial planning arrangements (this area was also reported as a recommendation by Audit Wales in its report 'Financial Sustainability Assessment – Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council').</p>	<p>September 2022</p>	<p>Director of Finance and Digital Services</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>The Council's MTFP has been updated in line with the recommendation and reported to Cabinet (26/9/22) and full Council (28/9/22)</p>

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

<b>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</b> <b>7<sup>th</sup> December 2022</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM NO. 7</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>The Council's Draft Annual Self- Assessment 2021/22 incorporating the Council's Corporate Performance Report</b>

**AUTHOR: Lesley Lawson, Performance Manager**

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for the Governance and Audit Committee to review the Council's draft Self-Assessment for 2021/22 in advance of consideration at a meeting of the Council in January 2023, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) Act 2021.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Review the draft Self-Assessment and consider whether it is an accurate and robust reflection of the position of the Council and its services and meets the requirements of the [Local Government and Elections Act 2021 Part 6](#).
- 2.2 Make observations / recommendations for change, as deemed appropriate, prior to consideration by Council.
- 2.3 Require the Chief Executive to update the draft Self-Assessment in line the Governance and Audit Committee's feedback, as appropriate, and for the Committee's feedback to be included in the report to Council.
- 2.4 Note that following approval of the self-assessment by Council, the document will be published within four weeks of it being finalised.

### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To continue to improve the Council's self-awareness through the range of self-assessment tools and approaches in place across the organisation.
- 3.2 To evidence how the Council is meeting the new duty set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, '*for each Council in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements', that is the extent to which:-*
- *it is exercising its functions effectively;*
  - *it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively;*
  - *its governance is effective for securing the above.'*

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 For many years, the Council has prepared Annual Corporate Performance Reports in order to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. This Measure is now disapplied. The 'freedom' from the Measure has enabled the Council to reflect on the previous arrangements and to take a more proportionate, pragmatic and timely approach to planning and reporting the Council's priorities, make better use of the plethora of information already made widely available and reduce the reporting burdens so far as possible.
- 4.2 Local Authorities in Wales are now required to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act requires an annual self-assessment to be undertaken of the Council, assess performance against priorities, identify areas for improvement and put plans on place to deliver those improvements. This is therefore the first year of our new style annual Corporate Performance Report which provides a summary of our 2021/22 Self-Assessment and acts as a signpost to the new and existing information we have used to keep our performance under review. Our annual Self-Assessment comprises information about:
1. **How we have delivered our Priorities** – reporting our progress and plans through the wide range of information already available to residents, communities and our stakeholders about how we are delivering our Priorities i.e. our Well-being Objectives, through our formal quarterly [Performance and Resources reports](#) to Cabinet and Council Committees and the Council's various Social Media channels.

2. **Our assessment of our corporate functions – including how we are meeting the Socioeconomic Duty.**
  3. **The Self Evaluation of our services.**
  4. **Our application of the Sustainable Development Principle** and information that shows how we are implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 4.3 All organisations, whatever their size, the product or service they offer, public or private sector, need to know themselves well, identify their agenda for improvement, promote innovation and sector-leading practice and improve the quality of their products and services to meet the changing needs and demands of their customers or service users.
  - 4.4 The basis of this process is called self-evaluation or self-assessment. Crucially, in the public sector, where the self-assessment process focuses on impact and outcomes of the services being delivered, it leads to improvements in the experiences and the outcomes for the service user, whether that is, for example, educational outcomes of learners or enabling more older people to live independently in their own homes.
  - 4.5 Self-assessment is a continuous process, not a one-off event. It is the first, essential step in a cyclical process of bringing about change and improvement. It is based on professional reflection, challenge and support among practitioners and professionals. Effective self-assessment involves taking wide-ranging decisions about actions which result in clear benefits for all service users. Most of all, it is about striving for excellence within the resources available.
  - 4.6 The Council introduced annual self-assessment processes in 2016 and has a good track record of open and honest self-assessment at corporate and service levels. This is evidenced in the latest Audit Wales ‘Assurance and Risk Assessment Review’, to be reported to the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Governance and Audit Committee meeting, which recognised *‘that the self-evaluation arrangements are well embedded and supported by robust corporate challenge.’*
  - 4.7 The self-assessments, at both service and corporate levels, encourage and enable self-awareness across the Council; are crucial to informing, supporting and challenging front line services alongside the corporate support in place to continually improve and giving assurance that we are delivering our priorities.
  - 4.8 These processes use different sources of evidence to give assurance and provide information about where we are doing well and how we can do better to improve outcomes for the customer/resident/user etc.

- 4.9 Between early 2020 and Autumn 2021, many of the internal performance processes were held in abeyance to allow appropriate direct focus on the response to and recovery phases from the Covid pandemic. However, regular and comprehensive quarterly financial and performance management reports including monitoring reports continued to be provided to, and considered by, elected Members. This ensured that the business of the Council continued and information about the response and recovery phases of the pandemic was considered.
- 4.10 In April 2021 the Performance and Governance arrangements arising from the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021, Part 6, were enacted. Among other things, Part 6 of the Act seeks *‘to establish a more regularised performance and governance system which will place an onus on the principal council to take ‘ownership of its own improvement, and should seek to build reflection on performance and action to improve into its system’*. Section 91 of the Act requires the Council to.....
- ‘....produce a self-assessment report in respect of each financial year. The report must set out its conclusions on the extent to which it met the performance requirements during that financial year, and any actions it intends to take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it is meeting the performance requirements’.*
- 4.11 A position statement in respect of our readiness to meet the new statutory duty, particularly in the light of our earlier established performance culture, was considered by [Cabinet in March 2021](#).
- 4.12 In September 2021, the full self-assessment processes restarted. Over the past few months, Cabinet Members, officers and staff from across the Council have contributed to the corporate and service self-assessments alongside the continuing robust challenge of performance in the many and varied reports to Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees. There is no single formula or approach for self-assessment.
- 4.13 Given the disruption and refocus of the Council’s arrangements in 2020/21, the Council’s 2021/22 Self Assessment has sought to provide a ‘stock take’ of the service and corporate functions together with consideration of the robustness of the management and monitoring arrangements in place that evidence that we are delivering our priorities and enable the Council to be assured that
- it is exercising its functions effectively;
  - it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and
  - its governance is effective for securing the above.’

## **5. THE COUNCIL'S 2021/22 SELF ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 Performance and Governance arrangements arising from the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 requires the Self-Assessment to be considered by Governance and Audit Committee in advance of consideration by Council.
- 5.2 The information considered in assessing our performance for all our services, activities and functions runs into thousands of pages, and many more hundreds of hyperlinked documents, policies, strategies, a small selection of which can be found [here](#). The available 'catalogue' of evidence includes updates contained in Cabinet Reports as part of the Cabinet work programme, and its Sub Committees and Steering Groups; Scrutiny and Pre-Scrutiny reports; Governance and Audit Committee considerations; Improvement and differing Regional Partnership Boards as well as Joint Committees. Much of this information is and has been publicly available for up to eighteen months. For this reason, it is not timely, nor is it of significant added value to the reader to reproduce the detail in the Self-Assessment. However, by providing high level summaries and signposts, we can demonstrate our open and transparent approach and provide the reader seeking more detail, with access to the information they need.
- 5.3 The Council's Self-Assessment is summarised in the Corporate Performance Report in Appendix 1 and comprises four sections
1. How we have delivered our Priorities
    - People;
    - Places; and
    - Prosperity.
  2. Our assessment of our corporate functions.
  3. The Self Evaluation of our services.
  4. Our application of the Sustainable Development Principle.

### **How we have delivered our priorities**

- 5.4 The Council's key strategic priorities for the period 2020-2024 were agreed by Council [on 4 March 2020](#) and are set out in its Corporate Plan '[Making a Difference](#)'. 'Making a Difference' continues the positive work started in 2016 as part of the previous Corporate Plan, 'The Way Ahead', and is a key element of the Council's strategic and financial management arrangements to ensure it:

- is well placed to meet future ambitions, particularly in the context of challenging funding levels, changes in the demand for services, including the on-going impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and legislation changes;
- sets a clear strategy and set of priorities for future years;
- allocates resources to priority areas; and
- puts in place plans to deliver the agreed priorities.

5.5 The Corporate Plan sets a clear direction for the Council, which all staff and Managers can see, understand and work toward through their Service Delivery Plans. There are transparent, robust and regular reporting and scrutiny arrangements in place which also ensure that residents and external stakeholders are able to hold the Council to account.

The Self-Assessment sets out our arrangements for monitoring and managing our priorities and associated budgets in our quarterly performance reports and sets out end of year summaries of each of our priorities demonstrating the progress made and where we need to improve.

### **Assessment of our corporate functions**

5.6 This sets out a 'stock take' of fourteen corporate functions and arrangements which support the delivery of services and our Priorities. In preparing the Assessment across the corporate functions, where possible, the Assessment has referred to existing processes, policies, reports etc., ensuring that no additional process is created in this work. The corporate functions considered are:

- 1 Strategic planning and Approach\*
- 2 Governance and Scrutiny
- 3 Performance Management\*/Finance\* and Risk Management
- 4 HR\*
- 5 Asset Management\*
- 6 IT/Information Management
- 7 Procurement\* and Commissioning
- 8 Partnerships
- 9 Involvement, Engagement and Customer Feedback
- 10 Welsh Language
- 11 Equalities and Socio-economic Duty
- 12 Regulators' Feedback
- 13 Net Zero
- 14 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act



- 5.7 A summary of each of the fourteen completed assessment sections is set out in the Self-Assessment. The detailed assessments are available for further scrutiny/examination if required. Improvement Actions arising from the assessment of corporate actions are incorporated within the Delivery Plans of individual services.
- 5.8 Seven of these functions\* are described in [the Well-being of Future Generations Act Core Guidance](#) *as the core activities common to the corporate governance of public bodies... the application of which is likely to secure the change required by the Act.* An update of the Council's previous progress in the core activities was included in the [Council's Corporate Performance Report 2020/21 \(p 78-81\)](#).

### **The Self Evaluation (SSE) of our services**

- 5.9 Self Evaluations were completed by twenty-one areas of service. In completing the SSEs, Service Managers provide the evidence that enables them to answer three questions:
- a) how are they performing?
  - b) how do they know? and
  - c) what can they do to improve?
- 5.10 This also included the extent to which services implement key corporate and cross cutting functions. A copy of the SSE template can be seen [here](#) and is also contained within the Annual Self-Assessment.
- 5.11 The completed Service Self Evaluations were challenged and reviewed by the respective Cabinet Member, signed off by the Group Director and were subject to challenge by the Chief Executive in meetings with service managers.

The outcome of the Service Self Evaluation is a

- Set of key priority actions the service will deliver in 2022/23.
  - Set of performance measures and targets through which elected Members and officers can assess the performance of the service.
- 5.12 All completed SSEs are made available on the Council's Intranet site for internal reference/use. A list of the service areas that completed a Service Self Evaluation is can be found [here](#) and within the Annual Self-Assessment.
- 5.13 The key actions emerging from the SSEs informed Service Delivery Plans in 2022/23. Relevant key actions also informed the detailed plans that deliver the Corporate Priorities which are also our Well-being

Objectives. The Corporate Priorities are monitored in [Performance Reports to Cabinet](#) and thereafter to Scrutiny Committees each quarter.

## **Well-being of Future Generations - Sustainable Development principle**

- 5.14 The Council's Improvement Priorities are our Well-being Objectives and discharge the requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This approach was supported by Council in endorsing the Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' on [4 March 2020](#) when it agreed that the Council's Corporate Priorities would also serve as the Council's Well-being Objectives and set out how it work would contribute to the seven national Well-being Goals.
- 5.15 The Council's approach to the Well-being Future Generations Act was set in [November 2016](#) when Cabinet agreed a Policy Statement to apply the spirit of the Act, embedding processes into the work of the Council and avoiding any additional burden to the leadership, management and governance of the Council. The Act has been acknowledged by the Commissioner as the 'common sense Act'.
- 5.16 Our Assessment of progress in respect of the Well-being of Future Generations Act has been set out in the Corporate Assessment, see 5.8 above. This Assessment provides an appraisal of progress and plans to strengthen our approach following a refocus of priorities arising from the pandemic.
- 5.17 As indicated in the Self-Assessment, early feedback from Regulators in respect of our approach to implementing the Act was generally positive but we know there is more to do. With the recent new national approach by Audit Wales to test how all Public Bodies are applying the Sustainable Development principle in all its reviews, inevitably gaps in all Public Bodies approaches, including the support provided by the Commissioner, are being identified.

## **6. HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THINGS FURTHER?**

- 6.1 Of the areas for improvement that emerge from the different elements across the Self-Assessment, there are nine clear themes that the Council must tackle:
  - 1. **Financial Planning and Resilience** – managing our way through the current and future significant financial challenges as a result

- of the pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine. This will require the Council and its partners to prioritise services and make some difficult decisions on which services are reduced or stopped;
2. **Workforce Planning** - Recruiting and retaining the best staff and ensuring key services such as social care have the staffing flexibility to respond to increasing demand for services;
  3. **Cost of Living Crisis** – working with partners, the Council provides a wide range of services and targeted support to children and their families as well as individuals living in poverty. However, in the aftermath of the pandemic we need to improve the way in which we engage with families to make them aware of the breadth of services available and how they can access them;
  4. **Making RCT Resilient to the challenges of Climate Change** – working with Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and local businesses and communities, we need to continue to mitigate, wherever possible, the impact of climate change. This includes continuing to replace / repair the infrastructure damaged by Storm Dennis, tackling tip safety, upgrading the flood water infrastructure and supporting residents and businesses to put in place their mitigation and adaptation measures. The Council will also be seeking to reduce its own carbon footprint and become carbon neutral by 2030;
  5. **Narrowing the Attainment gap for pupils living in poverty** - improving pupils' achievement and narrowing the attainment gap, which has widened during the course of the pandemic.
  6. **School Attendance** – improving pupil attendance to at least the level pre-the pandemic, and in particular those children living in poverty where the levels of attendance are lowest;
  7. **Modernising and integrating health and social care services and transforming the Council's residential services for children** – to ensure that vulnerable people who require care receive it promptly and within their own communities, with the minimum of time spent in acute hospital settings. To increase capacity and transform our services to move the Council to a not-for-profit model of provision of residential care that is close to home;
  8. **Continuing to regenerate the town centres and supporting local businesses** – we have ambitious plans for our town centres and despite the difficult financial circumstances we need to ensure we maximise UK and Welsh Government funding to create thriving town centres and be able to offer a range of quality commercial accommodation to local businesses to start up and become successful organisations employing local people; and
  9. **Supporting those in housing need** - continuing to focus on preventing homelessness and working with Welsh Government, private and registered social landlords to ensure we have the right accommodation, in the most appropriate location, and with

suitable support to meet an individual's and a family's need when they are at risk of being homeless.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIOECONOMIC DUTY**

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required with regard to the annual Self-Assessment. However, the Self-Assessment contains an evaluation of how we are delivering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Council's services, our progress in integrating the Socio economic duty into the work of the Council and where we need to do better.

**8. CONSULTATION, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT**

8.1 One of the key areas of challenge in the Self-Assessment is seeking and using residents/customers/service users and staff views on the services provided or ideas for improvement. This feedback can emerge through engagement, social media and other customer feedback channels. We have used the feedback we have in all parts of the Self-Assessment and the Corporate element of the Self-Assessment, in particular, explains how we are seeking to expand this work and ensure all feedback is being used across the Council to inform our planning and service delivery. This continues to be an area for improvement and will be developed further in 2023.

**9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no Welsh language implications aligned to this report. However, Welsh Language is integral to the Service Self Evaluation and Corporate Assessments and are contained within the relevant sections.

**10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

10.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. Any investment required to address any of the recommendations will be reported and considered separately.

**11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The report aims to ensure that the Council complies with its legal duties in respect of Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

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

- 12.1 This report seeks to identify how well the Council is performing and what needs to improve in accordance with the aspirations set out within the Council's Corporate Plan and to establish its progress in meeting the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to improve the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Well-being of the people and communities of RCT and the six core activities identified in the Act as being '*common to the corporate governance of public bodies*'.

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

- 13.1 The Self- Assessment and the processes it comprises, identify strengths and opportunities for improvement across all services within the County Borough.

### **14. CONCLUSION**

- 14.1 Each of the elements of the Self-Assessment seek to challenge the status quo and deliver an accurate appraisal of the Council. Within each section there are a number of potential areas for improvement which are developed in the relevant Delivery and Priority Plans.

- 14.2 The Council has in place comprehensive and well embedded assessment processes and robust monitoring, governance and scrutiny of its priorities. We are clear about our strengths and honest about where we need to do better. Our ability to compare with other Welsh Councils, continues to be hampered by the lack of robust national data. Within the Council the culture of constructive challenge, self awareness and pursuit of excellence, supports and challenges our arrangements and ensures we take all steps to deliver services efficiently and effectively. For these reasons, supported by the evidence throughout the Self Assessment, the Council can demonstrate it

- *is exercising its functions effectively;*
- *is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and*
- *governance is effective for securing the above.'*

and in doing so it is meeting the requirements of [Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#).

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**7 DECEMBER 2022**

**THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL SELF ASSESSMENT 2021/22  
INCORPORATING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PERFORMANCE  
REPORT**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ITEM: 7**

Author: **Lesley Lawson, Performance Manager**

**Background Papers:**

None.

Officer to contact: Lesley Lawson, Performance Manager

# **The Council's draft Corporate Performance Report Self Assessment Summary 2021-22**

*This document contains information about the planning and progress of the Council's priorities which are the Council's Well-being objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and also the Council's summary Self Assessment as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.*

*This document is available in other languages and formats on request.*

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  4. Our application of the Sustainable Development Principle
- Appendix A Contributing to the Well-being Goals

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## Introduction

This is the first year of our new style annual Corporate Performance Report which provides a summary of our 2021/22 Self Assessment, and acts as a signpost to the new and existing information we have used to keep our performance under review. Our annual Self Assessment comprises information about

1. **How we have delivered our Priorities** – reporting our progress and plans through the wide range of information already available to residents, communities and our stakeholders about how we are delivering our Priorities i.e. our Well-being Objectives through our formal quarterly [Performance and Resources reports](#) to Cabinet and Council Committees and the Council's various Social Media channels.
2. **Our assessment of our corporate functions – including how we are meeting the Socioeconomic Duty**
3. **The Self Evaluation of our services**
4. **Our application of the Sustainable Development Principle** and information that shows how we are implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Our previous Corporate Performance Reports, the most recent report for 2021/22 is [here](#), was designed to meet requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. This Measure is now disappplied. The 'freedom' from the Measure, has enabled the Council to reflect on the previous arrangements and to take a more proportionate, pragmatic and timely approach to planning and reporting the Council's priorities, make better use of the plethora of information already made widely available and reduce the reporting burdens so far as possible. In doing so this has also provided the opportunity to include our new annual Self Assessment and in so doing, meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

## The Self Assessment

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 put in place a wide range of new statutory duties. The Performance and Governance duties outlined in [Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Act](#) are about strengthening and empowering local government... *'defining principal councils as self-improving organisations through a system based on self-assessment and panel performance assessment'*. Among other things, the Act requires Public Bodies to

- keep performance under review
- consult on performance and
- report on performance, producing a self assessment report in respect of each financial year.

We have a strong track record of reviewing our performance through well embedded monitoring, support and challenge arrangements across all levels of the Council resulting in a positive performance culture in which the whole organisation continually strives for excellence. We also have wide ranging programmes of consultation and engagement activities with residents, staff and stakeholders that help to inform and shape our work and set our priorities.

The full 'catalogue' of available information to evidence how we achieve this is contained within the four areas described within this Self Assessment i.e.

1. **How we have delivered our Priorities**
2. **Our assessment of our corporate functions**
3. **The Self Evaluation of our services**
4. **Our application of the Sustainable Development Principle**

The information considered within the four areas that comprise our Self Assessment runs into thousands of pages, and many more hundreds of hyperlinked documents, policies, strategies and plans that provide more detailed supporting evidence and data, a selection of which can be found [here](#). This available 'catalogue' also includes updates contained in the quarterly Performance and Resources reports to [Cabinet](#), stand-alone reports as part of the Cabinet work programme and its Sub Committees and Steering Groups; Scrutiny and Pre Scrutiny reports; [Governance and Audit Committee](#) considerations; Improvement and differing Regional Partnership Boards as well as Joint Committees. Much of this information is and has been publicly available for up to eighteen months. For this reason, and also that we are already well into the 2022/23 reporting year, it is not timely, nor is it of significant added value to the reader to reproduce the detail of these assessments. However, by providing high level summaries and signposts, we can demonstrate our open and transparent approach and provide the reader seeking more detail with access the information they need.

This Council has a strong track record of performance review together with robust and regular performance monitoring by Senior Leadership Team and elected Members. It also has well embedded self-assessment processes in place at service and corporate levels as set out in our [Performance Management Framework](#). This means that we are able to support and challenge services and the corporate support areas to continually improve and set appropriate service

priorities for Delivery and Priority Planning, for consideration, monitoring and scrutiny by elected Members in meetings of Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees and Council. Our approach to responding to Regulators' reports is open and transparent and reports considered by Governance and Audit and Scrutiny Committees can be found [here](#).

A position statement in respect of our readiness to meet the new statutory duty of self assessment, particularly in the light of our earlier established performance culture, was considered by [Cabinet in March 2021](#).

Because of the unprecedented events of the last two years, between Spring 2020 and Autumn 2021, some of our self assessment processes were held in abeyance to allow appropriate direct focus on the response to and recovery phases from the Covid pandemic. However, quarterly reporting to elected Members experienced the least disruption. In late 2021 we resumed a full cycle of Service Self Evaluations and an assessment of our corporate functions.

Given the 'gap' in some aspects of our self-assessment knowledge and the value in providing the new administration a more comprehensive and timely suite of information, we have taken a pragmatic approach to meeting the new reporting requirements in this first year of the [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act](#) and at the same time taken the opportunity to further strengthen how we meet existing reporting requirements to reduce reporting burdens and make best use of existing reporting streams.

The following sections set out the four areas in our 2021/22 Self Assessment 'suite' comprising high level summaries of progress in delivering the Council's Priority Plans, i.e. Well-being Objectives; Assessments for fourteen Corporate/cross cutting areas of work, information about our Service Self Evaluations for twenty-one areas of service and our application of the Sustainable Development Principle.

Throughout the Assessment the Council can evidence consistent improvement over the past few years, which continued during the unprecedented global pandemic, when we continued to deliver our priorities, providing a solid foundation to build and accelerate progress following recovery.

The continued improvement continues to be driven by the strong and focused leadership from the Leader and Cabinet. In the coming months, work will start on the involvement and preparations for our new Corporate Plan, setting out our plans and ambitions beyond 2024.

Political leadership of the Council has been stable for a number of years, and remains constant following the 2022 Local Government elections. The stability and strength of leadership was recognised by staff in a staff survey considered by Senior Leadership Team in February 2022. Of the staff that responded,

- 75% agreed or strongly agreed that RCT is a strong Council that leads the way in many services.
- 19% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 5% in total, were unsure, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

These findings provide assurance that staff saw and felt strong leadership during the most challenging period in the existence of RCTCBC and we will continue to develop and deliver this strong and visible leadership.

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### How we have delivered our Priorities

The Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 '[Making A Difference](#)' sets out our Vision, sets our three priorities PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY and our approach. Together, these strategic aspects, direct everything we do and are well embedded into other Council's strategies and planning arrangements, including for Work Force and Financial planning and Risk Management. Each of the priorities contribute to the achieving the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of RCT, and of Wales.

The detailed plans to deliver our three priorities PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY are currently agreed by Council and subsequently monitored and scrutinised by elected Members in [Cabinet](#), [Scrutiny](#) and [Governance and Audit Committees](#) is part of the [quarterly Performance and Resources Reports](#).

The quarterly Performance and Resources Reports to Cabinet, currently comprises

- **Executive Summary** of Performance by quarter.
- **Revenue Budget Monitoring** - setting out the detailed financial spend against budget across our Revenue Budget with exceptions highlighted.
- **Capital Budget Monitoring** – setting out spend across our Capital Programme with exceptions highlighted and a section covering Prudential Indicators.
- **Organisational Health data**– includes staff turnover, sickness absence, organisational health related investment areas and an update on the Council's Strategic Risk Register.
- **Delivering our Corporate Plan:** Progress in delivering our Corporate Priorities; People, Places and Prosperity.
- **Our response to extreme weather events** - progress made to implement the recommendations agreed by [Cabinet on 18th December 2020](#).

In respect of delivering our Corporate Plan and in particular the priorities it sets out, the quarterly reports provide an overview of our progress, with hyperlinks to further and more detailed reports, case studies and relevant 'comms', and also presents more detailed progress reporting through updates to each of the three Action Plans. The 2021/22 end of year report was considered by Cabinet on [18 July 2022](#).

We can see from this information that overall, we are making good progress in delivering our priorities but we also know those areas we need to improve.

There is no single report that can provide a complete, timely and comprehensive picture of the work undertaken across the Council that contributes to the delivering our priorities. For example, the Annual Governance Statement contained within the Statement of Accounts provides an assessment of the Council's Governance arrangements and the extent to which it effectively manages the delivery of its services and priorities and its resources. [The 2020/21 Statement](#) indicated that these governance arrangements are in place.

However, the information contained within the quarterly reports provide a helpful overview from which the reader can seek further detailed information.

The following three sections, provide a summary of the progress of each of our priorities as described the end of year report, together with a link to each of the three 2022/23 Priority Plans that will form the basis of monitoring and scrutiny of our progress, up to and including 31 March 2023.

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## PEOPLE - Are independent, healthy and successful

### Introduction

We put in place plans to help PEOPLE to be independent, healthy and successful because we want to give people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds the best chance to live a good quality of life, both now and in the future. We believe that by working with partners to help people to stay healthy and active and involved in communities, preventing many long-term issues from arising, people can stay well for longer. Where people do need help, we need to make this help easier for them to find. Residents told us this is important to them and their families.

### General Statement of progress

Despite the challenges that remain from the Covid-19 pandemic, we continued to make good progress as a Council and in partnerships. We continued our work to support our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life and have continued the planned building work on new residential accommodation. We continued to encourage all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing and re-opened our leisure facilities including the new [Llys Cadwyn](#) centre in Pontypridd. We continued to work with partners to support older people to stay in their homes longer, prevent unnecessary stays in hospital and to help get people home from hospital safely and more quickly when they are well enough, although we recognise that there is more to do. We remained focused on supporting our most vulnerable residents and families. We know that there is much to do help keep our residents of all ages and backgrounds safe and well.

More detail can be found in our end of year [quarterly performance report](#) to Cabinet 18 July 2022. This includes a financial update on our investment priority areas and information about how we have .....

- opened [Cwrt Orsaf](#) Pontypridd, our third extra care facility in RCT, alongside Ty Heulog in Talbot Green and Maesyffynnon in Aberaman, with other facilities in progress in Porth and Treorchy.
- put in place [school holiday fun and activities](#) in 15 of our schools, around 400 children took part.
- opened a supported Accommodation Scheme for adults with a learning disability with plans being developed to provide a range of supported housing options that meet the needs of vulnerable people.
- reopened [Lido Ponty](#) and [Hawthorn Swimming Pool](#).
- introduced a new range of targeted leisure activities to keep people active, including [‘Made for Mams’](#) and [videos](#) featuring walking routes
- delivered a programme of Targeted Play provision for vulnerable 5-14 year olds with care and support needs.
- launched the new [‘YEPs’ App](#) to provide more and better information as support for young people.

and .....

- continued our review of residential care for older people.
- continued to develop our work to support recovery and independence and working with UHB to avoid hospital admission and support hospital discharge.
- continued to develop digital solutions to support people and their families.
- continued to strengthen our arrangements to train our Adult Services staff in different ways of working with individual and families.
- started to put in place a different way to help people to manage their care needs through direct payments through the new 'Community Catalyst' model.
- talked to people about new day services for people with a learning disability that provide meaningful activity and opportunities for them to achieve their personal goals.
- continued to develop our Community Hubs as places that people can meet and socialise, strengthening relationships with residents and community groups.
- involved people in the development of a new inclusive and accessible plan for our theatres.
- Prevented more homelessness in the County Borough, from 48% in Quarter 1 of 2021/22 to 69% at year end. Stand alone data for the final quarter performance was 77%.
- provided information and assistance to those people supporting Ukrainians fleeing conflict and also the Ukrainian families who have arrived in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- continued to work with partners to help people to stay in their own homes for longer, manage transfers of care and improve end of life care in the community.
- continued to review and Mental Health services.
- continued to our work to make sure that those children that cannot stay with their families are looked after closer to home and those young people leaving care have the right support.
- continued to transform early years support so that people can access help no matter where they live
- continued to develop the Social Prescribing model.

You can also find out more about our services in the [Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021/22](#)

The detailed plans to deliver our **PEOPLE priority in 2022/23** can be found [here](#).



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

### Introduction

We put in place plans for PLACES because we know that having a clean, pleasant and well-maintained environment is important to residents. Having efficient recycling and waste collections, welcoming green spaces, clean streets and well-maintained roads are some of the ways we can make residents' daily lives more pleasant as well as for our visitors who come to enjoy all that Rhondda Cynon Taf has to offer. However, our greatest challenge is to play our part in tackling Climate Change and we have a new '[Tackling Climate Change](#)' Strategy in place to direct the work to meet the carbon reduction goals we have set out ourselves.

### General Statement

Over the last year, we have continued to make good progress as a Council and as part of wider partnerships, to make PLACES where people are proud to live, work and play. By supporting and working with residents we recycled 67.18% of the waste we collected and we also continued to enforce the zero tolerance messages for environmental crimes. We progressed our carbon reduction plans by developing the EV Charging Infrastructure, changing the system of collection and recycling of our 'green waste' and widening opportunities to develop Active Travel. We took steps to keep residents safe e.g. responding to residents feedback to continue 'No Alcohol Zones' in Pontypridd and Aberdare, supporting people experiencing domestic and sexual violence to get the help they need when they present in a hospital setting and working on all Wales operations to tackle illegal trading. We also improved services to those residents in need of help and support with substance misuse. We have continued to create and support new biodiversity and climate related projects including establishing a Sustainable Food Partnership. However, we know we have more to do to continue to improve PLACES and to achieve our short and long term climate ambitions, including achieving our ambitious recycling and reuse targets, embracing the circular economy, putting in place adaptation and mitigation solutions to help tackle the impact of climate change to minimise the effect on our residents and in doing so, helping to improve air quality across the County Borough.

More detail about how we did this can be found in our end of year [quarterly performance report](#) to Cabinet 18 July 2022. This includes a financial update on our investment priority areas about how we have

- completed a comprehensive £27M Investment Programme on our highways and structures improvements, drainage improvements and storm recovery across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- published twelve [Section 19](#) Flood Reports.
- put in place an [Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy](#) and provided [EV Charging Points installation progress](#) information on the Council's website
- recycled 67.18% the waste we collected.
- taken enforcement action against 997 fly tipping incidents, and

- saw [South Wales Parking Group](#) process 20,000 Penalty Charge Notices for incidents within RCT
- talked to residents about [Food Waste Recycling](#) and about why some choose not to.
- launched a new sustainable [Green Waste Collection](#) system with almost 45,000 households signing up, the majority of which did so on line.
- launched our new [Biodiversity web page](#) providing information about what RCT has to offer.
- put in place '[Try before you buy](#)' EV taxi trial as part of Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, which included preparations to make live three dedicated 65kw electric taxi charging points at Pontypridd, Porth and Aberdare.
- established the [RCT Sustainable Food Partnership](#) to ensure that residents have access to healthy, tasty, affordable food that's good for the environment and for the local economy.
- worked with the Health Board and the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide specialist independent advice and support to domestic abuse victims who make a disclosure of abuse whilst attending A & E for treatment and/or hospital appointments at Royal Glamorgan.
- re launched '[Ask for Angela](#)' campaign to support people feeling vulnerable or unsafe and in need of access to a safe spaces in premises signed up to the [Pubwatch](#) scheme.
- opened the [Gravity Family Bike Park](#) at Dare Valley Country Park.

and

- trialled Low Carbon Vehicles and fuel alternatives in our fleet.
- continued to develop our arrangements to manage and install further publicly accessible charging points and seeking additional funding to expand further.
- continued to develop ways to generate renewable energy and reuse hard plastics.
- continued to continue to develop Bryn Pica Eco Park and seek funding opportunities to go develop further.
- continued to prepare to support businesses and social landlords to implement the planned changes to trade waste recycling.
- continued our work to reduce our use of single use plastics in the Council through the changes to our procurement processes.
- continued to dispose/recycle our office equipment and technology more sustainably
- continued to work with partners to reduce waste through blitz programmes and improving recycling habits in community bin collection points.
- through the [RCT Food Support Fund](#) and the [Sustainable Food Places](#) Network, continued to support residents to access food parcels, fresh fruit and vegetables
- continued to prosecute fraudulent activity, including through [Operation CeCe](#) which seized 1 Million illegal cigarettes.

The detailed plans to deliver our **PLACES priority in 2022/23** can be found [here](#).

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

### **Introduction**

We put in place plans for PROSPERITY because we want to create opportunities for people to reach their potential through education and training and for businesses across the County Borough to flourish both now and in the future. We are continuing to invest in our schools, early years settings and also our Town Centres, bringing in more jobs and creating new homes, along with opportunities for leisure and social activities. We believe that RCT has much to offer, and we want to make sure that we make best use of our work with partners including to improve the availability of low carbon public and accessible transport, strengthen tourism and create new jobs, especially in the 'green' economy.

### **General Statement of progress**

We continued to make positive progress both as a Council and working in partnership despite challenges remaining from the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly for our schools and businesses. We continued to support businesses and lead in ambitious plans to transform our town centres to unlock their economic, social and cultural potential whilst balancing environmental considerations. We also worked closely with partners to deliver quality, affordable and energy efficient homes and continued the development of a strong local development plan for the long-term future of the County Borough. Our new Education Strategic Plan will drive ongoing support and improvement for our schools, ensuring wellbeing and inclusion are at the heart of our approach, and we supported adults of all ages to develop their skills, find employment or develop their careers.

More detail about how we did this can be found in our end of year [quarterly performance report](#) to Cabinet 18 July 2022. This includes a financial update on our investment priorities areas and information about how we have

- completed a range of property and site redevelopment projects in our town centres, including the redevelopment of Rhos (Guto) Square in Mountain Ash and the [Porth Transport Hub](#).
- set out a [Pontypridd Town Centre draft Placemaking Plan](#) to provide a vision for the regeneration of the town to unlock the town's economic, social and cultural potential and supported redevelopment of disused sites including the former Bingo Hall and Marks & Spencer building.
- supported Active Travel and public transport in our town centres by obtaining planning permission for expanding Park and Ride schemes at Porth, Treorchy and Llwynypia and completing Active Travel studies in Pontypridd, Aberdare and Porth Town Centres.
- put in place our new [Tourism Strategy](#) and how we plan to promote our landscape, culture and heritage to support the local economy.
- agreed a new Education Strategic Plan outlining priorities for the next three years and also submitted our new [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#) to Welsh Government

- put in place new systems to identify where our schools and learners most need support, including those most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and put in place help and guidance to improve standards and deliver the new curriculum
- completed schemes to improve Early Years facilities at Dolau Primary school, Gwauncelyn Primary school and YGG Llantrisant, funded by Welsh Government's Early Years Grant.
- worked with housing associations and landlords to support people with a range of needs, including young people leaving care, to find and stay in suitable homes

and continued to

- lead on the £15M [Transforming Towns](#) grant across the Cardiff City Region and a strong pipeline of potential projects is in development, including review of currently disused sites.
- support our local businesses, including enabling smaller businesses to compete for Council contracts by improving communication and completing the roll out of wifi to 7 town centres
- develop a Revised Local Development Plan with an amended and extended plan period 2022 – 2037, to fully respond to the key issues we now face, including Climate Change and the impacts of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- develop the Masterplan for the [Llanilid Strategic opportunity area](#) and town centre placemaking plans. This includes dialogue with developers and Cardiff Capital Region City deal to support the development of new housing on brownfield sites.
- deliver major transport schemes including dualling the A4119; the Llanharran bypass scheme and the Cynon Gateway North project.
- review and extend our pilot of Family Engagement Officers to support children and families to improve their wellbeing and school attendance.
- ensure effective arrangements are in place to meet the requirements of the [ALNET Act](#), a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
- [invest in our school buildings](#) to develop high quality learning environments and community facilities to meet long-term needs, including Net Zero carbon buildings.
- support an increase in the number of energy efficient, low carbon homes in RCT, including working with Rhondda Housing Association to develop a Zero Carbon home using local timber as part of the [Skyline project](#).
- support retrofitting existing homes to make them more energy efficient
- provide a [range of support](#) for people to gain skills, find employment and develop their careers through our employment support programmes, graduate and apprenticeship programme. This also includes specialist support for those with particular needs including young people, those leaving care and people with learning disabilities.

The detailed plans to deliver our **PROSPERITY priority in 2022/23** can be found [here](#).

## **Our assessment of corporate functions – including how we are meeting the Socioeconomic Duties**

We have identified fourteen corporate/cross cutting areas of work that underpins everything we do. These cross cutting areas of work also comprise the set of seven core activities ‘*that are common to the corporate governance of public bodies.....likely to most effectively secure the type of change required*’ as set out in the [core guidance](#) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Where this is case, in preparing our assessments we can also demonstrate how we are applying the core activities of the Act.

<b>Corporate/Cross Cutting</b>	<b>Core Activities (WFG)</b>
1. Strategic planning and Approach	1. Corporate planning
2. Governance and Scrutiny	2. Financial planning
3. Finance Performance and Risk Management	3. Performance Management
4. Human Resources	4. Risk management
5. Asset Management	5. Workforce planning
6. IT/Information Management	6. Assets
7. Procurement and Commissioning	7. Procurement
8. Partnerships	
9. Involvement, Engagement and Customer Feedback	
10. Welsh Language	
11. Equalities and Socio-economic Duty	
12. Regulators’ Feedback	
13. Net Zero	
14. Well-being of Future Generations	

The performance of each of these fourteen areas has been assessed to consider how they are supporting the delivery of the Council’s services and priorities and enabling the Council to meet relevant statutory requirements. A summary of each of these assessments can be found below.

### **1. Strategic planning and Approach/Corporate Planning’**

Despite the unprecedented challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and the essential response and refocus required to support our residents, the Council’s strategic vision, priorities and approach directed the Council’s resources to where they made the most difference to the people and communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This has remained the case beyond the pandemic as we return to business as usual.

However, we know we have more to do to make sure that the Council’s priorities are fully reflected in all Council strategies/policies etc. We will ensure that that our

leadership, challenge, support and ambition remain strong and transparent so that we continue to uphold the strong ethos of self-awareness and continual improvement that has become embedded across the Council's services over recent years. We will continue to make best use of all our resources and to strengthen our knowledge of our communities so that we can ensure that our focus on their needs remains clear and priorities are relevant, particularly as we start to consider our corporate planning beyond 2024.

## 2. **Governance and Scrutiny**

The Council continues to strengthen its governance, scrutiny and accountability arrangements to more effectively inform and robustly challenge itself and its policies to drive forward change. We are also continuing to improve access to the democratic process and demonstrate improved outcomes for residents and communities through our decision-making arrangements. The areas of focus in the last year included continuing to develop capacity and support to enable elected Members to effectively discharge their responsibilities. The Council has continued to enhance its diversity of representation, aided by greater use of technology in virtual and hybrid meetings also meeting the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. There remains much to do to fully meet and embed these requirements. Building the progress made to support the previous administration we are ensuring that the new 'Council' arising from the 2022 Local Government elections, has the information, equipment and relevant support in place to enable all members to conduct the business of the Council in person and through virtual meetings in the language of their choice. The new Participation Strategy will be finalised and implemented in the Autumn, widening access to democracy for people of all ages and abilities. The work to create and develop a regional South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) continues, with the aim of transitioning the Cardiff Capital Region's existing operational and delivery model into a single corporate body with the CJC adopting the existing decision-making and oversight role of the Joint Committee but progress has been slowed by the need to address a number of taxation status issues and associated risks at national level. The Council's part in scrutinising the delivery of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board, continues to ensure all public sector organisations in the region, work to deliver the Well-being Goals and apply the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

## 3. **Financial Planning, Performance and Risk Management**

Strong and visible leadership and a clear strategic direction continues to provide a solid platform to prioritise resource and deliver an ambitious improvement programme for the benefit of residents, this underpinned by robust service and financial management arrangements. We have made positive progress in delivering our priorities in the context of the prolonged challenges arising from austerity and more recently the pandemic, and feedback from our external regulators confirms that the arrangements we have in place demonstrate the Council is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council's resources are directed to the delivery of its priorities through our Performance Management arrangements which contribute to a strong performance culture built on openness and transparency, and support and challenge at an Officer and elected Member levels, and the organisation's financial planning and risk management arrangements effectively support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities, as evidenced via the in-year and year-end [Performance Reporting](#) arrangements.

The Council has a sound approach to medium term financial planning, with these arrangements being key to support the on-going financial stability of the Council through the forecasted very challenging period ahead.

#### 4. **Human Resources/Workforce Planning**

In the last year, the Council focused its HR resources to continue to support Managers, Headteachers and staff across the Council as they emerged from various stages of the pandemic and tackled the ongoing and changing national and local challenges within their services. This has meant redeploying HR staff, recruiting and resourcing new services such as TTP, supporting the co-ordination and delivery of Covid testing and Vaccine programme, putting in place shielding arrangements for 'at risk' staff and facilitating risk assessments for all staff to safely return to work together with supporting their well-being. At the same time, the Council has been introducing a new HR/Payroll system, '[iTrent](#)' which is currently being rolled out incrementally following a period of 'parallel running' with the existing HR Vision system.

With a different HR focus over the last two years, during 2022-23 we will embed and develop the positive HR processes learned during this time and reflect these in the planned revisions to our HR strategy and Workforce Plan. We will also use the findings of the Audit Wales '[Springing Forward](#)' review of HR to challenge how we manage the new HR arrangements, policies and procedures to better support services as they emerge from the pandemic and meet the new challenges and opportunities ahead and strengthen our data and benchmarking arrangements. We are also taking steps to digitise, modernise and strengthen our recruitment processes and widen our pool of candidates. We will work to maximise the functionality of the new HR/Payroll system to enable the Council to better inform and manage its workforce processes and associated data and benchmarking.

#### 5. **Asset Management**

Pre pandemic, the Council made an early positive start to reduce the occupied office accommodation space and exceeded the target reduction of 20% set out in the [2016 Corporate Plan](#). During the pandemic, to enable services to meet their needs and to facilitate social distancing arising from Covid restrictions, previously unoccupied space was, of necessity, reoccupied. As a result, the use and occupation levels of our buildings have changed significantly over the last year or so, they align with other aspects of Agile Working i.e. Workforce and Digitisation. The Council's 'Built Asset Review' will inform an Office Accommodation Strategy where further targets for reducing occupied space will be agreed. The office accommodation portfolio in use

during 2021/22 will form the new baseline for setting targets and monitoring results in future years.

We regularly review our Corporate Asset Management Plan 2018-23, (CAMP) for our property assets. A new CAMP will be considered and implemented in April 2023. The new CAMP will reflect the changing needs and purpose of our built assets and the need to fully reflect the changing energy needs and usage so that they minimise energy use and carbon emissions. Similar energy saving work is ongoing across existing and proposed projects in our School Investment Programme and other Council Investment Programmes.

The Office Accommodation Strategy will inform the future development of the CAMP and Corporate Estates will continue to be pivotal in managing the Council's Climate Change aspirations through the new Decarbonisation Plan. The Decarbonisation plan is a key component of the [Council's Climate Change Strategy](#) and is currently being developed. Community Asset Transfer will continue to be considered as an option for surplus Council properties, particularly as Agile Working becomes embedded and more Council properties become vacant.

## 6. IT/Information Management

Building on the positive achievement of its first Digital Strategy [Digital RCT – Our 2020 Digital Vision](#) and the further rapid progress in digitalisation necessitated by Covid pandemic, the Council continues to make strong progress in supporting organisational and service changes through its new [Digital Strategy 2022 – 2026](#).

The new Strategy, agreed by [Cabinet in June 2022](#), sets out the Council's vision of being a 'Digitally Driven Council', to maximise the benefits of digital for our Communities, Customers i.e. residents, businesses, staff, learners, elected Members and visitors; and for the Council, with an emphasis on digital inclusion to ensure individuals and communities are not 'left behind'. A central part of this work is strengthening our data insight and intelligence through the provision of timely and accessible data. Integral to this vision, the strategy also sets out how the Council will further improve Cyber resilience and enhance the protection of our data and assets.

Key ICT and Digital requirements supported across the Council include the introduction of a new HR/Payroll system, Hybrid Working, Corporate Data Dashboards, supporting ICT needs of elected Members arising from the Local Government Election and the Emergency Control Centre for managing major incidents.

Our approach supports the delivery of the Council's [Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 'Making a Difference'](#) and the National Digital Strategy for Wales and also seeks to contribute to the National Well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We are also developing our work with others to maximise the benefits of regional working, including through the digital work stream of the Northern Valleys Transformation Fund. Through the strategy we continue to develop and strengthen the integration between our digital work and other Corporate areas to support service delivery and our ambition to become a carbon



neutral Council by 2030. Effective governance arrangements for monitoring progress are currently being developed to ensure effective support and challenge of the delivery of the strategy.

#### **7. Procurement and Commissioning**

The Council made significant achievements through our procurement arrangements both as a Council and in partnerships with other public bodies, during the Covid pandemic. For example, purchasing Personal Protective Equipment at speed to keep residents and staff safe and services operating as effectively as possible during repeated and irregular Covid restrictions. As we returned to 'normal', the Procurement focus has been on supporting the Council's recovery plans and developing and implementing the new [Commissioning, Socially Responsible Procurement & Contract Management Strategy 2021-2024](#) and also to put in place early preparations to meet the requirements of the [Draft Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Bill](#).

The Council is also focussed on meeting its Carbon reduction targets. Within Procurement and Commissioning arrangements, early work to ensure we meet these targets in respect of 'local' procurement and single use plastic, are being widened and accelerated to encompass the wider Scope 3 emissions arising from procured goods and services and built assets, which are a significant proportion of the Council's Carbon Footprint.

Despite our positive progress to date, we know we have more to do to further strengthen and embed our procurement arrangements and to further maximise our spending power and contribute the prosperity of County Borough. Our plans also include introducing formal performance management and scrutiny of our arrangements and putting in place improved communication with businesses.

#### **8. Partnerships**

The Council has a positive track record of partnership working and collaborating with others. Examples range from formal Regional Partnerships like the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to working with community groups to meet a particular and immediate need, or to bid for and deliver specific time limited grant funded projects. There also continues to be positive examples of collaborative arrangements in place within the Council. Our plans to review our partnerships to ensure that they effectively deliver outcomes that benefit people and communities in RCT, were affected by the need to refocus our work during the pandemic. However, this will remain on our work programme 2022 and beyond and we will use the findings from relevant Welsh Government and Audit Wales Reports to challenge our Regional Partnership arrangements. We will also ensure that we continue to maximise partnership opportunities including those afforded by the Corporate Joint Committees.

#### **9. Involvement, Engagement and Customer Feedback.**

We know we need to keep widening and strengthening our engagement and involvement and make better use of the information we receive from the various feedback channels.

The Council has a good track record of talking to residents and communities and finding out what matters to them. We are always looking for better and easier ways for people to get involved and to give their views and opinions on the decisions that affect them. These mechanisms will be developed further in the Council's new Participation Strategy. In 2021-22 we restarted some of our face to face conversations with people, as well as using our new online engagement platform '[Let's Talk](#)' which we launched in April 2021 using [Climate Change](#) as our 'pilot'. We have also put in place additional resource to manage and coordinate data insights in respect of the County Borough which also supports the Welsh language and Socio-economic Impact Assessments and better informs our engagement and community data arrangements.

Feedback from our customers who are residents, businesses and stakeholders as well as our visitors is also valuable to us as we strive to continually improve the services we provide. We have good evidence of using individual feedback to inform service change. However, we also recognise that we need to effectively maximise the strategic value of the data/information available to us. In the last year, have started preparatory work in advance of the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management by April 2023. This preparation includes data cleansing and the service user engagement that in turn, will inform data requirements and the shape, content and timeliness of reports. This work will be key to ensuring that strategic and service needs are met by the new system.

#### 10. **Welsh Language**

The Council continues to make positive progress in implementing the Welsh Language Standards, treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English Language and enabling people live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose. In doing so, we are reducing the Council's risk of non-compliance with the Welsh Language standards. Over the last year our work includes widening our use of digital technology to increase bilingual service options and support Welsh language compliance, investment in Welsh language training to facilitate simultaneous translation and staff training more generally. We have also strengthened our Welsh Language Impact Assessment processes and compliance processes and have led other Welsh Councils to develop and implement a new Grants Policy. However, there is more to do to make sure that the Welsh language Impact Assessments achieve the intended outcomes. We also need to increase the Welsh Language capacity within our services, better facilitate the use of the Welsh Language more widely across the County Borough and ensure that the proportion of Welsh speaking staff is representative of the population of RCT as identified by the 2011 census. i.e. 12.5%.

#### 11. **Equalities and Socio-economic Duty**

The Council continues to have a strong commitment to fairness and equalities as evidenced in the strategic approach and implementation of our Strategic Equality Plan, our most recent report published [in March 2022](#). Progressing our work set out in the [Strategic Equality Plan](#) was challenging due to the pandemic and resource issues arising. However, we have delivered in the majority of the objectives. The Council and its services also demonstrated a flexible approach outside the Plan, by responding to unexpected matters e.g. responding to the racial equality issues arising from the impact of the death of George Floyd

Despite our progress, we know we have more to do to embed understanding and the practical application of the wide range of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues across the Council's services. At a Service level, Equalities and Diversity has continued to feature in the Council's Service Self Evaluation processes which continues to provide a timely and transparent vehicle for strategic challenge and support of our services, helps to inform our statutory reporting requirements and reinforces the wider understanding and implementation of related Equalities strategies across the Council's services.

We also need to respond to the needs of our communities and further demonstrate that we are meeting new statutory requirements, arising from the Socio-economic Duty. At a community level, we are continuing to engage with residents to gain a better understanding of the barriers they face.

A full evaluation of the [Strategic Equality Plan](#) will be completed later in 2022, as part of the work to develop our new Plan, scheduled for Cabinet consideration in 2023.

#### **12. Regulators' Feedback**

The Council has a strong track record of constructive and productive relationships with its Regulators. Evidence shows that the Council responds well to feedback within Regulatory reports specific to RCT, and also uses National Reports and Studies to challenge how it delivers and commissions services.

However, as we emerge from the pandemic and as full Regulatory programmes resume, we need to revisit our processes including continuing to strengthen the arrangements for embedding the Sustainable Development Principle/Well - being of Future Generations Act into our arrangements, working with the Welsh language and Equalities and Human Rights Commissioners to make their feedback more transparent. We will also continue to align Regulators' feedback with Delivery Planning as well as Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees in the new administration to provide additional internal assurance to elected Members and communities.

#### **13. Net Zero**

The Council has made positive progress towards setting and meeting its early Carbon Reduction targets and implementing a wide ranging, flexible and ambitious initial work programme. To date, our direction has been set and our progress has been monitored by agreed political and officer governance and project management

arrangements, directed by the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and latterly, Sub Committee. However, there is still much to do to increase the scale and pace of our work and to better inform and support both our staff and residents so that they can contribute fully to helping the Council to meet the climate challenges across all Council services and the County Borough and to contribute to the national and global targets.

Cabinet's agreement to a comprehensive and ambitious Climate Change Strategy [in June 2022](#) and the continuing work to develop the Council's Decarbonisation Plan will provide a focus and framework that will both strengthen and accelerate our work to date. Progress in relation to the Decarbonisation Plan will accompany updates in respect of the Climate Change Strategy as part of the Quarterly Performance Reports to Cabinet.

#### **14. Well-being of Future Generations**

Given the Council's ambitions, the pace of change required to deliver its priorities, and the impact of the pandemic on the services to respond to immediate need, the level of progress in implementing the Act is generally positive. However, work in some service and corporate areas are more advanced than others. The knowledge and experience of all the public bodies subject to Act, including the need for more focused support from national bodies, continues to grow and mature. Previous feedback from Regulators in respect of the Council's approach to implementing the Act was generally positive but we know there is more to do. With the recent new national approach by Audit Wales to test how Public Bodies are applying the SD principle in all its reviews, inevitably gaps in our approaches, including the support provided by the Commissioner are being exposed.

### The Self Evaluation of our services

Our annual Service Self Evaluation (SSE) has been in place since 2016. In completing the SSE, services are encouraged and require honesty and self-awareness and to continually strive for excellence within the resources we have available.

The SSE asks services

1. how they are performing
2. evidence how they know, and
3. identify what they can do to improve

The process enables services to reflect and evaluate performance and identify their strengths, priorities and areas for improvement which in turn inform annual Service Delivery Plans and also the [Council's Priority Plans](#).

The SSEs also

- help elected Members to support, challenge and scrutinise performance, progress and planning.
- assist services in providing evidence for audit or inspection and deliver the requirements of relevant legislation.
- help services make better decisions and manage risks.
- demonstrate value for money, potential for service change, spend or efficiencies and identify the impact of new or amended service provision.
- enable corporate services to priorities service support.
- provide mechanism/information for 'corporate' monitoring and 'cross-cutting' services with the information they require to compile strategic action plans and statutory reports for the Council e.g. \*Climate Change; [Welsh Language Standards](#), Biodiversity; [Equalities](#) and [Socio-economic Duty](#).

The SSE model is refreshed annually to ensure it takes account of feedback from services and remains relevant and fit for purpose. Over the years it has been developed so that services can provide information about Sustainable Development Principle through the five Ways of Working and other cross cutting themes that inform statutory reports, such as those set out above\*. The [2021 SSE model](#) and the [judgement criteria](#) applied in Autumn 2021 is available.

The [suite of twenty-one SSEs](#) were completed within services in late 2021. They were reviewed by the respective Cabinet Member, signed off by the Group Director and have also been subject to an independent challenge by the Chief Executive in meetings with Service Heads. These Evaluations are also made available on the Council's Intranet site for internal reference/use.

The information contained within the SSEs, and the service priorities emerging, informed the Delivery Plan for each service for 2022/23. The Delivery Plans are subject to 'in service' monitoring. Relevant actions are also included in the Council's Priority Plans, monitored by

and reported in the quarterly [Performance Reports to Cabinet](#) and thereafter to various Scrutiny Committees. The Priority Plans are referenced in Section 1 above.

DRAFT

**How we are applying the Sustainable Development principle and contributing to the seven national Well-being goals**

Sustainable Development is defined as a process of improving the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of Wales.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act develops this further by requiring Public Bodies to meet the principle by applying 5 Ways of Working and contributing to seven national Well-being goals. The Act also indicates [seven core activities](#) that are most likely to secure change, see section 2 above. The Council's approach to the Well-being of Future Generations agreed by [Cabinet in 2016](#) is to embed its requirements into the Council's business. The necessary refocus of our work to deal with the pandemic has resulted in slower than anticipated progress to develop this further. However, we can point to many case examples of how we are applying the Act and are contributing to the seven national Well-being goals in our Priority Plans. A selection of our contributions to the goals have been summarised for illustrative purposes in Appendix A.

The Act requires the Council to set well-being objectives that maximise its contribution to achieving the well-being goals. In doing so, the Council will be expected to take all reasonable steps to meet those well-being objectives. It is proposed that the Wellbeing objectives will be the three priorities set out in the draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024.

The Council's Corporate Plan agreed [by Cabinet in March 2020](#), sets out a vision, principles and our priorities that will maximise our contribution to the seven national Well-being goals. The national goals, together with the five Ways of Working, have been incorporated into the detailed action plans that have delivered the Council's three priorities and have been summarised in our annual [Corporate Performance Reports](#) (CPRs).

Our CPRs have also previously set out our progress in meeting the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, mostly recently in [2021/22](#). This year, as we have changed our approach to annual corporate reporting, our progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Principle and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is included at Section 14 of the assessment of corporate/cross cutting functions.

## Some of the ways we are contributing to the 7 National Well-being Goals

National Well-being Goal	PEOPLE Ensuring 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
Prosperous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Children and Young People by giving them a great start in life through our <a href="#">Resilient Families programme</a></li> <li><a href="#">Redeveloping vacant</a> properties in line with regeneration strategies to bring prominent town centre buildings back into use and improve our housing offer e.g. <a href="#">new Oxford Buildings Supported Housing Scheme</a> in Mountain Ash and <a href="#">The Big Shed development</a> in Tonypanydy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping people and traffic moving on well-maintained roads and pavements including the work we do to <a href="#">keep our roads open in the winter months</a></li> <li>Providing <a href="#">new business facilities</a> that will support the long term economic future of the region</li> <li>Progressing schemes that will benefit communities now and in the future including the <a href="#">A4119 duelling and active travel scheme</a> from Coed Ely Roundabout to Llantrisant Business Park .</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting businesses to adapt and diversify</li> <li>Developing placemaking plans in <a href="#">Pontypridd</a>, <a href="#">Porth</a> and Tonypanydy and supporting a range of redevelopment to revitalise our town centres</li> <li>Building new homes and working with developers to facilitate building homes on brownfield sites where appropriate</li> <li>Supporting people to develop new skills</li> <li><a href="#">Providing schools</a> where children can achieve the best they can</li> </ul>
Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing site disturbance and material waste with shorter construction schedules by using modular construction methods in the construction of our Extra Care facilities.</li> <li>Producing <a href="#">online videos</a> of our most popular walking routes across the County Borough, which provide a visual walk through and directions for the route to encourage people to explore our natural green spaces. Some of the videos have been targeted at new mums via our <a href="#">‘Made For Mams’</a> programme to encourage new mums to exercise in the outdoors alongside other mums.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investing, valuing and <a href="#">celebrating our Green Spaces</a></li> <li>Launching our new <a href="#">Biodiversity web page</a></li> <li>Involving and engaging residents in our <a href="#">Let’s Talk Wildflowers</a> and new Draft <a href="#">‘Action for Nature’</a> recovery action plan <a href="#">conversations</a></li> <li>Increasing <a href="#">flood alleviation</a> measures including work at <a href="#">Aberdare</a> and <a href="#">Ynyshir</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting <a href="#">biodiversity</a> by protecting existing habitats where possible and creating new areas for wildlife on our school sites</li> <li>Integrating biodiversity into planning and <a href="#">Local Development Plan</a> arrangements</li> </ul>



National Well-being Goal	PEOPLE Ensuring 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
Healthier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping people to stay as well as they can by encouraging increased activity in a setting that is right for the individual e.g. <a href="#">at home</a>, in our <a href="#">leisure centres</a>, in our outdoor green spaces and in community facilities in schools</li> <li>Providing reablement support and <a href="#">Assistive Technologies</a> to ensure our older, vulnerable or those who have a disability can remain independent within their communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressing and maintaining <a href="#">Green Flag</a> standards in <a href="#">our parks</a> to ensure they provide a sanctuary for residents, contribute to improved physical and mental well-being, engage with nature, encourage play and opportunities to come together.</li> <li>Continuing to tackle environmental crime and holding those who <a href="#">commit the offences</a> accountable</li> <li><a href="#">Engaging with residents</a> on <a href="#">Active Travel</a> routes including schemes between Pontygwaith and Maerdy, links with Treforest Industrial Estate and the Church Village Community Route.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanding the number of family engagement officers in schools following a successful <a href="#">pilot</a>, providing support to children and families for wellbeing and engagement in education</li> <li>Providing enhanced counselling support to young people, including those most impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic</li> <li>Finding ways to protect air quality and promote health through <a href="#">active travel</a> and local amenities when planning new developments, including completing studies into active travel in Pontypridd, Porth and Aberdare town centres</li> </ul>
More Equal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to develop our housing offers so residents can enjoy the benefits of independent living e.g. Extra Care facilities and Supported Housing Schemes.</li> <li>Setting up a Sustainable Food Network as part of our Sustainable Food Places project to tackle food poverty in our communities</li> <li>Providing sanitary products to our communities via the WG Period Dignity in Communities Grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Raising awareness</a> of Hate Crime</li> <li>Ensuring <a href="#">domestic abuse support</a> is available to all in need including specialist IDVA support for children and young people, an IDVA in Health and another with Housing First.</li> <li>Providing support to those in need of help with substance misuse through increased outreach work undertaken by <a href="#">Barod</a> and <a href="#">promoting</a> the support we provide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing alternative learning, career planning and work experience for those young people who struggle to engage in classroom-based learning</li> <li><a href="#">Providing sanitary products</a> to help tackle period poverty for girls and women in our communities</li> <li>loaning devices and mifi to children, young people and job seekers to help them continue education and training online</li> </ul>

National Well-being Goal	PEOPLE Ensuring 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
Cohesive Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping people to stay in their own homes for longer and enabling them to contribute to communities and strengthen social relationships</li> <li>• Supporting and promoting volunteering opportunities within our communities via our Community Hubs</li> <li>• Supporting communities to be well connected through our Neighbourhood Networks.</li> </ul>	<p>Keeping people safe and helping them to feel safe by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• responding to community requests for action</li> <li>• tackling anti- social behaviour</li> <li>• Protecting those <a href="#">vulnerable to doorstep crime</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving housing for all our residents and creating pleasant neighbourhoods in which communities can thrive.</li> </ul>
Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to provide online and face to face cultural and arts opportunities including a free online production of <a href="#">Aladdin</a> and events like the <a href="#">People’s Library Wales</a> in Pontypridd Library</li> <li>• Providing a varied <a href="#">Adult Education programme</a>, including local history and basic Welsh language skills to help parents support their child’s development, that can be accessed face to face and online, therefore removing some identified barriers to learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Planning, involving</a> and <a href="#">preparing</a> for Rhondda Cynon Taf to host the National Eisteddfod for Wales in 2024.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrating the culture and history of the area in our theatres and parks and developing the <a href="#">Valleys Regional Park</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Supporting the redevelopment of the YMCA building and the Muni Arts Centre in Pontypridd to develop a cultural hub</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Promoting RCT as a visitor destination</a>, including the Eisteddfod</li> </ul>

National Well-being Goal	PEOPLE Ensuring 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
<b>Globally Responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinating the County Borough response to the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis.</li> <li>• Our work with <a href="#">PONT</a>, a volunteer-based charity organisation in RCT which is making a difference to lives in Mbale, Eastern Uganda and which aims to support Ugandan organisations who have the potential to tackle poverty in their towns and villages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to encourage recycling and reuse and implementing a new <a href="#">Green Waste Collection Service</a></li> <li>• Progressing <a href="#">our plans to tackle and reduce the impact of Climate Change</a> through Council services and the County Borough and to meet of 2030 targets, including the publication of the Council's <a href="#">Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-2030</a> and <a href="#">Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT' (2022-2025)</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Fair Trade Initiatives</li> <li>• Developing renewable energy projects like Taffs Well Thermal Spring</li> <li>• Working with Rhondda Housing Association to develop a zero-carbon home using local timber as part of the <a href="#">Skyline project</a></li> </ul>

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

<b>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>  7 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	<b>AGENDA ITEM NO. 8</b>
<b>REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE &amp; DIGITAL SERVICES</b>	<b>PROGRESS AGAINST THE INTERNAL AUDIT RISK BASED PLAN 2022/23</b>

Author: Mark Thomas (Head of Regional Internal Audit Service) &  
Lisa Cumpston (Audit Manager)

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of the Governance and Audit Committee with a position statement on progress made against the audit work included and approved within the Internal Audit Risk Based Plan 2022/23.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report and the progress made against the Internal Audit Risk Based Plan 2022/23.

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

- 3.1 To help ensure that the Governance and Audit Committee monitors the performance of the Council's Internal Audit Service, in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of the Regional Internal Audit Service is responsible for developing a risk-based annual audit plan which takes into account the Council's risk management framework. Within the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) there is also a requirement for the Head of the Regional Internal Audit Service to review and adjust the

plan, as necessary, in response to changes in the Council’s business, risks, operations, programs, systems, controls and resources. The Head of the Regional Internal Audit Service must also ensure that Internal Audit resources are appropriate, sufficient and effectively deployed to achieve the approved plan.

4.2 The Internal Audit Risk Based Plan for 2022/23 was submitted to the Governance & Audit Committee for consideration and approval on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The Plan outlined the audit assignments to be carried out which will provide adequate coverage to enable an overall opinion at the end of 2022/23.

4.3 Progress made against the 2022/23 plan is attached as **Appendix A** and a summary of the individual audit assignments as at 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 is as follows:

Status	No. Of Audits
Final Reports Issued / Complete Assignments	17
Draft Reports Issued	4
Awaiting Management Review / Under Review	2
Fieldwork in Progress	4
Audit Fieldwork being Scoped	10

4.4 **Appendix A** details the status of each planned review, the audit opinion (where the audit is complete or has reached final report stage) and the number of recommendations made to improve the internal control, governance and risk management environment.

4.5 As at 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, 21 audit assignments have been completed, including 17 audits where a final report and audit opinion have been issued. The remaining 4 completed assignments relate to work where no audit opinion is provided, for example Annual Governance Statement (AGS), Annual Opinion Report (Head of Internal Audit) and Internal Audit Planning 2022/23. This is because the audit work carried out in respect of these items was planned but the nature of the work does not lead to testing and the formation of an audit opinion. A further 4 draft reports have been issued and 2 audit assignments are awaiting management review. There are 4 audit assignments currently in progress and a further 10 assignments are at the scoping stage.

4.6 Based on the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the areas examined through testing of the effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements, the following

audit opinions have been given to the 17 audit assignments completed to final report stage to date:

Audit Opinion	No. Of Audits
Substantial Assurance	12
Reasonable Assurance	5
Limited Assurance	0
No Assurance	0

- 4.7 There have been no audit assignments completed across the 2022/23 planned areas to date where an audit opinion of limited assurance or no assurance has been placed on the current systems of internal control, governance and risk management.
- 4.8 **Appendix A** also illustrates that 2 planned audit assignments across the 2022/23 plan have been cancelled as follows:
- Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG)
  - RCT Pupil Development Grant (PDG)

These audits have been undertaken annually in recent years however no issues have been identified as part of the Internal Audit process for the past 2 years. There is no requirement for these 2 areas to be subject to an audit, either from an Internal Audit or Management perspective as no significant changes/issues or risks were identified. Both audits will continue to be included on the schedule for discussion in the audit planning process going forward in case circumstances change and material risks are identified.

- 4.9 A further 1 audit assignment relating to an audit included within the 2021/22 plan of work has been finalised during 2022/23 as follows:
- **Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)**  
This audit assignment was finalised on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022 and an audit opinion of **reasonable assurance** was provided, with 2 medium priority recommendations made. The scope of this audit was to provide assurance on the process in place for identifying data omissions/errors, and where patterns of data inaccuracies are identified determine whether guidance and training is given to prevent any instances of reoccurrence. This audit also examined the processes in place for collating the information required for Welsh Government statutory returns and ensuring the veracity of information for submission.

- 4.10 For reference, the audit assurance/opinion categories are:

<b>AUDIT ASSURANCE CATEGORY CODE</b>	
<b>Substantial</b>	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>Reasonable</b>	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>Limited</b>	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
<b>No Assurance</b>	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

4.11 **Appendix A** illustrates that a total of 35 recommendations have been made to improve the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements across the 2022/23 audit plan areas reviewed to date. The implementation of these recommendations is monitored to ensure that improvements are being made.

4.12 Again for reference, Internal Audit recommendations are categorised/prioritised as follows:

<b>RECOMMENDATION CATEGORISATION</b>	
Risk may be viewed as the chance, or probability, of one or more of the organisation's objectives not being met. It refers both to unwanted outcomes which might arise, and to the potential failure to realise desired results. The criticality of each recommendation is as follows:	
<b>High Priority</b>	Action that is considered imperative to ensure that the organisation is not exposed to high risks.
<b>Medium Priority</b>	Action that is considered necessary to avoid exposure to significant risks.
<b>Low Priority</b>	Action that is considered desirable and should result in enhanced control.



**5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

5.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

**6. CONSULTATION**

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

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

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

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

8.1 The provision of regular information in respect of the Council's Internal Audit Service supports the Council in demonstrating compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.

8.2 Regulation 7 (Internal Audit) of Part 3 of the 2018 Regulations directs that: *"A relevant body must maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control."*

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

**THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES**

9.1 The work of Internal Audit aims to support the delivery of the priorities contained within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 'Making a Difference', in particular 'Living Within Our Means' through ensuring that appropriate internal controls are in place to effectively manage resources.

**WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

9.2 The Sustainable Development Principles, in particular Prevention, can be applied to the systematic reviews undertaken in order to provide assurance that risks to the achievement of objectives are being managed.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 Monitoring the performance of Internal Audit is a key responsibility for the Governance and Audit Committee. This report provides the Governance and Audit Committee with detailed information with which the performance of the Service can be reviewed and scrutinised.

### **Other Information:-**

***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***  
**Not applicable.**

**Contact Officers** – Mark Thomas & Lisa Cumpston

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

**PROGRESS AGAINST THE INTERNAL AUDIT RISK BASED INTERNAL  
AUDIT PLAN 2022/23**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & DIGITAL SERVICES**

Author:

Mark Thomas (Head of Regional Internal Audit Service) & Lisa  
Cumpston (Group Audit Manager)

Item: 8

**Background Papers**

None.

Officer to contact: Mark Thomas / Lisa Cumpston

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**Appendix A - RCTCBC Progress Against the Internal Audit Plan**

Ref	Directorate	Area	Audit Scope / Risk	Priority	Status	Audit Opinion / Assurance				Recommendations		
						Substantial	Reasonable	Limited	No	High	Medium	Low
1	Chief Executive	Contract Variations/Payments in Advance	To undertake a review of contract variations and payments in advance made by the Council linked to the pandemic. Review the arrangements in place for authorisation, monitoring and budgetary control and provide assurance of a managed approach	High	Scoping							
2	Chief Executive	Purchase Cards - Review of Cash Withdrawals	To undertake a review of cash withdrawals made using the Purchasing Card across the Council and establish whether the process for identifying needs, setting spending limits, authorisation of spend and monitoring of expenditure is adequate	High	Under Review							
3	Chief Executive	Attendance & Sickness Recording	To review the accuracy, timeliness of recording and reporting of sickness absence information, and to ensure that processes are complaint with Council Policy and are being consistently followed	High	Planned							
4	Chief Executive	Cost of Living Payments - Administration of the Welsh Government Scheme	To give assurance that a robust administrative control process has been developed, adequate segregation exists and provide assurance through sample testing of the internal control in place prior to payments being processed	High	Complete	√				0	0	0
5	Chief Executive	Administration of Trust Funds	To undertake a review of the Trust Funds administered by the Council and annual certification / sign off process	Low	Scoping							
6	Chief Executive	Cyber Security Arrangements	To give assurance that a Cyber Security Strategy has been developed, changes in threats are regularly reviewed and monitored, Cyber Security reporting and governance arrangements are in place and that awareness is disseminated effectively within the Council	High	Draft Report Issued							
7	Chief Executive	Payroll - Review of the Midlands System	To provide assurance that the new controls and reporting arrangements in place for the recently implemented Midlands Payroll system are robust.	High	Planned							
8	Chief Executive	Sundry Debtors	To review the processes and procedures in place in respect of the identification and pursuit of outstanding debts to the Council, and identify the measures in place to support and manage bad debt provision where families are experiencing financial difficulty	High	Planned							
9	Chief Executive	Review of Grant Schemes Administered on behalf of Welsh Government	To review the arrangements for administering grant payments made on behalf of Welsh Government for a sample of grant schemes and provide assurance that these have been effectively administered	High	Planned							
10	Chief Executive	Housing Benefits	To undertake a review of Housing Benefits system and provide assurance to Management of the controls in place	High	Planned							
11	Chief Executive	Bank Reconciliation	To undertake a review of the Bank Reconciliation system and provide assurance to Management of the controls in place	High	Scoping							
12	Chief Executive	Council Tax	To undertake a review of the Council Tax system and provide assurance to Management of the controls in place	High	Planned							
13	Chief Executive	Non Domestic Rates (NDR)	To undertake a review of the NDR system and provide assurance to Management of the controls in place	High	Planned							
14	Chief Executive	Treasury Management	To undertake a review of the Treasury Management system and provide assurance to Management of the controls in place, with particular reference to the new treasury codes and strategy requirements	High	Planned							
15	Chief Executive	Asset Management & Corporate Asset Management Plan	To review the current plan and provide assurance on the proposed changes to deliver on the Council's objectives	High	Planned							
16	Chief Executive	Climate Change Strategy	To review and provide assurance on the Council's plans to deliver the Carbon Net Zero programme by 2030, and review the arrangements in place to minimise the use of energy and monitor energy efficiency across the Council. Additionally provide assurance on whether actions included in a sample of service delivery plans align to the strategy	High	Scoping SWAP							
17	Chief Executive	Scheme of Delegation	To verify whether there is an up to date Scheme of Delegation in place and review the Council's compliance with the Scheme of Delegation. To provide assurance that an up to date record is maintained of officers and decisions made, and that for a sample of decisions these are complaint with the Scheme	High	Scoping							
18	Prosperity & Development	Capital Projects	To provide assurance for a sample of Capital Projects that appropriate arrangements to procure and manage projects are in place and that any slippage is appropriately accounted for, monitored and reported	High	Planned							
19	Prosperity & Development	School Transport	To review the arrangements in place for awarding contracts and monitoring costs, and provide assurance of the arrangements in place for the provision of School Transport	High	Planned							

Ref	Directorate	Area	Audit Scope / Risk	Priority	Status	Audit Opinion / Assurance				Recommendations		
						Substantial	Reasonable	Limited	No	High	Medium	Low
20	Prosperity & Development	Recycling & Waste	To review the processes in place within RCT for the provision of recycling bags and recycling bins, and undertake a comparable exercise with other Welsh Councils for information purposes. To ensure there are robust procedures in place for any charges relating to the purchase of bags and to undertake a review of the collection and banking of income	Medium	Planned							
21	Prosperity & Development	Highways - Transfer of Waste	To review the process for the receipt of waste, management of waste and contractual arrangements for the transfer of waste at Council depots	High	Draft Report Issued							
22	Prosperity & Development	Parking Enforcement	To undertake a review of the administrative back office functions for providing parking within the Council, and on behalf of other Council's and provide assurance to Management that the internal controls and processes in place are effective	Medium	Complete	√				0	0	0
23	Community & Children's Services	Carers Assessments	To review the support available to carers to enable them to fulfil their caring duties and review the provisions in place to support those who have a caring role and the assessment / payments available	Medium	In Progress							
24	Community & Children's Services	Deputyship & Appointeeships	To provide assurance that the systems and controls surrounding the management of Deputyship accounts are robust and that they are operated in line with regulations/guidance/policy in order to protect the individual and Council	High	In Progress							
25	Community & Children's Services	Respite Services	To undertake a review of Respite Services and provide assurance that the internal controls and financial procedures in place are effective	High	Planned							
26	Community & Children's Services	Adaption & Community Equipment (ACE)	To review the processes in place and provide assurance on the internal controls and arrangements for the management of caseloads, assessment process and prioritisation of referrals	Medium	Planned							
27	Community & Children's Services	Adult Care & Support Services	To review the arrangements for waiting lists, referrals, long term planning and reporting arrangements in respect of Adult Care and Support Services	High	Planned							
28	Community & Children's Services	Contract Management Placements	To undertake a review of the controls and process in place in respect of Contract Management Placements and provide assurance to Management that these are effective and subject to regular review	High	Scoping							
29	Community & Children's Services	Adoption Support & Foster Carer Payments Follow Up	To undertake a follow up review and provide assurance that all recommendations contained within the previous audit report have been fully implemented	High	Planned							
30	Community & Children's Services	Referrals to Children's Social Care	To review the process in place for referrals to children's social care and provide assurance that arrangements are in place for management of the prioritisation of referrals, assessment of need, waiting lists and escalation/reporting arrangements	High	Planned							
31	Community & Children's Services	Llwydcoed Crematorium	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place. This annual review also informs the Annual Governance Statement and certification of the Small Bodies Return	Low	Planned							
32	Community & Children's Services	Temporary Housing Solutions	To determine compliance with the Statutory Duty and provide assurance on the procedures in place to identify, allocate and prioritise cases linked to the availability of housing solutions	High	Scoping							
33	Education & Inclusion Services	Education Safeguarding Arrangements - Capita One	To undertake a follow up audit and provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place following the previously issued consultancy audit report	High	Planned							
34	Education & Inclusion Services	Evolve - Compliance with Procedures for Recording School Visits	To provide assurance that consistent and accurate procedures are being followed within schools and these are compliant with requirements for recording off site visits in schools	High	Planned							
35	Education & Inclusion Services	Sickness Absence Protocols & Recording in Schools	To assess compliance with the new system requirements and provide assurance that absences are being recorded accurately, timely and in accordance with Council Policy	High	Planned							
36	Education & Inclusion Services	Attendance	To review the processes in place for recording, reporting and monitoring sixth form attendance	High	Draft Report Issued							
37	Education & Inclusion Services	School Admissions	To provide assurance there are effective arrangements in place to manage school admissions and there is a clear and transparent trail in the decision making process	High	Planned							
38	Education & Inclusion Services	Step 4 Provisions	To review the bidding and awarding process in place for obtaining alternative curriculum funding and review the termly monitoring arrangements in place	Medium	Scoping							
39	Education & Inclusion Services	Additional Learning Needs - Implementation of the Reduced Timetable Policy	To provide assurance that effective arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate additional learning needs services, with specific reference to the implementation of the Reduced Timetable Policy	High	Planned							
40	Education & Inclusion Services	Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit - Follow Up	To undertake a follow up review and ensure that all recommendations contained within the previous audit report have been fully implemented	High	Planned							

Ref	Directorate	Area	Audit Scope / Risk	Priority	Status	Audit Opinion / Assurance				Recommendations		
						Substantial	Reasonable	Limited	No	High	Medium	Low
41	Education & Inclusion Services	Park Lane Special School - Follow Up	To undertake a follow up review and ensure that all recommendations contained within the previous audit report have been fully implemented	Medium	Complete		√			1	4	2
42	Education & Inclusion Services	Ysgol Ty Coch	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Complete		√			1	7	2
43	Education & Inclusion Services	Special School Self Assessment Programme & Annual Report	To collate information and prepare the annual information report relating to the self assessment process	Medium	Planned							
44	Education & Inclusion Services	Ffynon Taf Primary School	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Complete	√				0	1	0
45	Education & Inclusion Services	Cymmer Primary School	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Complete	√				0	3	1
46	Education & Inclusion Services	Maesybryn Primary School	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Complete	√				0	2	0
47	Education & Inclusion Services	Penywaun Community Primary	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Scoping							
48	Education & Inclusion Services	St Margaret's RC Primary	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Under Review							
49	Education & Inclusion Services	YGG Evan James	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Complete	√				0	0	2
50	Education & Inclusion Services	YGG Llyn y Forwyn	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Planned							
51	Education & Inclusion Services	YGG Pontsionnorton	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Planned							
52	Education & Inclusion Services	YGG Ynyswen	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Planned							
53	Education & Inclusion Services	Abercynon Community Primary	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Planned							
54	Education & Inclusion Services	Aberdare Park Primary	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Planned							
55	Education & Inclusion Services	Abernant Primary School	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Planned							
56	Education & Inclusion Services	Blaengwawr Community Primary	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Complete	√				0	1	3
57	Education & Inclusion Services	Coed Y Lan Primary School	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	Medium	Planned							
58	Education & Inclusion Services	Primary School Self Assessment Programme & Annual Report	To collate information and prepare the annual information report relating to the self assessment process	Medium	Planned							
59	Education & Inclusion Services	Hawthorn High School - Follow Up	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	High	Draft Report Issued							
60	Education & Inclusion Services	Ferndale Community School	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	High	In Progress							
61	Education & Inclusion Services	Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place at the school	High	In Progress							
62	Education & Inclusion Services	Comprehensive/All Through School Self Assessment Programme & Annual Report	To collate information and prepare the annual information report relating to the self assessment process	Medium	Planned							

Ref	Directorate	Area	Audit Scope / Risk	Priority	Status	Audit Opinion / Assurance				Recommendations		
						Substantial	Reasonable	Limited	No	High	Medium	Low
63	Education & Inclusion Services	RCT - Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)	Under the conditions of the specific grant determination, the Head of Audit must certify that the conditions of the grant have been complied with	High	Complete	√				0	1	0
64	Education & Inclusion Services	RCT - Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG)	Under the conditions of the specific grant determination, the Head of Audit must certify that the conditions of the grant have been complied with	High	Cancelled							
65	Education & Inclusion Services	RCT - Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	Under the conditions of the specific grant determination, the Head of Audit must certify that the conditions of the grant have been complied with	High	Cancelled							
66	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Performance Management Arrangements	To review the delivery planning process in place for informing future planning and provide assurance on the adequacy of delivery plans, quarterly planning and reporting arrangements	High	Planned SWAP							
67	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Anti Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Arrangements	To undertake proactive work at the request of Management in respect of anti fraud, bribery & corruption	High	Planned							
68	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Fuel Usage, Control & Monitoring	To review the internal controls in place for the receipt, secure storage, usage and reconciliation of fuel at Council Depots and provide assurance that robust measures are in place	High	Complete		√			0	1	0
69	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Corporate Risks	To select a sample of strategic risks and provide assurance on how these are being managed and undertake a follow up review to ensure that all recommendations contained in the previous Risk Management audit report have been fully implemented	High	Planned							
70	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements	To undertake an assessment of the Council's overall operating model for safeguarding and evaluate the Council's safeguarding performance.	High	Complete		√			0	1	2
71	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks	To provide assurance that DBS checks are undertaken for all posts where there is a statutory requirement, ensure consistency across the Council for undertaking DBS checks where there is no statutory obligation and review the policies and procedures for safer recruitment for compliance with legislation, new starters and process for renewals	High	Scoping							
72	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Corporate Dashboard	To provide assurance that the integrity of source data used to inform the Corporate Dashboard can be relied on for information and reporting, and the quality assurance arrangements for ensuring the accuracy of data on or at data source	Medium	Planned							
73	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Corporate Complaints	To provide assurance on the process for collecting information and accuracy of data reported to Governance and Audit Committee in respect of Corporate Complaints	Medium	Planned							
74	Cross Cutting / Whole Authority Arrangements	Test, Trace, Protect (TTP)	To review the arrangements in place for the transition of staff and equipment and provide assurance that this has been done effectively and that appropriate handover procedures have been followed and all equipment / assets are accounted for	High	Planned							
75	Central South Consortium Joint Education Services (CSC)	CSC - Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RSIG)	Under the conditions of the specific grant determination, the Head of Audit must certify that the conditions of the grant have been complied with.	High	Complete	√				0	0	0
76	Central South Consortium Joint Education Services (CSC)	CSC - RSIG - Consolidated Statement	Under the conditions of the specific grant determination, the Head of Audit must certify that the conditions of the grant have been complied with.	High	Complete	√				0	0	0
77	Central South Consortium Joint Education Services (CSC)	CSC - Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	Under the conditions of the specific grant determination, the Head of Audit must certify that the conditions of the grant have been complied with.	High	Complete	√				0	0	0
78	Central South Consortium Joint Education Services (CSC)	CSC - PDG - Consolidated Statement	Under the conditions of the specific grant determination, the Head of Audit must certify that the conditions of the grant have been complied with.	High	Complete	√				0	0	0
79	Central South Consortium Joint Education Services (CSC)	CSC - General Ledger	To review and conclude on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in operation in respect of the CSC General Ledger function	Medium	Planned							
80	South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC)	Small Bodies Return Assurance Work	To provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control, governance and risk management arrangements in place. This review also informs the certification of the Small Bodies Return	High	Complete		√			0	0	0
81	Amgen	Amgen - Payroll	To review and conclude on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in operation in respect of the Amgen Payroll function	Medium	Planned							
82	Amgen	Amgen - Debtors	To review and conclude on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in operation in respect of the Amgen Debtors function	Medium	Planned							
83	Amgen	Amgen - Creditors	To review and conclude on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in operation in respect of the Amgen Creditors function	Medium	Planned							
84	Amgen	Amgen - General Ledger	To review and conclude on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls in operation in respect of the Amgen General Ledger function	Medium	Planned							



Ref	Directorate	Area	Audit Scope / Risk	Priority	Status	Audit Opinion / Assurance				Recommendations		
						Substantial	Reasonable	Limited	No	High	Medium	Low
85	Amgen	Review of Arms Length Companies & Governance Arrangements	To provide assurance that any changes made by the Amgen Board to operational procedures following a review of the recommendations contained within the Silent valley Waste Report, are effective and compliant	High	Planned							
86	Internal Audit Reporting	Annual Governance Statement	The completion of the Council's Annual Governance Statement and submission to Governance and Audit Committee	High	Complete							
87	Internal Audit Reporting	Annual Opinion Report (HIA)	Preparation for the production of the 2021/22 Annual Opinion Report	High	Complete							
88	Internal Audit Reporting	Audit Charter & Manual	To review and update the documents as required	High	Complete							
89	Internal Audit Reporting	Governance & Audit Committee	To prepare and present internal audit reports to Governance and Audit Committee	High	In Progress							
90	Internal Audit Reporting	Audit Planning	To prepare and present the annual risk based plan for 2022/23	High	Complete							
91	Internal Audit Reporting	Closure of Reports from 21/22	To finalise all draft reports and work in progress at the end of 2021/22	High	In Progress							
92	Internal Audit Reporting	Recommendation Monitoring	Monitoring the implementation of internal audit recommendations in consultation with the service areas where recommendations have been made. During the year, Internal Audit will review the process to ensure recommendations are followed up and reported upon to Governance and Audit Committee in a timely, efficient and effective manner	High	In Progress							
93	Internal Audit Reporting	Audit Wales Liaison	To ensure that a 'managed' approach is followed in relation to the provision of internal audit and external audit services	High	In Progress							
94	Internal Audit Reporting	Fraud and Error Contingency	To undertake reactive work where suspected irregularity has been detected	High	In Progress							
95	Internal Audit Reporting	Advice & Guidance	To allow auditors to facilitate the provision of risk and control advice which is regularly requested by officers of the Council, including school based staff	High	In Progress							
96	Internal Audit Reporting	Public Sector Internal Audit Service (PSIAS) Compliance	To review compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards	High	In Progress							
97	Internal Audit Reporting	Emerging Risks / Special Investigations	To enable audit services to flexibly respond to provide assurance as required	High	In Progress							
<b>OVERALL TOTALS WHERE AN AUDIT OPINION HAS BEEN PROVIDED</b>						<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

<b>GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>  7 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	<b>AGENDA ITEM NO. 9</b>
<b>REPORT OF HEAD OF THE REGIONAL INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE</b>	<b>INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS 2022/23</b>

Author: Mark Thomas (Head of Regional Internal Audit Service) & Lisa Cumpston (Audit Manager)

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

- 1.1 This report provides members of the Governance and Audit Committee with a position statement on internal audit recommendations made, implemented and outstanding.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Governance and Audit Committee:
- Consider the information provided in respect of the status of internal audit recommendations made; and
  - Review the information contained within the report and provide feedback on the content and format of the information provided.

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

- 3.1 To help ensure that the Governance and Audit Committee monitors the performance of the Council's Internal Audit Service, in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the internal audit activity must assess and make appropriate recommendations to improve the Council's governance, risk management and internal control. The Regional Internal Audit Service Strategy states that the implementation of agreed recommendations will be monitored.
- 4.2 Recommendations are made at the conclusion of an audit review if it is felt that improvements should be made to mitigate risk and strengthen controls. Recommendations are included, if appropriate, in the final audit report and recipients are asked to provide Management Responses to indicate whether they agree with the recommendations and how they plan to implement them. To assist Managers in focussing their attention, each recommendation is classified as being either High, Medium or Low priority.
- 4.3 Table 1 shows the recommendation categorisation as follows:

<b>Table 1 – Recommendation Categorisation</b>	
Risk may be viewed as the chance, or probability, of one or more of the organisation's objectives not being met. It refers both to unwanted outcomes which might arise, and to the potential failure to realise desired results. The criticality of each recommendation is as follows:	
<b>High Priority</b>	Action that is considered imperative to ensure that the organisation is not exposed to high risks.
<b>Medium Priority</b>	Action that is considered necessary to avoid exposure to significant risks.
<b>Low Priority</b>	Action that is considered desirable and should result in enhanced control.

- 4.4 Once the target date for implementation has been reached the relevant Officers are contacted and asked to provide feedback on the status of each agreed recommendation. The implementation of these recommendations is monitored using MK Insight internal audit software to ensure that improvements are being made.
- 4.5 Any audits concluded with a no assurance or limited assurance opinion will be subject to a follow up audit.
- 4.6 As this is the first recommendation monitoring report brought to this Committee, the report at **Appendix A** provides a summary of the status, at as 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022, of all recommendations made by Internal Audit since the implementation of the MK Insight internal audit software on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Moving forward it is suggested that only outstanding recommendations from previous years be included together with the recommendations made in the current year.

- 4.7 The report at **Appendix A** summarises the internal audit recommendations made, implemented and overdue relating to areas reviewed during 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 4.8 Members will note that a total of 142 recommendations were made to improve the control environment of the areas reviewed during 2021/22 and to date 35 have been made in 2022/23. There was 1 recommendation made during 2021/22 which was not accepted by the service area as Management considered that they complied with the recommendation that staff sign their timesheets in most instances but there were occasions when it was not possible to comply due to staff being absent, therefore they did not consider it was appropriate to remind staff of this requirement.
- 4.9 **Appendix A** illustrates that as of 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022, 127 recommendations made in 2021/22 have been implemented, while 14 have target dates in the future. There are no overdue recommendations to report to date in respect of 2021/22.
- 4.10 Of the 35 recommendations made to date in 2022/23, **Appendix A** illustrates that 24 have been implemented, and 11 have a future target date. All have been accepted by Management.
- 4.11 The information contained in **Appendix A** has been compiled from the internal audit software system. Views from the Committee are sought in respect of the content and details provided. Similar reports have been presented to the other 3 Governance and Audit Committees that comprise the regional service and once feedback from all is obtained a standard report will be commissioned.

## **5. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY & SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

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

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

- 7.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report, but effective audit planning and monitoring are key contributors in ensuring that the Council's assets and interests are properly accounted for and safeguarded.

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

- 8.1 The provision of an adequate and effective Internal Audit function is a legal requirement under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations

2018.

- 8.2 Regulation 7 (Internal Audit) of Part 3 of the 2018 Regulations directs that: “A *relevant body must maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control.*”

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

### **9.1 THE COUNCIL’S CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITIES**

The work of Internal Audit aims to support the delivery of the priorities contained within the Council’s Corporate Plan 2020-2024 “Making a Difference”, in particular ‘Living Within Our Means’ through ensuring that appropriate internal controls are in place to effectively manage resources.

### **9.2 WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT / FIVE WAYS OF WORKING**

The wellbeing goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of wellbeing goals/objectives as a result of this report.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 Monitoring the performance of Internal Audit is a key responsibility for the Governance and Audit Committee. This report provides Members with detailed information relating to audit recommendations made by the Internal Audit Service, with which the performance of the Service can be reviewed and scrutinised.

### **Other Information:-**

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

**Not applicable.**

**Contact Officer** – Mark Thomas (Head of Regional Internal Audit Service)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT, 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

**HEAD OF REGIONAL INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE**

Author: Mark Thomas (Head of Regional Audit Service) & Lisa Cumpston (Audit Manager)

**Item: 9**

**Background Papers**

None.

Officer to contact: Mark Thomas (Head of Regional Internal Audit Service)  
Lisa Cumpston (Audit Manager)

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Appendix A - Status of Internal Audit Recommendations RCTCBC

Audit Name	Audit Opinion	Final Report Date	Number Made				Not Agreed	Implemented Total	Outstanding				Future Target Date Total
			High	Medium	Low	Total			High	Medium	Low	Total	
<b>2021/22</b>													
Adoption Support & Foster Carer Payments	LIMITED	31/01/22	0	6	2	8	0	5	0	0	0	0	3
WCCIS	REASONABLE	18/08/22	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit - Follow Up	LIMITED	17/12/21	6	6	0	12	0	12	0	0	0	0	0
Alaw Primary School	SUBSTANTIAL	18/08/21	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Amgen - Creditors	SUBSTANTIAL	08/06/22	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Amgen - Payroll	SUBSTANTIAL	08/06/22	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prevention Payments	REASONABLE	06/01/22	0	1	3	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Penderyn Community Primary	SUBSTANTIAL	22/06/22	0	2	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	REASONABLE	24/05/22	2	6	1	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0
Budgetary Control - School Deficit Recovery Protocols	SUBSTANTIAL	15/10/21	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Building Control	REASONABLE	05/07/22	1	3	1	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Cefn Primary School	REASONABLE	11/11/21	2	4	2	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
Operation of the Primary School Sickness Scheme	REASONABLE	08/11/21	0	1	2	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Park Lane Special School	LIMITED	21/09/21	4	9	3	16	0	16	0	0	0	0	0
Cilfynydd Primary School	SUBSTANTIAL	20/09/21	1	1	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Coedpenmaen Primary School	REASONABLE	07/09/21	3	6	3	12	0	11	0	0	0	0	1
Community Recycling Centres	LIMITED	20/10/22	2	2	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Corporate Landlord Compliance	REASONABLE	08/07/22	0	3	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Craig yr Hesg Primary School	REASONABLE	11/11/21	2	1	2	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Cwmbach Church in Wales Primary School	REASONABLE	13/12/21	1	6	2	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0
Distribution of Devices to Digitally Excluded Learners	SUBSTANTIAL	25/01/22	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Dolau Primary School	SUBSTANTIAL	25/01/22	1	2	2	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Governor Support - Provision of Governing Body Information	REASONABLE	24/03/22	3	2	1	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Income Management Arrangements	SUBSTANTIAL	21/01/22	0	3	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	1
Llwydcoed Crematorium	REASONABLE	23/05/22	0	8	0	8	0	7	0	0	0	0	1
Llantrisant Primary School	SUBSTANTIAL	27/01/22	0	2	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Overall Totals 2021/22</b>			<b>28</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>

Audit Name	Audit Opinion	Final Report Date	Number Made				Not Agreed	Implemented Total	Outstanding				Future Target Date Total
			High	Medium	Low	Total			High	Medium	Low	Total	
<b>2022/23</b>													
Maesybryn Primary School	SUBSTANTIAL	07/09/22	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Park Lane Special School - Follow Up	REASONABLE	14/09/22	1	4	2	7	0	5	0	0	0	0	2
RCT - Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)	SUBSTANTIAL	22/11/22	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Small Bodies Return	SUBSTANTIAL	15/06/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost of Living Payments - Administration of the WG Scheme	SUBSTANTIAL	16/09/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CSC - Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG)	SUBSTANTIAL	28/09/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CSC - Pupil Development Grant (PDG)	SUBSTANTIAL	28/09/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CSC - Pupil Development Grant Consolidated Statement (PDG)	SUBSTANTIAL	12/10/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CSC - Consolidated Statement (RCSIG)	SUBSTANTIAL	12/10/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Parking Enforcement	SUBSTANTIAL	14/11/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements	REASONABLE	23/08/22	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Ffynnon Taf Primary School	SUBSTANTIAL	18/10/22	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fuel Usage, Control & Monitoring	REASONABLE	10/11/22	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cymmer Primary School	SUBSTANTIAL	28/09/22	0	1	3	4	0	3	0	0	0	0	1
Blaengwawr Community Primary	SUBSTANTIAL	12/10/22	0	1	3	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
Ysgol Ty Coch	REASONABLE	15/09/22	1	6	3	10	0	8	0	0	0	0	2
YGG Evan James	SUBSTANTIAL	22/09/22	0	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Overall Totals 2022/23</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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