

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

GWŶS I GYFARFOD PWYLLGOR

C Hanagan
Cyfarwyddwr Materion Cyfathrebu a Phennaeth Dros Dro'r Gwasanaethau
Llywodraethol
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf
Y Pafiliynau Parc Hen Lofa'r Cambrian
Cwm Clydach, CF40 2XX

Dolen gyswllt: Julia Nicholls - Gwasanaethau Democraidd (01443 424098)

DYMA WŶS I CHI i gyfarfod rhithwir o **GYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL RHONDDA CYNON TAF** sydd i'w gynnal ar **DYDD MERCHER, 17 Ionawr 2024** am **5pm**

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

AMSER	EITEM	TUDALEN(N AU)
5 Munud	EITEM 1. DATGAN BUDDIANT Derbyn datganiadau o fuddiannau personol gan Aelodau yn unol â'r Cod Ymddygiad. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mae gofyn i Aelodau ddatgan rhif a phwnc yr agendwm y mae eu buddiant yn ymwneud ag e a mynegi natur y buddiant personol hwnnw; a2. Lle bo Aelodau'n ymneilltuo o'r cyfarfod o ganlyniad i ddatgelu buddiant sy'n rhagfarnu, rhaid iddyn nhw roi gwybod i'r Cadeirydd pan fyddan nhw'n gadael.	
5 Munud	EITEM 2. COFNODION Cadarnhau cofnodion o gyfarfod ar-lein y Cyngor, a gynhaliwyd ar 29 Tachwedd 2023, yn rhai cywir	5 - 18
5 Munud	EITEM 3. CYHOEDDIADAU	
LLYWODRAETHU AGORED:		
10 Munud	EITEM 4. DATGANIADAU Yn unol â Rheol 2 o Weithdrefn Llywodraethu Agored Cyfarfodydd y Cyngor, derbyn datganiadau gan Arweinydd y Cyngor a/neu Gynghorwyr sy'n Aelodau Portffolio o'r Cabinet:	

20 Munud	EITEM 5. CWESTIYNAU GAN YR AELODAU Derbyn cwestiynau'r Aelodau yn unol â Rheol 9.2 o Weithdrefn y Cyngor.	19 - 28
RHAGLEN WAITH Y CYNGOR – ER GWYBODAETH I AELODAU		
Rhaglen Waith y Cyngor 2023-2024		
ADRODDIADAU'R SWYDDOGION		
20 Munud	EITEM 6. CYLLIDEB REFENIW'R CYNGOR 2024/25 - SETLIAD LLYWODRAETH LEOL DROS DRO Rhoi gwybodaeth i'r Aelodau mewn perthynas â Setliad Llywodraeth Leol Dros Dro 2024/25.	29 - 40
10 Munud	EITEM 7. ADRODDIAD BLYNYDDOL DEDDF YR EGLWYS YNG NGHYMRU AC ADRODDIAD ARCHWILIO ALLANOL Derbyn adroddiad y Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr a Chyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cyllid, Digidol a Rheng Flaen.	41 - 100
10 Munud	EITEM 8. CYNLLUN GOSTYNGIADAU TRETH Y CYNGOR Derbyn adroddiad y Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr a Chyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cyllid, Digidol a Rheng Flaen.	101 - 110
10 Munud	EITEM 9. CYNLLUN DATBLYGU LLEOL DIWYGIEDIG RHONDDA CYNON TAF 2022-2037 - Y STRATEGAETH A FFEFRIR Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu.	111 - 204
10 Munud	EITEM 10. ADOLYGIAD O DDOSBARTH AU ETHOLIADOL, MANNAU PLEIDLEISIO A GORSAFOEDD PLEIDLEISIO 2023 Derbyn adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Llywodraethol.	205 - 218
10 Munud	EITEM 11. HUNANASESIAD BLYNYDDOL DRAFFT 2022/23 (CYNWYS ADRODDIAD CYFLAWNIAD CORFFORAETHOL Y CYNGOR) Derbyn adroddiad y Prif Weithredwr.	219 - 280
45 Munud	EITEM 12. RHYBUDD O GYNNIG Ystyried y Rhybuddion o Gynnig sydd wedi'u cyflwyno yn unol â Rheol Gweithdrefn y Cyngor 10.1 yn y cyfansoddiad.	281 - 286
	EITEM 13. MATERION BRYD Trafod unrhyw faterion sydd, yn ôl doethineb y Cadeirydd, yn faterion bryd yng ngoleuni amgylchiadau arbennig.	

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu

At: Pob Aelod o'r Cyngor

tudalen wag

PWYLLGOR CYNGOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF CYNGOR

Cofnodion o gyfarfod rhithwir y Cyngor a gynhaliwyd Dydd Mercher, 29 Tachwedd 2023 am 5.00 pm.

Cafodd y cyfarfod yma ei ddarlledu'n fyw, ac mae modd gweld y manylion [yma](#)

Y Cyngorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol – Roedd y Cyngorwyr canlynol yn bresennol yn Siambr y Cyngor:-

Y Cyngorydd G Hughes (Cadeirydd)

Y Cyngorydd S Evans	Y Cyngorydd B Stephens
Y Cyngorydd M Ashford	Y Cyngorydd J Barton
Y Cyngorydd R Bevan	Y Cyngorydd P Binning
Y Cyngorydd J Bonetto	Y Cyngorydd S Bradwick
Y Cyngorydd J Brencher	Y Cyngorydd G Caple
Y Cyngorydd J Cook	Y Cyngorydd A Crimmings
Y Cyngorydd S J Davies	Y Cyngorydd R Davis
Y Cyngorydd A Dennis	Y Cyngorydd E L Dunning
Y Cyngorydd J Edwards	Y Cyngorydd L Ellis
Y Cyngorydd S Emanuel	Y Cyngorydd P Evans
Y Cyngorydd A Fox	Y Cyngorydd D Grehan
Y Cyngorydd B Harris	Y Cyngorydd S Hickman
Y Cyngorydd G Holmes	Y Cyngorydd G Hopkins
Y Cyngorydd W Hughes	Y Cyngorydd K Johnson
Y Cyngorydd G O Jones	Y Cyngorydd W Jones
Y Cyngorydd R Lewis	Y Cyngorydd W Lewis
Y Cyngorydd C Leyshon	Y Cyngorydd C Lises
Y Cyngorydd M Maohoub	Y Cyngorydd C Middle
Y Cyngorydd A Morgan	Y Cyngorydd K Morgan
Y Cyngorydd N H Morgan	Y Cyngorydd S Morgans
Y Cyngorydd W Owen	Y Cyngorydd Owen-Jones
Y Cyngorydd M Norris	Y Cyngorydd M Powell
Y Cyngorydd C Preedy	Y Cyngorydd S Rees
Y Cyngorydd A Roberts	Y Cyngorydd A O Rogers
Y Cyngorydd J Smith	Y Cyngorydd G Stacey
Y Cyngorydd L A Tomkinson	Y Cyngorydd S Trask
Y Cyngorydd W Treeby	Y Cyngorydd J Turner
Y Cyngorydd G L Warren	Y Cyngorydd M Webber
Y Cyngorydd D Williams	Y Cyngorydd R Williams
Y Cyngorydd T Williams	Y Cyngorydd D Wood
Y Cyngorydd R Yeo	

Swyddogion oedd yn bresennol

Mr B Davies, Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr ac Chyfarwyddwr Cyfadran - Cyllid, Gwasanaethau Digidol a Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen

Mr R Evans, Cyfarwyddwr - Materion Adnoddau Dynol

Mr C Hanagan, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democraataidd a Chyfathrebu

Mr A Wilkins, Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol

Ymddiheuriadu am absenoldeb

Y Cyngorydd L Addiscott	Y Cyngorydd V Dunn
Y Cyngorydd J Elliott	Y Cyngorydd A J Ellis
Y Cyngorydd S.Evans	Y Cyngorydd H Gronow
Y Cyngorydd G Jones	Y Cyngorydd D Parkin
Y Cyngorydd S Powderhill	Y Cyngorydd K Webb
Y Cyngorydd G E Williams	

66 Croeso

Croesawodd y Llywydd yr Aelodau i gyfarfod ar-lein y Cyngor.

67 Datgan Buddiant

Yn unol â Chod Ymddygiad y Cyngor, cafodd y datganiadau o fuddiant canlynol eu gwneud ynglŷn â'r agenda a chafodd datganiadau (viii a ix) eu gwneud ynglŷn ag eitem 6 ar yr agenda yn ddiweddarach yn y cyfarfod (Cofnod 75):

Eitem 9 ar yr Agenda – Rhybudd o Gynnig (Menywod yn Erbyn Anghyfiawnder Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth)

- (i) Y Cyngorydd J Barton – “Rwy’n cael fy effeithio gan y newidiadau i oedran Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth i fenywod a anwyd yn y 1950au, fel y nodir yn y Rhybudd o Gynnig”.
- (ii) Y Cyngorydd J Brencher – “Rwy’n cael fy effeithio gan y newidiadau i oedran Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth i fenywod a anwyd yn y 1950au, fel y nodir yn y Rhybudd o Gynnig”.
- (iii) Y Cyngorydd R Davis – “Rwy’n cael fy effeithio gan y newidiadau i oedran Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth i fenywod a anwyd yn y 1950au, fel y nodir yn y Rhybudd o Gynnig”.
- (iv) Y Cyngorydd S Rees – “Rwy’n cael fy effeithio gan y newidiadau i oedran Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth i fenywod a anwyd yn y 1950au, fel y nodir yn y Rhybudd o Gynnig”.
- (v) Y Cyngorydd J Smith – “Rwy’n cael fy effeithio gan y newidiadau i oedran Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth i fenywod a anwyd yn y 1950au, fel y nodir yn y Rhybudd o Gynnig”.
- (vi) Y Cyngorydd W Treeby – “Rwy’n cael fy effeithio gan y newidiadau i oedran Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth i fenywod a anwyd yn y 1950au, fel y nodir yn y Rhybudd o Gynnig”.
- (vii) Y Cyngorydd M Webber – “Rwy’n cael fy effeithio gan y newidiadau i oedran Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth i fenywod a anwyd yn y 1950au, fel y nodir yn y Rhybudd o Gynnig”.

Eitem 6 - Datganiad o Gyfrifon ac Adroddiadau Archwilio ar gyfer CBS Rhondda Cynon Taf a Chronfa Bensiwn Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022/23

(viii) Y Cyngorydd J Brencher – “Mae fy mab yn gweithio i Trafnidiaeth Cymru”

(ix) Y Cyngorydd K Johnson – “Rwy'n gweithio i Trafnidiaeth Cymru”

68 Cofnodion

PENDERFYNODD y Cyngor gymeradwyo cofnodion cyfarfod y Cyngor a gynhaliwyd ar 25 Hydref 2023 yn rhai cywir yn amodol ar nodi bod cyfenw'r Cyngorydd G Hopkins wedi'i gamsillafu.

69 Cyhoeddiadau

Cafodd y cyhoeddiadau canlynol eu gwneud:

- Talodd y Cyngorydd R Lewis deyrnged i Richard Jones, a fu farw'n ddiweddar. Roedd Richard yn gymeriad adnabyddus yng Nghwm Cynon, yn eiriolwr angerddol dros hawliau pobl anabl ac yn gweithio i hyrwyddo hygyrchedd. Bu'n Gadeirydd Amgueddfa Cwm Cynon ac ACT (Accessible Caring Transport), yn ogystal â sefydlu'i elusen hygyrchedd ei hun. Roedd e'n Gyngorydd Cymuned ar Gyngor Cymuned Hirwaun a Phenderyn. Roedd e bob amser yn awyddus i helpu eraill ac yn adnabyddus am ei synnwyr digrifwch. Cafodd Richard ei gefnogi gan ei deulu drwy gydol ei oes, a daeth y Cyngorydd Lewis i ben drwy ddweud y bydd colled ar ôl Richard Jones.
- Roedd y Cyngorydd K Morgan hefyd yn dymuno talu teyrnged i Richard Jones, a oedd yn hyrwyddwr llawer o achosion eraill, gyda'r rhan fwyaf o'r rheiny'n canolbwyntio ar sicrhau chwarae teg i bawb. Gweithiodd y Cyngorydd Morgan ochr yn ochr â Richard yn ei rôl gyda Cymru Hygyrch, ac yn ystod y gwaith hwn daeth yn ymwybodol o ba mor aml yr oedd Richard yn wynebu rhwystrau yn ei fywyd bob dydd. Gorffennodd y Cyngorydd Morgan drwy ddweud mai dyma yw ein hetifeddiaeth gan Richard, y cyfle i ni weld y rhwystrau mae pobl yn eu hwynebu a chael gwared arnyn nhw. Roedd y Cyngorydd Morgan yn dymuno estyn ei chydymdeimlad i deulu Richard.
- Talodd y Cyngorydd W Hughes deyrnged i aelod hirsefydlog o'r blaid Lafur a Chyn-gyngorydd Trealaw, Bill Murphy, a fu farw ar 2 Tachwedd 2023. Roedd e'n aelod uchel ei barch o Gymuned Trealaw. Cafodd ei ethol yn Gyngorydd ar ward Trealaw ym 1983, a bu'n Aelod o'r Cyngor tan 1999. Yn ystod y cyfnod yma, roedd yn Ddirprwy Arweinydd ac Arweinydd ar y Grŵp Llafur ac ar Gyngor Bwrdeistref Cwm Rhondda. Fe hefyd oedd Arweinydd cyntaf Cyngor RhCT. Bu'n eistedd ar lawer o bwyllgorau a chyrrff llywodraethu ysgolion. Roedd y Cyngorydd Hughes yn dymuno estyn ei gydymdeimlad i wraig Bill, Barbara, a'i deulu.
- Talodd y Cyngorydd G Caple deyrnged i gyn AS y Rhondda, Allan Rogers, a fu farw ddoe yn 91 oed. Daeth yn AS y Rhondda ym 1983 a bu yn ei swydd tan 2001. Roedd ei ymrwymiad i'w gymunedau, gan

gynnwys ei gefnogaeth barhaus i'r glöwyr, heb ei ail. Soniodd y Cynghorydd Caple am ei fuddugoliaethau etholiadol, gan orffen gyda pherfformiad trawiadol o'r Fanner Goch. Treuliodd oes ym myd gwleidyddiaeth, yn Gyngorydd, AS ac yn aelod o Senedd Ewrop. Roedd bob amser yn annog eraill i gefnogi achos y Llywodraeth Lafur trwy wleidyddiaeth. Bu'n gweithio fel daearegwr mwyngloddio, swydd a aeth ag ef ledled y byd. Estynnodd y Cynghorydd Caple ei gydymdeimlad â theulu Allan.

Arweiniodd y Llywydd y Cyngor mewn munud o dawelwch er cof am y tri phreswlydd crybwylledig a fu farw yn ddiweddar.

- Cyhoeddodd y Cynghorydd J Brencher fod ymweliad diwylliannol wedi'i gynnal gan grŵp o ymwelwyr, gan gynnwys Brenin Buganda, yn ddiweddar. Roedd hwn yn gyfle i'r ymwelwyr ddod i'r fwrdeistref sirol a diolch i drigolion RhCT am eu gwaith o ran mynd i'r afael â thlodi a lleihau cyfraddau marwolaethau drwy PONT. Diolchodd y Cynghorydd Brencher i Faer Rhondda Cynon Taf a phawb a fu'n rhan o drefnu'r ymweliad.

70 Datganiadau

Gwnaeth Arweinydd y Cyngor, y Cynghorydd A Morgan OBE, ddatganiad mewn perthynas â chyllideb y Cyngor a chanlyniad siomedig Datganiad yr Hydref. Bydd Llywodraeth Cymru yn cael £305m yn ychwanegol ond hyd yn oed gyda'r cyllid ychwanegol, mae cynghorau yn wynebu blwyddyn anodd iawn i ddod. Mewn termau real, mae hyn yn debygol o fod yn £41m yn unig, sy'n briodoli i newidiadau o ran Ardrethi Busnes a gyhoeddodd y Canghellor yn flaenorol, a thua £4 miliwn wedi'i neilltuo i fynd i'r afael â thyllau yn y ffordd. Mynegodd yr Arweinydd ei siom enbyd yn y canlyniad, er gwaethaf pryderon a gafodd eu dwyn i sylw Llywodraeth San Steffan ynghylch y pwysau ar Ysgolion, Gofal Cymdeithasol a'r GIG.

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd bydd y cyllid refeniw craidd ar gyfer llywodraeth leol yn 2024-25 yn cynyddu o 3.1% ond fod y Cyngor yn debygol o weld cynnydd llai na 3% oherwydd poblogaeth y fwrdeistref sirol a newidiadau yn y fformiwla, a fydd yn rhagolwg anodd iawn. Ychwanegodd fod Swyddogion yn gweithio'n galed yn y cefndir i nodi lle mae modd gwneud arbedion.

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod chwech ar hugain o awdurdodau lleol yn Lloegr yn wynebu hysbysiad 114 yn ystod y 12 mis nesaf, sy'n golygu y byddan nhw'n cael eu gorfodi i ddatgan methdaliad ariannol heb unrhyw arian wrth gefn/arbedion, a fyddai'n golygu bod dim modd iddyn nhw ddarparu gwasanaethau statudol. Dywedodd yr Arweinydd y byddai darparu cyllideb gytbwys ar gyfer Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf yn dasg hynod heriol ac ategodd ei siom gyda chanlyniad datganiad yr Hydref.

Dywedodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd, y Cynghorydd M Webber, ei bod hi wedi cyfarfod â Citizens Cymru/Wales a Citizens UK yn Eglwys y Santes Catrin, Pontypridd, ar 10 Tachwedd i ddathlu achrediad y Cyngor yn gyflogwr Cyflog Byw Gwirioneddol. Roedd hi wedi gwneud hyn ar ran yr Arweinydd. Cafodd tiws

ei gyflwyno i'r Cyngor i ddathlu'r gamp. Roedd y Dirprwy Arweinydd yn dymuno diolch i Citizens Cymru UK am y gydnabyddiaeth honno.

Pwysleisiodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd bod y Cyngor yn dal ati i gydnabod mai'r staff yw ei ased gorau, ac roedd hi'n falch o'r cyfle i gwrdd â'r Dirprwy Weinidog Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol yn gynharach yn y flwyddyn, gyda'r Arweinydd, i dderbyn achrediad fel cyflogwr Cyflog Byw. I gloi, dywedodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd fod Cyngor RhCT yn gosod esiamplydd dda i awdurdodau lleol yng Nghymru, yn rhinwedd ei rôl yn ail awdurdod lleol mwyaf Cymru.

Gwnaeth yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion lechyd y Cyhoedd a Chymunedau, Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol B Harris, ddatganiad mewn perthynas â'r ffaith bod y Cyngor wedi derbyn gwobr fawreddog Lleoedd Bwyd Cynaliadwy Cenedlaethol (gwobr Efydd SPF) ar ran Partneriaeth Bwyd RhCT. Mae'n cydnabod gwaith rhagorol Partneriaeth Bwyd RhCT wrth hyrwyddo arferion bwyd cynaliadwy o fewn y cymunedau. Mae Carfan Datblygu Cymuned y Cyngor, y Cydlynnydd Bwyd Cynaliadwy a'i bartneriaid wedi ymrwymo i hyrwyddo bwydydd cynaliadwy ac iach, ac mae eu gwaith wedi cyfrannu'n helaeth at ymrwymiad y Cyngor i fynd i'r afael â heriau cymdeithasol sylweddol megis tlodi bwyd, salwch sy'n gysylltiedig â diet a cholli busnesau bwyd annibynnol.

Roedd y Cynghorydd B Harris am estyn ei longyfarchiadau i'r garfan a'r bartneriaeth am gael ei gydnabod gan y wobwr fawreddog yma, ac roedd hefyd yn dymuno diolch iddyn nhw am wneud RhCT yn un o ddim ond tair ardal awdurdod lleol yng Nghymru i dderbyn y wobwr hon ers ei sefydlu yn 2015.

71 Cwestiynau gan yr Aelodau

Cwestiwn gan Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol N. H. Morgan i Arweinydd y Cyngor, Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol A. Morgan:

“A oes modd i'r Arweinydd roi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf am sut mae'r Cyngor yn bwrw ymlaen â'i waith i uwchraddio a gwella draeniad ar ei rwydwaith priffyrdd?”

Ymateb y Cynghorydd A Morgan OBE:

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod y Cyngor wedi caffael gwasanaeth glanhau foltiau arbenigol 5 mlynedd a chontract teledu cylch cyfyng gyda darparwr allanol sydd ar hyn o bryd yn ei drydedd flwyddyn. Mae nifer o asedau carthffosydd dŵr wyneb wedi'u glanhau a'u harolygu hyd yma, gyda 15km wedi'i drin hyd yma eleni.

Ychwanegodd yr Arweinydd fod gan y Cyngor hefyd ei bedwar gwacwr cwteri a lorïau jetio ei hun sy'n gweithio bob dydd i lanhau miloedd o gyliau bob mis, yn ogystal â nodi diffygion sydd wedyn yn cael eu hatgyweirio i helpu i ddiogelu'r rhwydwaith.

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod y Cabinet wedi cytuno'n ddiweddar ar fuddsoddiad o £200,000 ar gyfer gwaith lliniaru llifogydd parhaus. Mae hyn yn rhan o'r buddsoddiad untro ehangach o £7.73 miliwn ar gyfer meysydd blaenoriaeth y Cyngor, a gytunwyd gan y Cabinet yn gynharach eleni. Cyfeiriodd yr Arweinydd hefyd at y buddsoddiad o £1 miliwn y mae'r Cyngor wedi'i dderbyn gan Gronfa

Ffyrdd Cydnerth Llywodraeth Cymru gyfer 2023/24. Dros y tair blynedd diwethaf, mae'r Cyngor wedi sicrhau dros £10 miliwn gan y Gronfa Ffyrdd Cydnerth ers Storm Dennis, a hynny er mwyn edrych ar y priffyrdd hynny sy'n dueddol o fod yn destun llifogydd.

I gloi, dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod llawer o waith eisoes yn mynd rhagddo, ond mae modd gwneud rhagor, a diolchodd i'r Aelodau Etholedig sy'n parhau i dynnu sylw at broblemau yn eu wardiau nhw.

Nid oedd unrhyw gwestiwn ategol.

2. Cwestiwn gan Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol G. O. Jones i Arweinydd y Cyngor, Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol A. Morgan OBE:

“Rydyn ni wedi clywed yn ystod y misoedd diwethaf bod effeithiau cyfunol Brexit a'r rhyfel yn Wcráin yn cael effaith sylweddol ar ein diwydiant adeiladu. Beth mae hyn yn ei olygu i'r Cyngor a sut allwn ni liniaru'r effeithiau yma?”

Ymateb y Cynghorydd A Morgan OBE:

Dywedodd y Cynghorydd A Morgan y bu cynnydd mewn costau adeiladu sy'n ymwneud â chyflenwad deunyddiau. Mae hyn yn rhannol yn ymwneud â Brexit, y rhyfel yn Wcráin a chyfradd chwyddiant uchel yn y DU, sydd i gyd yn effeithio ar gostau adeiladu.

Eglurodd yr Arweinydd, o ran Rhaglen Gyfalaf y Cyngor, fod gan y Cyngor brofiad o gynllunio a chyflawni prosiectau sy'n bodloni amodau llym o ran ansawdd a phris. Ychwanegodd fod prisiau'n cael eu cytuno ymlaen llaw ar gyfer prosiectau adeiladu fel Ysgolion neu gyfleusterau Gofal Ychwanegol, a bod dim modd newid y pris yma unwaith i'r contract gael ei ddyfarnu.

Cyfeiriodd yr Arweinydd at anawsterau o fewn y farchnad lafur, ac effaith Brexit, sy'n effeithio ar faterion recriwtio, yn enwedig mewn meysydd fel lletygarwch a ffermio, lle mae ffermwyr yn cael trafferth recriwtio gweithwyr i gasglu cnydau. Soniodd yr Arweinydd am yr anhawster o ran recriwtio'n lleol, gan ddweud bod rhaid hysbysebu swyddi sawl gwaith weithiau.

I gloi, dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod y Cyngor yn gweithio'n dda o ran contractau ond y bydd yn parhau i fonitro'r farchnad a phennu cyllidebau adeiladu realistig yn y dyfodol, gan fanteisio ar wybodaeth am y farchnad ar y pryd.

Nid oedd unrhyw gwestiwn ategol.

3. Cyhoeddodd y Llywydd fod ymddiheuriad am absenoldeb wedi'i gyflwyno gan y Cynghorydd S Powderhill, a chadarnhaodd na fyddai cwestiwn 3 yn cael ei ofyn i'r Aelod o'r Cabinet.

4. Cwestiwn gan Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol W. Lewis i Arweinydd y Cyngor – Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol A. Morgan OBE:

“A wnaiff yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ddatganiad am gyflwyno terfynau cyflymder 20mya diofyn Llywodraeth Cymru ledled Cymru a Rhondda Cynon Taf?”

Ymateb y Cynghorydd A Morgan OBE:

Darparodd yr Arweinydd yr wybodaeth ganlynol mewn perthynas â chyflwyno terfynau cyflymder 20mya diofyn Llywodraeth Cymru yn Rhondda Cynon Taf. Mae'r Cyngor wedi cael gwared ar tua 3,140 o arwyddion ac wedi codi 1,710 o arwyddion newydd ar y rhwydwaith priffyrdd i baratoi ar gyfer cyflwyno'r terfyn 20mya diofyn. Yn ogystal, roedd cyfle i dynnu 1,974 o arwyddion wedi'u goleuo i lawr, a gosod fersiynau heb olau yn eu lle, gan arbed costau ynni a chynnal a chadw.

Ychwanegodd yr Arweinydd fod wyth deg pedwar o eithriadau terfyn cyflymder 30mya yn RhCT ar hyn o bryd, gyda 18 wedi'u lleoli yng Nghwm Rhondda, 16 yng Nghwm Cynon a 50 ar draws ardal Taf-elái. Ychwanegodd fod y contractwr allanol i fod i gwblhau'r gwaith erbyn 24 Tachwedd ond mae'r contractwr wedi gofyn am estyniad i gwblhau elfennau o'r wyneb coch a'r arwyddion 'eilaidd' - Mae swyddogion yn adolygu'r cais yma ar hyn o bryd ac yn obeithiol y bydd yr amser hwn yn cael ei gwtogi yn sgil trafodaethau pellach.

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd, tra bod Swyddogion yn ymateb i unrhyw wallau clir ac amlwg ar yr arwyddion cyn gynted â phosibl, mae unrhyw geisiadau i adolygu terfynau cyflymder yn cael eu cofnodi, a byddan nhw'n destun adolygiad posibl yn y dyfodol. Ychwanegodd y dylai'r Cyngor fod mewn sefyllfa i gadarnhau bod yr holl arwyddion wedi'u diweddarau erbyn cyfnod y Nadolig.

I gloi, dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ymrwymo i gyhoeddi canllawiau diwygiedig mewn perthynas â phennu terfynau cyflymder lleol yng Nghymru yn hydref 2024. Bydd hyn yn darparu'r fframwaith ar gyfer unrhyw adolygiad o derfynau cyflymder yn RhCT.

Nid oedd unrhyw gwestiwn ategol.

5. Cwestiwn gan Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol S. Bradwick i Arweinydd y Cyngor, Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol A. Morgan OBE:

“A oes modd i'r Arweinydd wneud datganiad ar wasanaethau bws yn Rhondda Cynon Taf ac amlinellu'r sefyllfa ddiweddaraf o ran rhoi cymorth i ddarparu'r?”

Ymateb y Cynghorydd A Morgan OBE:

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod Covid-19 wedi effeithio ar hyfywedd masnachol gwasanaethau bysiau, a heb ymyrraeth Llywodraeth Cymru drwy'r Cynllun Brys ar gyfer y Sector Bysiau a'r Gronfa Bontio ar gyfer Bysiau, byddai'r rhan fwyaf o wasanaethau wedi dod i ben dros y 3 blynedd diwethaf. Ychwanegodd, er bod y diwydiant wedi dangos rhywfaint o adferiad o effaith y pandemig, ei fod wedi wynebu heriau ychwanegol oherwydd bod mwy o drigolion yn gweithio gartref, neu'n siopa bwyd ar-lein.

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd, o ran y Cynllun Brys ar gyfer y Sector Bysiau, a oedd ar waith am dair blynedd, fod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi bod yn gweithio gyda Chynghorau o ran y cyllid (gyda deg cyngor ar yr un ôl troed â'r Cyd-bwyllgorau Corfforaethol, a chyda RhCT yn rhan o ôl troed y De-ddwyrain ar gyfer y deg awdurdod lleol sydd i gyd yn cydweithio â'r diwydiant bysiau) i symud tuag at fecanwaith ariannu mwy cynaliadwy a fydd yn gwneud y defnydd gorau o'r cyllid sydd ar gael ac yn lleihau dyblygu gwasanaethau o ddechrau blwyddyn ariannol 2024/25. Cadarnhaodd yr Arweinydd yr amcangyfrifir y bydd cyfran yr arian ychwanegol sydd ar gael i gefnogi'r diwydiant bysiau gan Lywodraeth Cymru ar

gyfer y flwyddyn nesaf tua £46 miliwn.

Fel gyda phob Cyngor yng Nghymru, wrth baratoi ar gyfer y mecanwaith ariannu newydd, mae swyddogion o Uned Trafnidiaeth Integredig y Cyngor wedi bod yn llunio dogfennau tendro sy'n ceisio cynnal cymaint o'r gwasanaethau bws presennol â phosibl o fewn y cyllid sydd ar gael. Bydd canlyniad yr ymarfer tendro yn cael ei gyhoeddi yn y flwyddyn newydd, a bryd hynny, bydd angen gwneud ceisiadau i arweinwyr rhanbarthol i sicrhau'r cyllid sydd ei angen.

Cwestiwn ategol gan y Cynghorydd S Bradwick

“O ran y cynllun Tocyn Bws £1, a allwch chi roi gwybodaeth ynghylch cyflwyno'r cynllun?”

Ymateb y Cynghorydd A Morgan OBE:

Roedd yr Arweinydd yn falch o gyhoeddi bod y Cyngor ar fin cyflwyno cynllun bws am bris gostyngol pellach ar gyfer mis Rhagfyr. Bydd modd cael tocyn am £1 am bob taith o fewn y Fwrdeistref Sirol. Ychwanegodd mai hwn fydd y trydydd cynllun o'i fath mae'r Cyngor wedi'i gyflwyno yn RhCT yn ystod y flwyddyn galendr hon, a hynny drwy benderfyniadau'r Cabinet. Yn gyntaf, cafwyd cynllun teithio am ddim ym mis Mawrth, ac wedyn y cynllun tocyn bws am £1 am 6 wythnos yn ystod gwyliau'r haf. Bu cynnydd sylweddol yn nifer y defnyddwyr a theithiau ar fysiau yn ystod y cyfnodau yma.

Cadarnhaodd yr Arweinydd fod y cynllun wedi'i gefnogi gan gyllid a dderbyniwyd gan Lywodraeth Cymru ac y bydd o gymorth mawr i drigolion gyda'r argyfwng costau byw, ac yn cefnogi'r ôl troed carbon. Bydd hefyd yn lleddfu rhywfaint o'r traffig ar y ffyrdd ym mis Rhagfyr yn ystod prysurdeb y Nadolig.

I gloi, dywedodd yr Arweinydd ei fod yn gobeithio y bydd y Cyngor yn gallu parhau â'r cynllun yn y dyfodol ac y bydd y cynllun yn cael ei werthuso ar ôl y Nadolig.

6. Cwestiwn gan Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol J. Barton i Arweinydd y Cyngor, Cynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol A. Morgan:

“Yng ngoleuni'r argyfwng Costau Byw parhaus, pa gymorth sydd ar gael i drigolion RhCT wrth i ni agosáu at fisoedd y gaeaf gyda'r tywydd yn troi'n llawer oerach dros y dyddiau diwethaf?”

Ymateb y Cynghorydd A Morgan OBE:

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd, yn ogystal â'r cynllun Tocyn Bws am £1, a fydd yn sicr yn cefnogi llawer o deuluoedd a'r economi leol, ym mis Medi, cytunodd Cabinet y Cyngor ar Gynllun Cymorth Costau Byw newydd ar gyfer 2023. Mae hwn werth £4.292 miliwn, sy'n uwch nag unrhyw gynllun gan Awdurdod Lleol arall yng Nghymru. Mae'r pecyn yn cynnwys taliad untro o £125 i bob cartref yn RhCT sydd â phlentyn/plant o oedran ysgol gorfodol (fesul teulu, nid fesul plentyn). Ychwanegodd fod 18,819 o'r 20,235 o aelwydydd sy'n gymwys ar gyfer y taliad wedi'u talu hyd yma, sy'n cyfateb i 93%. Anogodd y teuluoedd hynny sydd ddim wedi gwneud hynny eisoes i wneud cais am y cynllun, sy'n parhau ar agor tan 31 Rhagfyr 2023. Bydd swyddogion yn anfon llythyrau dilynol i unrhyw deuluoedd sydd ddim wedi gwneud cais eto yn y cyfamser.

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod y Cabinet hefyd wedi cymeradwyo £245,000 i'w

ddyfarnu i sefydliadau cymunedol lleol ei ddefnyddio i ddarparu cefnogaeth sylweddol i drigolion RhCT. Mae hyn yn cynnwys y Grant Cyfleusterau Cymunedol (£135,000) sy'n cefnogi grwpiau trydydd sector i gynnal hybiau cymunedol. Ar gyfer y Canolfannau Croeso yn y Gaeaf, mae grantiau o £110,000 o gyllid y Cyngor ei hun wedi'u darparu, gyda 86 o Ganolfannau Croeso yn y Gaeaf wedi cofrestru ar gyfer y cymorth yma. Atgoffodd yr Arweinydd yr Aelodau bod holl Lyfrgelloedd y Cyngor yn cael eu hystyried yn Ganolfannau Croeso yn y Gaeaf.

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd, o ran cefnogaeth uniongyrchol i drigolion sy'n wynebu caledi ariannol yn ystod misoedd y Gaeaf, bod tri gwasanaeth cefnogi trigolion o fewn y Cyngor wedi cael mynediad at dalebau Archfarchnad a Thanwydd y gellir eu rhoi i'r rhai sydd â'r angen mwyaf, a hynny am gyfanswm o £100,000. Mae £100,000 ychwanegol wedi'i ddyrannu ar gyfer dyfarniadau tai dewisol i gefnogi trigolion i gynnal eu tenantiaeth a'u hatal rhag wynebu cael eu troi allan a chaledi. Dywedodd yr Arweinydd y bydd y Gaeaf yn adeg heriol i lawer o deuluoedd.

Cwestiwn Ategol gan y Cynghorydd J Barton:

“A yw'r Arweinydd mor ddig a thrist â minnau ein bod ni fel un o wledydd cyfoethocaf y Byd yn gorfod helpu'r rhai mwyaf bregus mewn cymdeithas, tra'n wynebu toriadau ein hunain ar yr un pryd?”

Ymateb y Cynghorydd A Morgan OBE:

Cytunodd yr Arweinydd â theimladau'r Cynghorydd Barton a mynegodd ei siom o orfod darparu cymorth ariannol i'r Banciau Bwyd lleol er mwyn gallu cyflawni gwaith pwysig iawn, y mae mawr ei angen, ar gyfer cymunedau RhCT. Roedd yr Arweinydd yn gobeithio y byddai'n gweld diwedd ar Fanciau Bwyd yn RhCT yn y dyfodol ond byddai'n eu cefnogi'n llwyr tra bod eu hangen nhw.

Nid oedd unrhyw gwestiynau pellach oherwydd bod yr amser a neilltuwyd wedi dod i ben.

72 Rhaglen Waith y Cyngor 2023-24 ac Adroddiad Gwybodaeth

Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth, Gwasanaethau Democraidd a Chyfathrebu nad oedd unrhyw newidiadau i raglen waith y Cyngor ar gyfer y cyfnod a chadarnhaodd, oherwydd yr amserlenni yn ymwneud â symud swyddfa o Gwm Clydach i Lys Cadwyn ym Mhontypridd, y byddai cyfarfod nesaf y Cyngor Llawn ar 17 Ionawr 2024 yn cael ei gynnal ar-lein.

Amlinellodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth ddiben yr adroddiad gwybodaeth amgaaedig a oedd yn rhoi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf am y Rhybudd o Gynnig a gyflwynwyd i'r Cyngor Llawn ar 29 Mawrth 2023, a gynigiwyd gan Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol D Grehan ac a eiliwyd gan Gynghorydd y Fwrdeistref Sirol S Evans mewn perthynas â Thlodi Plant. Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth fod y Rhybudd o Gynnig wedi'i gyfeirio at y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu, sy'n disgwyl derbyn adroddiad mewn perthynas â'r Cynllun Corfforaethol yn rhan o'i gylchred nesaf o gyfarfodydd.

73 Datganiad o Gyfrifon ac Adroddiadau Archwilio ar gyfer CBS Rhondda Cynon Taf a Chronfa Bensiwn Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022/23

Cyflwynodd Mr M Jones, Archwilio Cymru Adroddiad Archwilio Cymru ar Archwiliad o Gyfrifon CBS Rhondda Cynon Taf a Grŵp CBS Rhondda Cynon Taf, gan gyfeirio'r Aelodau'n benodol at baragraff 4 a oedd yn nodi lefel perthnasedd eleni o £9.6 miliwn ar gyfer archwiliad cyfrifon Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf eleni, a £9.8 miliwn ar gyfer archwiliad Grŵp Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Cyfeiriodd Mr Jones at baragraff 9 a dywedodd y bydd Archwilio Cymru yn cyhoeddi barn archwilio ddiamod ar gyfrifon eleni, gan gadarnhau bod yr holl gamddatganiadau yn yr adroddiad wedi'u cywiro gan y rheolwyr (gyda chrynodeb camddatganiadau yn Atodiad 3 yr adroddiad), fel sydd wedi'i nodi ym mharagraffau 13 ac 14.

Canmolodd Mr Jones effeithlonrwydd y Gwasanaeth Cyllid o fewn Cyngor RhCT a rhoddodd sicrwydd bod y dull archwilio newydd sydd ar waith eleni mor drylwyr ag y bu erioed.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth am yr adroddiad, cyflwynodd Archwilio Cymru adroddiad yr Archwiliad o Gyfrifon Cronfa Bensiwn Rhondda Cynon Taf, y mae RhCT yn awdurdod gweinyddu ar ei chyfer. Cyfeiriodd at y perthnasedd uchel o £42.64 miliwn ar gyfer archwiliad eleni a chanmolodd yr adroddiad cadarnhaol sy'n cynnwys mân gamddatganiadau teipograffyddol a chyflwyniadol yn unig.

(Nodyn: Oherwydd yr anawsterau technegol a brofwyd ar yr adeg yma, penderfynodd y Llywydd y byddai'r agenda'n cael ei hystyried allan o drefn ac fel y manylir yn y cofnodion a nodir isod cyn dychwelyd i eitem 6 ar yr Agenda - Datganiad Cyfrifon ac Adroddiadau Archwilio CBSRhCT a Chronfa Bensiwn RhCT - i gytuno ar y penderfyniad).

74 Penodi Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Cyflwynodd y Cyfarwyddwr Materion Adnoddau Dynol yr adroddiad ar y cyd a oedd yn gofyn am gadarnhad o benderfyniad y Pwyllgor Penodiadau mewn perthynas â phenodi'r ymgeisydd sydd wedi'i ddewis i swydd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau i Oedolion. Mae hyn yn dilyn y broses benodi yr oedd y Pwyllgor Penodiadau wedi cytuno arni hi ymlaen llaw.

Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr fod proses benodi canolfan asesu ddwys yn cael ei chynnal ddydd lau 16 Tachwedd a dydd Gwener 17 Tachwedd 2023, ac yn dilyn hynny, penderfynodd y Pwyllgor Penodiadau argymhell bod Mrs Sian Nowell yn cael ei phenodi i swydd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau i Oedolion.

Cytunodd Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Penodiadau, y Cynghorydd SJ Davies, fod y broses recriwtio a dethol ffurfiol, wedi penderfynu argymhell yn unfrydol y dylid penodi Mrs Sian Nowell i swydd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau i Oedolion.

Roedd Aelodau'n dymuno mynegi eu bod nhw o blaid y penodiad a
PHENDERFYNWYD:

- a) Cadarnhau argymhelliad y Pwyllgor Penodiadau y dylid penodi Mrs Sian Nowell i swydd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau i Oedolion; a
- b) Nodi mai dydd lau 30 Tachwedd fydd dyddiad cychwyn Mrs. Nowell yn y

swydd hon.

75 Datganiad o Gyfrifon ac Adroddiadau Archwilio ar gyfer CBS Rhondda Cynon Taf a Chronfa Bensiwn Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022/23

(**Nodyn:** Gydag anawsterau technegol wedi'u datrys, dywedodd y Llywydd y bydd gwaith o drafod eitem 6 ar yr Agenda - Datganiad o Gyfrifon ac Adroddiadau Archwilio ar gyfer CBS Rhondda Cynon Taf a Chronfa Bensiwn Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022/23 (ailddechrau).

Cyflwynodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran - Cyllid, Gwasanaethau Digidol a Rheng Flaen Gyfrifon Cyngor RhCT a'r Gronfa Bensiwn i'w hystyried gan y Cyngor, a chyfeirio gadarnhad a dderbyniwyd yn gynharach yn y cyfarfod gan y Rheolwr Archwilio, Archwilio Cymru, o'r bwriad i gyhoeddi barn archwilio ddiamod ar gyfrifon eleni. Cadarnhaodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran fod y ddau gyfrif wedi'u hystyried yn flaen gan Bwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio'r Cyngor ac ni chodwyd unrhyw faterion.

Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran, o ran y sefyllfa alldro a gyflwynwyd yn y cyfarfod hyn yn adlewyrchu'r hyn a gyflwynwyd i'r Cabinet ac i Bwyllgor Trosolwg a Chyngor ym mis Gorffennaf 2023, a bod sefyllfa'r cronfeydd wrth gefn yn adlewyrchu hyn a gyflwynwyd i'r Cyngor yn ei gyfarfod ym mis Medi 2023 ochr yn ochr â'r Cyngor Ariannol Tymor Canolig.

Cadarnhaodd Rheolwr Archwilio, Archwilio Cymru, fod y llythyr cynrychioliadol terfynol awgrymwyd yn nodi'r cyfeiriad cywir at y Cyngor Llawn yn cymeradwyo'r datganiad ariannol ar 29 Tachwedd 2023.

Diolchodd Arweinydd y Cyngor a'r holl Arweinwyr Grwpiau eraill i Archwilio Cymru chydabod y cydweithio llwyddiannus a'r ymgysylltu rhyngddynt hwy a charfan Cymru'r Cyngor.

Ar ôl trafod yr adroddiad, **PENDERFYNWYD:**

a) Cymeradwyo a nodi Datganiad o Gyfrifon Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf (Atodiad 1), a'r Llythyr Cynrychiolaeth cysylltiedig sy'n cynnwys ymatebion i'r Ymholiadau Archwilio (Atodiad 2).

b) Cymeradwyo a nodi Datganiad o Gyfrifon Cronfa Bensiwn Rhondda Cynon Taf (Atodiad 3), a'r Llythyr Cynrychiolaeth cysylltiedig sy'n cynnwys ymatebion i'r Llythyr Ymholiadau Archwilio (Atodiad 4).

c) Cymeradwyo a nodi safle alldro terfynol y Cyngor, sydd wedi'i archwilio, ar gyfer blwyddyn ariannol 2022/23 a lefel y Balansau Cyllid Cyffredinol (paragraff 6.4 o'r adroddiad); a

(d) Nodi ystyriaethau a sylwadau cyfarfod y Pwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio a Medi 2023 fel sy'n ofynnol gan y Mesur Llywodraeth Leol (adran 9).

(**Nodwch:** Cafodd dau ddatganiad personol yn ymwneud â'r eitem agenda eu cyflwyno gan y Cyngorwyr K Johnson a J Brencher (Cofnod Rhif 67 (eitemau viii a ix)).

76 Adroddiad Canol Blwyddyn Cylch Rheoli'r Trysorlys 2023-24

Yn unol â gofynion Cod Ymarfer Sefydliad Siartredig Cyllid Cyhoeddus a Chyfrifyddiaeth ar Reoli'r Trysorlys, rhoddodd Cyfarwyddwr y Gyfadran Cyllid, Gwasanaethau Digidol a Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen wybodaeth i'r Aelodau am weithgarwch Rheoli'r Trysorlys y Cyngor yn ystod chwe mis cyntaf 2022/23, yn ogystal â Dangosyddion Darbodus a Thrysorlys ar gyfer yr un cyfnod.

Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr, yn erbyn cefndir economaidd heriol o dwf cymharol isel, cyfraddau uwch o chwyddiant a chyfraddau llog uwch, fod y Cyngor wedi cynnal ei sefyllfa o dan-fenthyca a ddangosir gan y sefyllfa fenthyca gros o gymharu â'r gofyniad cyllid cyfalaf (CFR). Mae hyn yn cynrychioli angen sylfaenol y Cyngor i fenthyca. Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr ymhellach fod y gofyniad benthyca wedi cynyddu yn ystod hanner cyntaf y flwyddyn ariannol wrth i gymeradwyaethau pellach gael eu derbyn mewn perthynas â'r Rhaglen Cymunedau Cynaliadwy ar gyfer Dysgu. Manylir ar hyn yn yr adroddiadau monitro cyflawniad chwarterol.

Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr fod y Cyngor yn parhau i weithredu ymhell o fewn ei derfynau, hynny yw, y terfyn awdurdodedig a'r ffin weithredol. Ychwanegodd fod y Cyngor wrthi'n cynnal proses gaffael ar gyfer ymgynghorwyr rheolaeth trysorlys, a bydd Aelodau'n cael eu diweddarau yn unol â hynny pan fydd y broses wedi'i chwblhau. Mae'r Cyngor yn parhau i weithredu o fewn yr amlen fenthyca gyffredinol fel y cytunwyd ar gyfer rhaglen Ysgolion yr 21^{ain} Ganrif y Cyngor.

I gloi, dywedodd Cyfarwyddwr y Gyfadran Cyllid, Gwasanaethau Digidol a Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen y byddai'r adroddiad yn cael ei gyflwyno i'r Pwyllgor Llywodraethu ac Archwilio i'w adolygu ymhellach.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth lle atebodd y Cyfarwyddwr Cyfadran nifer o gwestiynau, **PENDERFYNWYD** cymeradwyo cynnwys yr adroddiad.

77 Rhybudd o Gynnig

Trafod y Rhybuddion o Gynnig isod sydd wedi'u cyflwyno yn unol â Rheol Gweithdrefn y Cyngor 10.1 ac a dderbyniwyd gan y Swyddog Priodol, yn enwau Cynghorwyr y Fwrdeistref Sirol:

- 1) R. Williams, S. Emanuel, L. Addiscott, M. D. Ashford, J. Barton, D. R. Bevan, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, G. Caple, J. Cook, A. Crimmings, S. J. Davies, R. Davis, A. J. Dennis, V. Dunn, E. L. Dunning, J. Edwards, J. A. Elliott, L. Ellis, R. Evans, A. S. Fox, B. Harris, S. Hickman, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, W. Hughes, G. Jones, G. O. Jones, R. R. Lewis, W. Lewis, C. Leyshon, M. Maohoub, C. Middle, A. Morgan, N. H. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, D. Parkin, S. Powderhill, C. Preedy, S. Rees, A. Roberts, J. Smith, G. Stacey, L. A. Tomkinson, W. Treeby, J. Turner, G. L. Warren, K. Webb, M. Webber, D. Williams, G. E. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo.

Ar ôl wythnosau o ddyfalu, mae'r Prif Weinidog wedi cadarnhau o'r diwedd na fydd rhan ogleddol HS2 rhwng Manceinion a Birmingham bellach yn cael ei hadeiladu.

Mae'r cyhoeddiad, sydd i bob golwg wedi bod y gyfrinach waethaf mewn

gwleidyddiaeth, yn dilyn dileu cymal y dwyrain rhwng Birmingham a Leeds, a'r llinell gyflym rhwng y dwyrain a'r gorllewin rhwng Leeds a Manceinion yn 2021.

Roedd dynodiad gwreiddiol HS2 fel prosiect Cymru a Lloegr yn ysgytwol ynddo'i hun' gyda'r prosiect rheilffordd cyflym agosaf wedi'i leoli bron i 70 milltir i ffwrdd o ffin Cymru, a'r cyfiawnhad dros y dosbarthiad oedd y byddai teithwyr yng Ngogledd Cymru yn ôl pob sôn yn cael budd o'r gyfnewidfa arfaethedig ar gyfer Crewe.

Dros y degawd diwethaf, mae anghydraddoldebau Fformiwla Barnett a phenderfyniadau'r Llywodraeth Geidwadol yn San Steffan wedi gweld Cymru'n cael ei hamddifadu o bron i hanner biliwn o bunnoedd o fuddsoddiad trafndiaeth (yn seiliedig ar gyllid rheilffyrdd tebyg am debyg fesul pen o'r boblogaeth o gymharu â rhannau eraill o'r DU).

Gyda'r prosiect HS2 yn cael ei ddileu a "biliynau o bunnoedd bellach wedi'u harbed" mae'n gwbl deg a chyfiawn fod Cymru'n elwa ar gyfran deg o fuddsoddiad.

Mae'r cyhoeddiad y byddai £1 biliwn yn cael ei ddyrannu i drydaneiddio prif reilffordd Gogledd Cymru yn ddim mwy na ffigur amcangyfrifol ac, yn ôl Llywodraeth Cymru, fe fydd yn cymryd o leiaf 10 mlynedd.

Mae'r Prif Weinidog eisoes wedi datgan y bydd pob rhanbarth y tu allan i Lundain yn derbyn yr un buddsoddiad gan y llywodraeth neu fwy nag y bydden nhw wedi'i wneud o dan HS2, a gyda chanlyniadau cyflymach.

Rhaid i'r ymrwymiad hwn fod yn berthnasol i Gymru a chael ei gyflawni ar raddfa sy'n adlewyrchu anghenion Cymru wrth geisio mynd i'r afael â'r tanariannu o ran trafndiaeth rheilffyrdd dros y degawd diwethaf. Rhaid iddo hefyd ganiatáu i brosiectau trafndiaeth pwysig eraill ledled Cymru gael eu hariannu hefyd.

Felly mae'r Cyngor hwn yn:

- Bod canslo HS2 yn rhoi cyfle i Gymru gael cyfran deg o gyllid ar gyfer prosiectau seilwaith trafndiaeth rheilffyrdd.
- Bod angen adolygu fformiwla Barnett ar fyrder i atal achosion o brosiectau rhag cael eu dosbarthu'n anghywir yn y dyfodol er mwyn osgoi darparu cyllid i'r gwledydd datganoledig.
- Bod yn rhaid i Lywodraeth San Steffan yn awr wneud yn iawn am ei hymrwymiad i ddarparu trefniadau ariannu teg i "bob rhanbarth y tu allan i Lundain" gyda'r arian "wedi'i arbed" o HS2.

Bod y Cyngor hwn:

- Yn gofyn i Arweinydd y Cyngor ysgrifennu at y Prif Weinidog, yr Ysgrifennydd Trafndiaeth, Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru, a Changhellor y Trysorlys i gyfleu'r Cynnig hwn.
- Gofyn i Gymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru gyflwyno sylwadau fel "llais Cymru gyfan" i amlinellu'r achos bod yn rhaid i Gymru dderbyn swm teg a chymesur o gyllid o ganslo HS2.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth, **PENDERFYNWYD** mabwysiadu'r Rhybudd o Gynnig.

Ystyried y Rhybuddion o Gynnig isod sydd wedi'u cyflwyno yn unol â Rheol Gweithdrefn y Cyngor 10.1 ac a dderbyniwyd gan y Swyddog Priodol, yn enwau Cynghorwyr y Fwrdeistref Sirol:

W Lewis, R. Davis, L. Addiscott, M. D. Ashford, J. Barton D. R. Bevan, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, G. Caple, J. Cook, A. Crimmings, S. J. Davies, A. J. Dennis, V. Dunn, E. L. Dunning, J. Edwards, J. A. Elliott, L. Ellis, S. Emanuel, R. Evans, A. S. Fox, B. Harris, S. Hickman, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, W. Hughes, G. Jones, G. O. Jones, R. R. Lewis, C. Leyshon, M. Maohoub, C. Middle, A. Morgan, N. H. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, D. Parkin, S. Powderhill, C. Preedy, S. Rees, A. Roberts, J. Smith, G. Stacey, L. A. Tomkinson, W. Treeby, J. Turner, G. L. Warren, K. Webb, M. Webber, D. Williams, G. E. Williams, R. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo.

Mae'r Cyngor yn nodi bod yr Ombwdsmon Seneddol a Gwasanaeth Iechyd wedi dod i gasgliad bod camweinyddu wedi digwydd ar ran yr Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau mewn perthynas â methiannau yn y ffordd yr oedd yn cyfleu newidiadau i oedran Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth i fenywod a aned yn y 1950au.

Mae'r Cyngor hefyd yn nodi bod yr Ombwdsmon yn bwriadu anfon Adroddiadau Cyfnod 2 a Cham 3 dros dro yn ymdrin â'r anghyfiawnder a achoswyd gan y camweinyddu, a'r rhwymedïau, i'r tua 500 o fenywod y cyrhaeddodd eu hachosion yr Ombwdsmon cyn iddo roi'r gorau i dderbyn cwynion. Byddant hwy, a'r Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau, yn cael eu gwahodd i wneud sylwadau erbyn y dyddiad cau disgwylidig, sef 21 Rhagfyr. Bydd y sylwadau hyn yn cael eu hystyried gan yr Ombwdsmon sy'n gobeithio cyhoeddi adroddiad terfynol rywbryd yn y flwyddyn newydd. Yna caiff ei roi gerbron y Senedd.

Mae'r Cyngor yn cefnogi gweithredoedd Ymgyrch Menywod yn Erbyn Anghyfiawnder Pensiwn y Wladwriaeth (WASPI) i sicrhau cyfiawnder i'r 3.8 miliwn o fenywod yr effeithir arnynt, gan gynnwys y 12,800 sy'n byw yn etholaethau Rhondda, Cynon a Thaf.

Mae'r Cyngor yn nodi bod Prif Weinidog y DU wedi dweud y bydd y Llywodraeth yn ymateb yn briodol i unrhyw argymhellion ac yn galw ar y Llywodraeth i ymrwymo i weithredu iawndal priodol yn llawn, yn deg ac yn gyflym.

Yn dilyn trafodaeth, **PENDERFYNWYD** mabwysiadu'r Rhybudd o Gynnig.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 6.30 pm

**Y Cynghorydd G Hughes
Cadeirydd.**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

17 JANUARY 2024

MEMBERS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the order of questions in respect of the Members Questions on Notice, following the amendment to the process agreed at the [Council AGM 2019](#).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Receive the Questions and any supplementary questions proposed, as in accordance with the running order advised upon in 4.3 of the report, which should not exceed a 20-minute time period.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 As agreed at the Council AGM on the 15th May, 2019, Members agreed to amend Council Procedure Rule 9.2 in respect of Members Questions on Notice. A further amendment was made to Council Procedure Rule 9.2 at the Council AGM on the 26th May 2021 in respect of supplementary questions following expiry of the 20 minute time duration. [Council AGM 2021](#)

4. MEMBERS QUESTION ON NOTICE

- 4.1 The closing date for receipt of Members Questions on Notice to the Council Business Unit for the Council meeting on the 17th January 2024 was 5pm on the 4th January 2024.
- 4.2 Thirty-seven questions were received and put forward to the Council Ballot held on the 9th January 2024, to determine the running order of the questions at the Council Meeting.
- 4.3 The results of the ballot are outlined below:

Number	Corresponding Question
1	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. Stacey to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader update Members on the work and preparations to welcome the National Eisteddfod to Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2024?”</p>
2	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. D. Ashford to the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the progress of the new school for Pontyclun Primary?”</p>
3	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Williams to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services, County Borough Councillor T. Leyshon:</p> <p>“Would the Cabinet Member provide a further update on the progress of EV charging point rollouts in RCT?”</p>
4	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Brencher to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member please make a statement on the significant investment to Ynysangharad War Memorial Park?”</p>
5	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor C. Middle to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on this administration’s ambitious plan to deliver 10 new MUGAs across RCT?”</p>
6	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. J. Dennis to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the relevant Cabinet Member outline what investment has been made in children’s play areas across the Borough?”</p>
7	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Emanuel to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“With the announcement that essential works are to be carried out on Rhigos Mountain Road, can the Cabinet Member outline what the scheme is involved and what residents can anticipate in terms of travel disruption?”</p>

8	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. A. Tomkinson to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities, County Borough Councillor B. Harris:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the Muni Arts Centre redevelopment scheme?”</p>
9	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor T. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update on the Council’s almost £4.3m Cost of Living Support Scheme?”</p>
10	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. Rogers to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“It is a concern that many roads in RCT are patched over rather than given the much-needed investment of resurfacing. Can the relevant Cabinet Member share what support is available to residents when their vehicle is damaged on a Council maintained road due to its condition?”</p>
11	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor A. S. Fox to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update to Members on the discussions taking place given the significant financial pressures facing the public sector this year?”</p>
12	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Hickman to the Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity, County Borough Councillor M. A. Norris:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on investment in Porth town centre?”</p>
13	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Smith to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“With the introduction of the Social Partnership and Procurement Bill in Wales, can the Leader please outline what action RCT are taking to ensure compliance with the legislation?”</p>
14	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Bonetto to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Will the Leader provide an update on the progress of the South Wales Metro, and in particular on the depot at Taff’s Well?”</p>

15	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor Sera Evans to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader please outline what lessons have been learned from the Maindy Bridge closure?”</p>
16	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Yeo to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“The pressures facing Local Authority budgets are well documented and finances are becoming increasingly strained, but can the Cabinet Member outline what winter maintenance preparations are being considered and confirm whether this remains a priority for the Council?”</p>
17	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Cook to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Armed Forces Champion, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on the Council’s programme of events?”</p>
18	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor Sheryl. Evans to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on the recent awarding of Welsh Government funding under the Resilient Roads and Local Transport Fund?”</p>
19	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. Ellis to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update on the programme of coal tip management across RCT?”</p>
20	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Lewis to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member update on recycling rates in RCT and what progress is being made to improve these?”</p>
21	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor L. Addiscott to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member make a statement on investment in our sports centres and outline how this has impacted their usage?”</p>
22	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. E. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p>

	<p>"With Storm Dennis now almost 4 years ago, can the Leader give an assessment on the progress made since that Storm, which brought so much devastation to RCT?"</p>
23	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Powell to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>"Could the Cabinet portfolio holder for highways say what measures or proposals the RCT Highways department are considering to alleviate the dire traffic congestion problems that the Pontypridd Town centre has been enduring for many, many years please?"</p>
24	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor G. O. Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>"Can the Council Leader set out what level of protection our school budgets have in the draft budget being worked on?"</p>
25	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Grehan to the Cabinet Member for Development & Prosperity, County Borough Councillor M. Norris:</p> <p>"Mae nifer o ardaloedd yn fy ward i, sydd yn amlwg wedi eu hadeiladu gan y Cyngor neu wedi eu hadeiladu wrth greu ddatblygiadau newydd – llwybrau, grisiau, ardaloedd gwyrdd. Erbyn hyn mae'r Cyngor yn dweud nad yw'r ardaloedd yma yn eiddo i'r Cyngor ac felly nad oes ganddyn nhw gyfrifoldeb dros drwsio neu gadw'r ardaloedd yma. Galla i ofyn i'r Cyngor yma cymryd cyfrifoldeb dros yr ardaloedd yma er diogelwch ein trigolion?"</p> <p>"There are a number of areas in my ward, which have obviously been built by the Council or have been built when creating new developments – paths, stairs, green areas. By now the Council is saying that these areas are not the property of the Council and therefore it has no responsibility for repairing or maintaining these areas. May I ask this Council to take responsibility for these areas for the safety of our residents?"</p>
26	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Hughes to the Deputy Leader of the Council and Armed Forces Champion, County Borough Councillor M. Webber:</p> <p>"What support does this Council provide to the local Armed Forces community?"</p>
27	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Davis to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>"Can the Leader update on what new flood resilience bids are being put forward for 2024/2025?"</p>

28	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor M. Maohoub to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“With the latest published maps pinpointing 350 disused coal tips situated close to homes and communities that it fears could put people at risk in the event of a landslip and with Westminster insisting on not funding the clean-up of these coal-tips. Cwmbach, the ward I represent, is one of the areas affected and the disused coal tip is being categorised as a category D, which will need to be inspected twice a year. Can the Leader of the Council assure me that the inspections will be taking place as required?”</p>
29	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor J. Edwards to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Would the Leader update on the progress of the Welsh Government funded walking and cycling route along the river through the Rhondda Fach?”</p>
30	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor D. Owen-Jones to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update on the progress of the A4119 dualling works?”</p>
31	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Williams to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Council Leader tell this Council if the opposition group have put forward any budget suggestions in the face of what you have described – both in the Council Chamber and publicly in the media - as one of the most difficult budget rounds RCT has faced?”</p>
32	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. J. Davies to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader make a statement on capital investment across Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
33	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor C. Preedy to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, County Borough Councillor A. Crimmings:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member please give an update on the usage of the National Lido of Wales’ and any information on how long the summer season will be this year?”</p>
34	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor E. L. Dunning to the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, County Borough Councillor R. Lewis:</p>

	<p>“Will the Cabinet Member please make a statement on outreach work and detached youth service provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly in the Ystrad area?”</p>
35	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor W. Treeby to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities, County Borough Councillor B. Harris:</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member make a statement on what support the Council is providing to Paddling Pool groups in Rhondda Cynon Taf?”</p>
36	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor S. Rees to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Can the Leader provide an update on the progress on the delivery of the Labour Group’s manifesto commitments?”</p>
37	<p>Question from County Borough Councillor R. Evans to the Leader of the Council, County Borough Councillor A. Morgan OBE:</p> <p>“Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on the scheme to upgrade the culvert on the industrial estate in Porth?”</p>

4.4 At the Council meeting a maximum of 20 minutes shall be allowed for Questions on Notice. Any questions that are not dealt with in this time limit shall fall. Any questions on notice not answered will need to be resubmitted to the Proper Officer for the next full Council meeting in accordance with these rules.

5. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

5.1 The amendments to the Council Procedure Rule in respect of Members Questions was considered and agreed at the Council’s AGM 2019 and AGM 2021, following consultation with the Constitution Committee.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The amendment to the Council procedure rule taken forward at the Council AGM, allows the opportunity for more Members to ask a question at Council

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.2.

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

- 9.1 The opportunity for Members to propose questions at Council meetings allows Members to receive information which potentially detail the Council priorities. It also embraces the Future Generations Act as all work and decisions taken by Council seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Detailing the procedure for Members Questions on Notice assists in transparency for both Members and for public engagement.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

17 JANUARY 2024

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

Item: MEMBERS QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Background Papers

[Council AGM 2019.](#)

[Council AGM 2021](#)

tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-2024

COUNCIL

17th JANUARY 2024

THE COUNCIL'S 2024/25 REVENUE BUDGET (PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT)

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES

AUTHOR: Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services (01443 424026)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information in respect of the 2024/25 Provisional Local Government Settlement, and initial comments on its likely implications for the delivery of Council services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the Provisional 2024/25 Local Government Settlement, announced by the Minister for Finance and Local Government on the 20th December 2023;
- 2.2 Note that the Final 2024/25 Local Government Settlement is expected during early March 2024; and
- 2.3 Note the approach to budget consultation for 2024/25 as already determined.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To update Members on the implications of the Provisional Settlement for 2024/25 following receipt of information on the 20th December 2023.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The timing of the Local Government Settlement in Wales for 2024/25 has followed the UK Government Autumn Statement as announced on the 22nd November 2023.

4.2 On the 20th December 2023, the Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) announced the Provisional 2024/25 Local Government Settlement. The Minister's statement and key data table is attached at Appendix 1.

4.3 The "headlines" of the Provisional 2024/25 Settlement are as follows:-

- a. The overall increase in Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) funding for 2024/25 (of unhypothecated funding) at an all Wales level, after adjusting for transfers is 3.1% (+£169.8M).
- b. The settlement for Rhondda Cynon Taf, amounts to an increase of 2.8% which is below the average all Wales increase. Settlement figures across Wales range from 2.0% to 4.7%.
- c. A funding 'floor' protection has been included for 2024/25 so that no Council receives a settlement below 2.0%.
- d. There are no transfers into / out of the Settlement for 2024/25.
- e. The Settlement provides no indication of future year settlement levels.
- f. Provisional figures and indicative estimates for 2024/25 are also included for specific grants, at an all Wales level. The Social Care Workforce Grant will reduce from £45M to £35M (all Wales level), a reduction of £0.815M for this Council. This funds our core base budget.
- g. The Council's General Capital Funding allocation is reduced by £0.086M to £13.800M.

5.0 PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVICE IMPLICATIONS OF THE 2024/25 PROVISIONAL SETTLEMENT

5.1 The provisional settlement indicates that our 2024/25 RSG and NDR funding will total £484.111M.

5.2 Whilst the all Wales settlement is confirmed at the level previously indicated, this Council's settlement has been impacted negatively by

changes in a number of data sets (relative to other councils), in particular pupil and free school meal numbers.

- 5.3 Cabinet on the 20th November 2023 determined the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 at £79,696.89. The impact on the modelled budget gap of our updated tax base can also now be reflected.
- 5.4 The combined effects of the above can now be updated to the position previously reported in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the impact on the budget gap position which the Council faces. This is now shown at table 1.

Table 1 : Restated Budget Gap at Provisional Settlement

	£'000
Budget Gap at MTFP	35,005
<u>Provisional Settlement</u>	
RSG Reduction (3.1% to 2.8%)	1,817
SS Workforce Grant Reduction	815
Council Tax Base	- 983
Restated Gap at Prov Settlement	36,654

- 5.5 In preparation for the 2024/25 local government settlement, the Council's service managers have constructed base budget requirements for next financial year. Those initial calculations provided for:-

- Estimated employee costs, pension costs and National Insurance Contribution levels;
- Non-pay (i.e. goods and services) inflationary implications, including energy and fuel;
- Corporate financing requirements and levies; and
- Full year effects of any additional burdens imposed on the Council and the implications of demand led pressures.

- 5.6 Whilst the overall settlement has been protected at +3.1% in line with the indicative settlement, it remains a challenge for local government, as the following extract from the Minister's statement recognises :

"I recognise that while the recent very high rates of inflation are now decreasing, they are still high by the standards of the last 15 years. Baseline costs for staff and services have increased and are not reducing. Demand for services, alongside cost pressures mean that your Authorities will need to make difficult decisions on services, efficiencies, and council tax in setting your budgets."

- 5.7 Members have continued to receive updates on the projections of the Council's revenue budget position for the period to 2026/27, as part of our Medium Term Service Planning arrangements. The latest of these

assessments was considered by Council on the 20th September 2023 which, based on a range of modelled settlement levels, projected a funding gap of £35.005M (at the provisional All Wales +3.1% settlement level).

- 5.8 Alongside and since the preparation of the MTFP, officers have continued to review options for budget reduction measures, continuing our approach of early preparatory and delivery work which has benefitted us so well over recent years in particular.
- 5.9 Cabinet have already considered and agreed a number of proposals and also received an update at the meeting in November regarding Early Budget Reduction Measures. The financial implications of these can now be set against the budget gap faced. This is set out at Table 2.

Table 2 : Agreed Budget Reduction Measures

	£'000
Early Budget Measures	- 8,245
Base Budget Adjustments	- 841
Learning Disability Day Services Offer	- 220
Supported Living Service for People with a Learning Disability	- 544
Domiciliary Home Care	- 753
Day Services for Older People	- 140
Total Agreed Budget Reduction Measures	- 10,743

- 5.10 The combined effects of the above updates on the budget gap and following receipt of the provisional settlement are now shown in table 3.

Table 3 : Revised Budget Gap 2024/25

	£'000
Budget Gap at MTFP	35,005
Provisional Settlement and Tax Base Implications	1,649
Agreed Budget Reduction Measures	- 10,743
Remaining Budget Gap at Provisional Settlement	25,911

- 5.11 It will now be for the Cabinet to consider the implications of the above scenario in the preparation of its draft budget strategy. As part of this, consideration will be given to the outcome of the first phase of the budget consultation process.
- 5.12 In light of the scale of the challenge as set out in the MTFP, Senior Finance Officers have worked alongside service managers to identify both a range of service efficiency and service operational reconfiguration opportunities. This work provided the opportunity to deliver early budget reduction measures as has been identified above. Notwithstanding, the

scale of the challenge remains significant especially following the £38M budget gap which was balanced for the current financial year, the largest which this Council has ever faced.

- 5.13 Cabinet will clearly wish to consider carefully the wider and ongoing implications of the cost of living crisis on our services and staff, residents, businesses and communities. This will include council tax levels, the treatment of schools, our levels of fees and charges for next year and any opportunities to allocate additional resources to priority service areas.
- 5.14 It is inevitable, however that the resources available for next year are not going to be sufficient for us to continue to fully fund and maintain all of our services at their current levels and difficult decisions and choices will need to be made. In this regard we do have a track record of making decisions early and on an ongoing basis and use our reserves proportionately and pragmatically as part of setting balanced budgets each year.

6.0 DEVELOPING AN EQUITABLE BUDGET STRATEGY FOR 2024/25

6.1 Against the backdrop of a sustained period of financial challenges the Council must maintain a focus on robust financial management and stability. A key component of this is the responsible approach taken to how we address the development of our annual budgets. Therefore, we still, as in previous years, need to ensure that the parameters for producing the 2024/25 budget are adhered to, these being :-

- a) Maintain the Council's financial stability, whilst targeting any available funding, in an efficient and effective manner, towards our key services and priorities;
- b) Look to protect those key services and jobs wherever possible;
- c) Review **all** areas of service provision, including eligibility to those services and charging policies in place;
- d) Take maximum advantage of funding opportunities made available by the Welsh Government and others where it is in the best interests of the Council with appropriate exit arrangements when the funding ceases;
- e) "Top slice" appropriate necessary sums to fund corporate budgets;
- f) Allocate across our Services, initially, an adequate allowance for movements in employee costs;
- g) Allocate an appropriate level of funding to support our schools;

- h) Continue to deploy our procurement strategy to offset the impact of certain supplies and services inflation in the coming financial year;
 - i) Actively pursue efficiency in all areas of the Council, for example, through continuing our work on digitalisation, reducing office accommodation, on-going transformational change and a focus on invest to save and early intervention and preventative activities;
 - j) Use the strength of our balance sheet and reserves appropriately and prudently to balance service provision alongside the corporate and longer term financial health and standing of the Council.
- 6.2 These parameters will provide an effective and pragmatic framework for the delivery of a fair and equitable Council budget.

6.3 Council Tax Levels

- 6.4 As is the case every year in respect of Council Tax levels, the Council will have due regard to the level of increase and the ability of residents to pay, but it also has to balance this against the need to fund important services. The 'modelled' increase at this time, in line with the MTFP is +3.90% for 2024/25 and it is now for Cabinet to consider and recommend the level of Council Tax for next financial year.
- 6.5 The local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS), will continue to operate in line with the national framework, and at the same level of funding as that originally provided for through Revenue Support Grant in 2014/15. Costs therefore associated with Council Tax uplifts and changing caseloads remain a risk that the Council must fund. To illustrate the cost implications further, a 1% increase in Council Tax will generate an additional income for the Council of £1,286k (at the 2024/25 tax base level), but will also cost £258k in additional CTRS requirements. It therefore follows that a 1% increase generates a net additional income of £1,028k, or stated another way, 20% of any Council Tax increase is lost to support the increased costs associated with the Welsh Government's CTRS.

7.0 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Whilst the primary focus is necessarily on setting out an annual budget strategy and required Council Tax levels for the forthcoming financial year, the medium term financial and service planning emphasis has been a cornerstone of robust financial management at this Council.
- 7.2 The provision by Welsh Government of an all Wales indicative settlement for 2024/25 was helpful for our medium term financial planning arrangements, notwithstanding the level of indicative settlements itself

presented us with a significant challenge. Whilst we have received no indication of funding levels for the following years (2025/26 and beyond) from Welsh Government, the outlook for public sector finance remains extremely challenging. In this regard it is essential that we retain our focus across the medium term planning horizon and seek to ensure that we continue to manage our cost base effectively alongside future prospects for settlement levels.

7.3 The delivery of efficiency savings early and as part of our medium term planning has positioned us extremely well in our ability to respond to funding challenges and uncertainties and continues to contribute to the delivery of a lean, efficient and effective organisation.

7.4 Work is now underway to revisit all of the assumptions through to 2026/27 within the Medium Term Financial Plan and this will be reported to Members when available. The Council must continue to identify opportunities for efficiency and savings and whilst Members will clearly focus on their legal obligation to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 by March of this year, we must also have full regard to medium and longer term requirements.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

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

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The proposed approach to budget consultation for 2024/25 is set out in the Cabinet report dated 23rd October 2023. It comprises 2 phases as follows :

Phase 1 - to provide residents and stakeholders with the opportunity to feedback their views on some of the key strategic building blocks used to construct the Council's budget.

Phase 2 - once Cabinet have agreed a draft budget strategy, and in light of the provisional local government settlement, then this draft strategy will itself be consulted upon as part of Phase 2.

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The financial modelling assumptions and implications are set out in the detail of this report. Members are not being asked to make any new financial decisions at this stage.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS or LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

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

12.1 The budget strategy is a key enabler for the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

12.2 With regard to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, at the 4th March 2020 Council meeting, it was agreed that the Corporate Plan priorities would also serve as its Well-being Objectives in line with the Act.

13.0 CONCLUSIONS

13.1 The Minister for Finance and Local Government (Rebecca Evans MS) announced the Provisional 2024/25 Local Government Settlement on the 20th December 2023.

13.2 The reported Provisional Settlement represents an increase in revenue funding for the Council of +2.8% and small decrease in capital support.

13.3 The Council's primary objective continues to be setting a budget in 2024/25 that maintains key services and jobs wherever possible as well as ensuring the ongoing financial stability of the Council.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Provisional Local Government Settlement 2024-25**

DATE **20 December 2023**

BY **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government**

In 2024-25, local authorities will receive £5.7bn from the Welsh Government Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and non-domestic rates (NDR) to spend on delivering key services. This means the core revenue funding for local government in 2024-25 will increase by 3.1% on a like-for-like basis compared to the current year.

Additional funding of £1.3m is being provided to ensure no authority will receive less than a 2.0% increase.

The Welsh Government's budget is worth up to £1.3bn less in real terms than when it was set in 2021. Our settlement, which comes largely from the UK Government in the form of a block grant, is not sufficient to meet all pressures public services face as a result of persistently-high inflation and rising demand. As we have developed the draft Budget 2024-25, which was published yesterday, we have prioritised protecting core frontline public services as far as possible; supporting the hardest hit households and prioritising jobs, where we can.

We have therefore protected the indicative rise of 3.1% in the local government settlement, and in line with our focus on supporting households, this also continues to protect vulnerable and low-income households from any reduction in support through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). We will continue to maintain full entitlements in 2024-25 by providing £244m in the settlement.

In addition to the core settlement, I am publishing indicative information on specific revenue and capital grants planned for 2024-25, which amount to more than £1.3bn for revenue and more than £960m for capital at this provisional stage.

We have worked closely with local government throughout the year, and understand the pressures local government is facing. I am proud of the working relationship Welsh Government and local government share in Wales and we will continue to engage closely through the WLGA.

Demand for services, alongside cost pressures, caused by persistently-high inflation, means local authorities will need to make difficult decisions about services, efficiencies, and council tax as they set their budgets. It is important they engage meaningfully with their local communities as they consider priorities for the forthcoming year.

It is not appropriate for the Welsh Government to set an arbitrary level of council tax increase. Local authorities will need to take account of the full range of funding sources available to them, as well as the pressures they face. I encourage them to continue to carefully balance the impact of increases on household finances with the loss of support and services. I know that across Wales, leaders, elected members and officers alike will be striving to find ways to make the best use of their resources to make the most difference for their communities.

I am providing a package of non-domestic rates support which will benefit every ratepayer in Wales. I set this package out as part of the draft Budget yesterday. We will cap the increase to the non-domestic rates multiplier for 2024-25 to 5%, at a recurring annual cost of £18m. This is lower than the 6.7% increase that would otherwise apply. We will also be investing an additional £78m to provide a fifth successive year of support for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses with their non-domestic rates bills. We also continue to support ratepayers with increased liabilities following the 2023 non-domestic rates revaluation. Our transitional relief scheme continues to phase in changes for eligible ratepayers at a cost of £38m in 2024-25.

I set out the position on capital funding as part of the draft Budget. I have maintained the general capital funding for local authorities at £180m, the indicative level that was set last year. With soaring inflationary costs in the construction sector, I know this will mean local authorities will have to look carefully at and prioritise their capital programmes to continue to invest to best effect in the provision of public services. I have also continued to provide £20m in each year to enable authorities to respond to our joint priority of decarbonisation, to continue the focus on contributing to the Net Zero Wales plan.

Attached to this statement is a summary table setting out the settlement allocations (Aggregate External Finance (AEF)) by authority. They are derived using the formula agreed with local government.

As part of our Programme of Government we are committed to ensuring that local authorities are not hampered by unnecessary bureaucracy. In our discussions, local authorities overwhelmingly highlighted grants management and administration as the most burdensome administrative overhead, and the area with the greatest opportunity for change to achieve mutual benefit.

A programme of work is underway to reduce the number of separate grants paid to local authorities from 2024-25 and to consider moving grants into the de-hypothecated settlement if the wider context makes this appropriate. Some areas have already been identified for change and the draft budget sets out how we are rationalising and refocusing education specific grants. Where changes have already been worked through, these are set out in the grant tables published as part of the settlement. This work continues and I expect more changes to be presented at part of the final settlement. I am committed to complete transparency about the movements so local authorities and others can clearly see any changes in funding.

Further details will be sent to all local authorities and published on the [Welsh Government's website](#)

Summary Table

2024-25 Provisional Settlement compared to 2023-24 adjusted final AEF

	2023-24 AEF (£000) ¹	2024-25 AEF including floor (£000)	Change (£000)	% change	Rank
Isle of Anglesey	123,866	126,973	3,107	2.5%	17
Gwynedd	227,541	232,092	4,551	2.0%	21
Conwy	198,736	202,710	3,975	2.0%	21
Denbighshire	187,785	194,743	6,958	3.7%	4
Flintshire	251,959	257,555	5,596	2.2%	20
Wrexham	224,722	231,963	7,241	3.2%	8
Powys	228,558	234,940	6,381	2.8%	11
Ceredigion	129,341	132,715	3,373	2.6%	14
Pembrokeshire	212,626	217,999	5,372	2.5%	16
Carmarthenshire	338,439	349,441	11,002	3.3%	7
Swansea	417,588	433,590	16,002	3.8%	3
Neath Port Talbot	276,915	284,624	7,708	2.8%	12
Bridgend	250,557	257,978	7,422	3.0%	10
The Vale of Glamorgan	202,631	208,901	6,270	3.1%	9
Rhondda Cynon Taf	471,049	484,111	13,062	2.8%	13
Merthyr Tydfil	118,886	122,923	4,037	3.4%	5
Caerphilly	340,037	347,726	7,689	2.3%	19
Blaenau Gwent	139,809	143,433	3,624	2.6%	15
Torfaen	172,265	177,988	5,723	3.3%	6
Monmouthshire	122,561	125,355	2,794	2.3%	18
Newport	289,306	302,972	13,667	4.7%	1
Cardiff	594,712	618,958	24,246	4.1%	2
Total unitary authorities	5,519,889	5,689,689	169,800	3.1%	

Note: Total may not sum correctly due to rounding

1. 2023-24 AEF adjusted for the latest 2024-25 tax base.

tudalen wag



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL**

17th January 2024

WELSH CHURCH ACT FUND ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR –
FINANCE, DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES**

AUTHOR : Barrie Davies (01443) 424026

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report is to ensure the Council complies with the requirements relating to the production and approval of an Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Welsh Church Act Fund for the financial year ended 31st March 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (a) Consider the External Auditor report – “2022- 23 Audit Plan” (Appendix 1);
- (b) Consider the External Auditor report – “Audit of Accounts Report” (Appendix 2);
- (c) Approve and note the Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year 2022/2023 (Appendix 3); and

- (d) Approve and note the Letter of Representation relating to the Welsh Church Act Fund (Appendix 4).

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has administrative responsibility for the production of the Welsh Church Act Fund Annual Report and Financial Statements.
- 3.2 The draft financial statements were provided to Audit Wales on 10th November 2023.
- 3.3 The intervening period has seen the completion of the audit of the Financial Statements by Audit Wales and they are now in a position to provide their opinion on them as presenting a true and fair view. During the audit process a small number of amendments were necessary and these are incorporated into the Financial Statements at Appendix 3. The Audit Wales reports are at Appendix 1 “2022-23 Audit Plan” and the Audit of Accounts Report is at Appendix 2, both attached for Members consideration.
- 3.4 It is normal practice for Audit Wales to request that the Responsible Finance Officer provides a “Letter of Representation”, which highlights material issues relating to the completeness and/or accuracy of the information included in the Financial Statements and could, therefore, influence the audit opinion. This is to ensure that the Financial Statements properly reflect the Fund’s financial standing and is consistent with the approach taken by Audit Wales in prior years.
- 3.5 The Letter of Representation for the Welsh Church Act Fund is provided at Appendix 4.

4.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 4.1 The report satisfies the legal requirement for the approval of the Welsh Church Act Fund’s Annual Report and Financial Statements in accordance with the Charities Act 2011. As a result, there are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications to report.

5.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in the report.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The report ensures the Council complies with the legal requirements contained in the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No 629) and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice 2019 (FRS102).

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

9.1 The report supports the Well-being of Future Generations Act in particular 'a Wales of cohesive communities' through the financial support it offers to community based groups within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend Councils.

10.0 CONCLUSION

10.1 The completion of the audit of the Welsh Church Act Fund Financial Statements provides Members, in their role as trustees, with the necessary assurances upon the financial affairs of the Fund.

tudalen wag



Welsh Church Act Funds (RCT administered)

Outline Audit Plan 2023

Audit year: 2022-2023

Date issued: December

2023

Tudalen 45



This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions. Further information can be found in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

Audit Wales is the non-statutory collective name for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are separate legal entities each with their own legal functions. Audit Wales is not a legal entity and itself does not have any functions.

No responsibility is taken by the Auditor General, the staff of the Wales Audit Office or, where applicable, the appointed auditor in relation to any member, director, officer or other employee in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 Code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales, the Wales Audit Office and, where applicable, the appointed auditor are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to the Wales Audit Office at infoofficer@audit.wales.

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.

About Audit Wales

Our aims:

Assure



the people of Wales
that public money is
well managed

Explain



how public money
is being used to
meet people's
needs

Inspire



and empower the
Welsh public sector
to improve

Our ambitions:



Fully exploit our
unique perspective,
expertise and
depth of insight



Strengthen our
position as an
authoritative,
trusted and
independent voice



Increase our
visibility,
influence and
relevance



Be a model
organisation for the
public sector in
Wales and beyond

Contents

Introduction and my responsibilities	5
Fees and audit team	7
Significant financial statement risks	8
Audit timeline	9
Audit quality	10
Appendix 1 – key changes to ISA315 and impact	12

Introduction



Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for
Wales

This Outline Audit Plan specifies my statutory responsibilities as your external auditor and to fulfil my obligations under the Code of Audit Practice. It also sets out details of my audit team and key dates for delivering my audit team's activities and planned outputs. Given the size of the audit I do not intend sharing a Detailed Audit Plan later in the year. This plan therefore also sets out my estimated audit fee and the work my team intends undertaking to address the audit risks identified and other key areas of audit focus during 2023.

My audit responsibilities

I complete work each year to meet the following duties:

- I audit Welsh Church Act Fund's (the Fund's) financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.
- the Fund has to put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and I have to be satisfied that it has done this.
- The Fund needs to comply with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives. The Auditor General must assess the extent to which they are doing this.

Audit of financial statements

I am required to issue a certificate and report on your financial statements which includes an opinion on their 'truth and fairness'.

I do not seek to obtain absolute assurance on the truth and fairness of the financial statements and related notes but adopt a concept of materiality. My aim is to identify material misstatements, that is, those that might result in a reader of the accounts being misled. The levels at which I judge such misstatements to be material are seen in table below.

I will also report by exception on a number of matters which are set out in more detail in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

Level	£'000
Materiality	264
Performance Materiality	198
Triviality	13
Reduced threshold for sensitive areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Related Parties 	2.62

Fees and audit team

In January 2023 I published the fee scheme for the year, approved by the Senedd Finance Committee. This sets out my fee rates and also highlights the impact of the revised auditing standard ISA 315 on my financial audit approach. More details of the revised auditing standard and what it means for the audit I undertake is set out in **Appendix 1**.

The estimate fee for this year is £7540.

Your engagement team:

Richard Harries	Engagement Director
Tracy Veale	Audit Manager (Financial Audit)
Sara-Jane Byrne	Audit Manager (Performance Audit)
Angharad Clemens	Audit Lead (Financial Audit)
Ian Phillips	Audit Lead (Performance Audit)

We confirm that our audit team members are all independent of the Authority and your officers.

Significant financial statement risks

Significant risks are identified risks of material misstatement for which the assessment of inherent risk is close to the upper end of the spectrum of inherent risk or those which are to be treated as a significant risk in accordance with the requirements of other ISAs. The ISAs require us to focus more attention on these significant risks.

Significant risk	Our planned response
<p>The risk of management override of controls is present in all entities. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur, it is viewed as a significant risk [ISA 240.32-33].</p>	<p>The audit team will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assess the design and implementation of controls over journal entry processing;• test the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments made in preparing the financial statements;• review accounting estimates for bias; and• evaluate the rationale for any significant transactions outside the normal course of business.

Tudalen 52

There are no other risks identified to bring to your attention at this time.

Audit timeline

We set out below key dates for delivery of our audit work and planned outputs.

Planned output	Work undertaken	Report finalised
Audit of financial statements work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Audit of Financial Statements Report<li>• Opinion on the Financial Statements.	November 2023	December 2023

Audit quality

My commitment to audit quality in Audit Wales is absolute.

I believe that audit quality is about getting things right first-time.

We use a three lines of assurance model to demonstrate how we achieve this.

We have established an Audit Quality Committee to co-ordinate and oversee those arrangements. We subject our work to independent scrutiny by QAD¹ and our Chair acts as a link to our Board on audit quality. For more information see our [Audit Quality Report 2022](#).

Our People

The first line of assurance is formed by our staff and management who are individually and collectively responsible for achieving the standards of audit quality to which we aspire.

- Selection of right team
- Use of specialists
- Supervisions and review

Arrangements for achieving audit quality

The second line of assurance is formed by the policies, tools, learning & development, guidance, and leadership we provide to our staff to support them in achieving those standards of audit quality.

- Audit platform
- Ethics
- Guidance
- Culture
- Learning and development
- Leadership
- Technical support

Independent assurance

The third line of assurance is formed by those activities that provide independent assurance over the effectiveness of the first two lines of assurance.

- EQCRs
- Themed reviews
- Cold reviews
- Root cause analysis
- Peer review
- Audit Quality Committee
- External monitoring

¹ QAD is the Quality Assurance Department of ICAEW.



Appendix 1 – the key changes to ISA315 and the potential impact on your organisation

Key change	Potential impact on your organisation
<p>More detailed and extensive risk identification and assessment procedures</p>	<p>Your finance team and others in your organisation may receive a greater number of enquiries from our audit teams at the planning stage of the audit. Requests for information may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information on your organisation’s business model and how it integrates the use of information technology (IT); • information about your organisation’s risk assessment process and how your organisation monitors the system of internal control; • more detailed information on how transactions are initiated, recorded, processed, and reported. This may include access to supporting documentation such as policy and procedure manuals; and • more detailed discussions with your organisation to support the audit team’s assessment of inherent risk.
<p>Obtaining an enhanced understanding of your organisation’s environment, particularly in relation to IT</p>	<p>Your organisation may receive more enquiries to assist the audit team in understanding the IT environment. This may include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT applications relevant to financial reporting; • the supporting IT infrastructure (e.g. the network, databases); • IT processes (e.g. managing program changes, IT operations); and • the IT personnel involved in the IT processes.

Key change	Potential impact on your organisation
	<p>Audit teams may need to test the general IT controls and this may require obtaining more detailed audit evidence on the operation of IT controls within your organisation.</p> <p>On some audits, our audit teams may involve IT audit specialists to assist with their work. Our IT auditors may need to engage with members of your IT team who have not previously been involved in the audit process.</p>
<p>Enhanced requirements relating to exercising professional scepticism</p>	<p>Our audit teams may make additional inquiries if they identify information which appears to contradict what they have already learned in the audit.</p>
<p>Risk assessments are scalable depending on the nature and complexity of the audited body</p>	<p>The audit team's expectations regarding the formality of your organisation's policies, procedures, processes, and systems will depend on the complexity of your organisation.</p>
<p>Audit teams may make greater use of technology in the performance of their audit</p>	<p>Our audit teams may make use of automated tools and techniques such as data analytics when performing their audit. Our teams may request different information or information in a different format from previous audits so that they can perform their audit procedures.</p>

tudalen wag

Audit of Accounts Report – The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

Audit year: 2022-23

Date issued: December 2023

Document reference: WCA RCT 23

Purpose of this document

This document is a draft supplied in confidence solely for the purpose of verifying the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in it and to obtain views on the conclusions reached.

Handling prior to publication

This document and the copyright comprised therein is and remains the property of the Auditor General for Wales. It contains information which has been obtained by the Auditor General and the Wales Audit Office under statutory functions solely to discharge statutory functions and has been prepared as the basis for an official document that may be issued or published in due course. It may also contain information the unauthorised disclosure of which may be an offence under section 54 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. Except as expressly permitted by law, neither the document nor any of its content may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system and/or transmitted in any form or by any means, or disclosed to any person other than the original recipient without the prior written permission of the Wales Audit Office. It must be safeguarded at all times to prevent publication or other improper use of its content. Unauthorised use or disclosure may result in legal proceedings. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to the Wales Audit Office at infoofficer@audit.wales.

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to the Wales Audit Office at infoofficer@audit.wales.

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.

We intend to issue an unqualified audit report on your Accounts.

Audit of Accounts Report

Introduction	4
Proposed audit opinion	5
Significant issues arising from the audit	5
Recommendations	5
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Final Letter of Representation	6
Appendix 2 – Proposed Audit Report	9
Appendix 3 – Summary of Corrections Made	13

Introduction

- 1 We summarise the main findings from our audit of your 2022-23 annual report and financial statements in this report.
- 2 We have already discussed these issues with the Service Director, Finance Services and Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services.
- 3 Auditors can never give complete assurance that accounts are correctly stated. Instead, we work to a level of ‘materiality’. This level of materiality is set to try to identify and correct misstatements that might otherwise cause a user of the accounts into being misled.
- 4 We set this level at £264,180 for this year’s audit.
- 5 There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the reader and we have set a lower materiality level for these, as follows:
 - Related Parties £2,620
- 6 We have now substantially completed this year’s audit.
- 7 In our professional view, we have complied with the ethical standards that apply to our work; remain independent of yourselves; and our objectivity has not been compromised in any way. There are no relationships between ourselves and yourselves that we believe could undermine our objectivity and independence.

Proposed audit opinion

- 8 We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts once you have provided us with a Letter of Representation based on that set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 9 We issue a 'qualified' audit opinion where we have material concerns about some aspects of your accounts; otherwise we issue an unqualified opinion.
- 10 The Letter of Representation contains certain confirmations we are required to obtain from you under auditing standards.
- 11 Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 2**.

Uncorrected misstatements

- 12 There are no misstatements identified in the accounts, which remain uncorrected.

Corrected misstatements

- 13 There were initially misstatements in the accounts that have now been corrected by management. However, we believe that these should be drawn to your attention and they are set out with explanations in **Appendix 3**.

Other significant issues arising from the audit

- 14 In the course of the audit, we consider a number of matters relating to the accounts and report any significant issues arising to you. There were no issues arising in these areas this year.

Final Letter of Representation

[Audited body's letterhead]

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

Date

Representations regarding the 2022-23 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils for the year ended 31 March 2023 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and [insert relevant code]; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith;
- the design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.]

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- full access to:

- all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;
- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements;
- our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others;
- our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements;
- the identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware;

Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Representations by Full Council

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by [name of audited body/the Board] on [insert date].

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Officer who signs on behalf of management

Officer or Member who signs on behalf of those charged with governance

Date:

Date:

Proposed Audit Report

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the trustee of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils (the Fund) for the year ended 31st March 2023 under the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and related notes, including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at 31st March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

My staff and I are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which I report by exception

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require me to report to you if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit;
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustee report.

Responsibilities of the trustees for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the statement of trustee's responsibilities, the trustee is responsible for:

- maintaining sufficient accounting records;
- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- internal controls as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees anticipate that the services provided by the charity will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

I have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to fund's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, expenditure recognition and the posting of unusual journals;
- Obtaining an understanding of fund's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Fund operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Fund.
- Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Council and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the trustee
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business; and

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Fund's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
[Date]

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

Summary of Corrections Made

During our audit, we identified the following misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention due to their relevance to your responsibilities over the financial reporting process.

Exhibit 3: summary of corrections made

Value of correction	Nature of correction	Reason for correction
Related Party disclosures	Two of the Note 4.2 disclosures required amendment. Cumulative value £10,060.	To correctly reflect the related party transactions.



Audit Wales

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

**The Welsh Church Act Fund within
the areas of
Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend
and Merthyr Tydfil
County Borough Councils**

**ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
2022/23**

Registered Charity no. 506658

Annual Report 2022/23

Contents

	Page
Report of the Trustee	3
Statement of the Trustee's Responsibilities	8
Report of the Auditor	9
Statement of Financial Activities	13
Balance Sheet	14
Statement of Cash Flows	15
Accounting Policies	16
Notes to the Statement of Financial Activities	18
Notes to the Balance Sheet	21
Notes to the Cash Flow	23

Report of the Trustee for the Year Ended 31st March 2023

Duty to Prepare Annual Reports and Accounts

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, as trustee, is responsible for the preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts for the Welsh Church Act Fund.

The trustee presents its report along with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the legal requirements contained in the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No 629) and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice 2019 (FRS102).

Legal and Administrative Information

Name of Charity

The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.

Charity Number

506658

Governing Document

Trust Deed

Trustee

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, as a corporate body, is the trustee of the Welsh Church Act Fund.

Method of Appointment

Upon becoming a Member of the Council, Councillors become a trustee of the Fund.

Chief Executive

Paul Mee

Principal Office

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

Auditors

Audit Wales, 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ.

Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC, Leicester, Leicestershire, United Kingdom, LE87 2BB.

COIFs (Charities Official Investment Fund)

Managed by CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities) Investment Management Ltd., Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4ET.

Solicitors

Legal and Democratic Services, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Rhondda Cynon Taf, CF40 2XX.

Investment Managers

There is no contract with any advisor and no annual fees are charged. However, advice is sought on an ad-hoc basis.

Narrative Information

Constitution and Objectives

Lloyd George, under the provisions of the 1914 and 1919 Welsh Churches Acts, established the Welsh Church Act Fund. These two acts transferred certain categories of secularised property to a Welsh Church Act Fund to be administered by the County Councils, however, these funds were not activated until 1942-47, when property to the value of almost £2.5m was handed over to the County Councils.

The Welsh Churches Acts state that income of the funds should be devoted to charitable or alms giving purposes and that each Council is required to prepare a scheme for the use of the fund.

The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils still operates under the constitution of the Mid Glamorgan Welsh Church Act Fund. The original trust deed is dated 9th January 1976 and the registered charity number is 506658.

The charitable purposes to which the fund may be applied are:

- Educational
- Relief in sickness
- Relief in need
- Libraries, Museums, Art Galleries, etc.
- Social and recreational
- Protection of historical buildings, etc.
- Medical and social research, treatment, etc.
- Probation, etc.
- Blind persons
- Aged persons
- Places of worship and burial grounds
- Emergencies or disasters
- Other charitable purposes

These purposes are consistent with the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Organisation

All the Councillors of Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC act as trustee of the Welsh Church Act Fund. As the Fund covers the areas of Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil as well as Rhondda Cynon Taf, the trustee consults with representatives from these County Borough Councils on successful applications within their localities.

Where appropriate an induction and appropriate training is provided to councillors and any responsible officers which deal with the Fund on behalf of the Trustee.

The charity trustee has complied with the duty in the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Related Parties

A related party transaction is one where the charity has a relationship with another party, which might inhibit it from pursuing its own separate interests. It is considered that Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Bridgend CBC and Merthyr Tydfil CBC and all Trustees of the Fund have related party relationships with the charity. Transactions with related parties are disclosed in Note 4 to the Statement of Financial Activities.

Grant Making Policy

Organisations are invited to submit applications together with estimates, accounts and constitutions. One or more of the purposes mentioned previously will cover successful applicants. There are specific restrictions applied around these general categories which are as follows:

1. Students are not eligible as it is considered that the County Borough Council's education policy already covers the most worthwhile cases.
2. Individual cases of relief in sickness will be referred to by the County Borough Council's Community & Children's Services Group.
3. Individual cases of relief in need will be refused, as any provision in this area should be the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions. However, applications from organisations working towards relief in need will be considered on their merits.
4. No grant will be made towards organisations with an alcohol license.
5. No grants will be made toward projects operating outside the areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.
6. Applications will be considered from organisations based outside the areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf provided that the work of the organisation has local significance.
7. To be eligible, organisations should ensure their facilities are open to the public at large. Any assistance given will be towards project expenditure of a capital nature only. Revenue costs such as running expenses will not be supported. Welsh Church

Act Fund grants will not be paid up front. Grant will normally be paid on completion of the project, on submission of invoices and bank statements to evidence the expenditure.

8. Welsh Church Act Fund grant limits during 2022/23 were:

Grants under £2,000 did not require match funding, grants exceeding £2,000 required a minimum of 10% match funding and grants exceeding £10,000 required a minimum of 20% match funding from non-Welsh Church Fund sources. Maximum grant available was £50,000.

Details of the Grant Making Process

When projects are fully developed and ready for a decision, recommendations are made by officers via a Grant Assessment Report. Decisions to accept or reject these recommendations are made by the Regeneration Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Member and following consultation with Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.

Review of Financial Activities

The Statement of Financial Activities for the year is set out on page 13. A summary of the financial results are set out below:

Investment income during the year totalled £378k (£376k in 2021/22). Expenditure on charitable activities totalled £470k (£423k in 2021/22), and governance costs of £4k were incurred (£9k in 2021/22). Net incoming resources less resources expended amounted to a deficit of £96k (Net incoming resources less resources expended amounted to a deficit of £56k in 2021/22).

During 2022/23 the number of grant awards processed increased from 38 in 2021/22 to 40.

Net losses on the revaluation of Investments totalled £572k for the year (net gains of £385k in 2021/22).

Investment Policy and Performance against Policy

The Trust Deed governs the trustee's investment powers. This permits the Charity's funds to be invested in any authorised security listed on the London Stock Exchange. The trustee has complied with this policy during 2022/23.

The investment strategy of the Fund is to balance risk. Capital value is exposed to minimum risk whilst ensuring investment income is sufficient to pay for approved grants.

Aims

We will continue to be a demand led grant making charity providing support where it is needed.

Achievements and Performance

In line with the charity's objectives, grants of £440k were awarded in 2022/23. Further details are given in Note 2 to the Statement of Financial Activities.

Risk Management

The trustee is made aware of any issues with possible detrimental effects upon the Fund as they arise. There were no such issues during 2022/23.

The accounts are prepared in accordance with the Host Authority's Corporate Governance policies such as Financial Procedure Rules, Contract Procedure Rules, Codes of Conduct and Scheme of Delegation. The trustee is aware that investment values can decrease as well as increase.

Statement of the Trustee's Responsibilities

The trustee is responsible for preparing the Trustee's Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustee is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustee is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustee is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on its website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

By order of the Trustee

Signed:

On behalf of the Trustee.....

Date.....

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the trustee of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils (the Fund) for the year ended 31st March 2023 under the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and related notes, including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at 31st March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

My staff and I are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the body's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial

statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which I report by exception

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require me to report to you if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit;
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustee report.

Responsibilities of the trustees for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the statement of trustee's responsibilities, the trustee is responsible for:

- maintaining sufficient accounting records;
- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- internal controls as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees anticipate that the services provided by the charity will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

I have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they

could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, the head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to fund's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, expenditure recognition and the posting of unusual journals;
- Obtaining an understanding of fund's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that the Fund operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Fund.
- Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Council and legal advisors about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the trustee
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business; and

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the Fund's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Adrian Crompton
On behalf of the Auditor General for Wales
[Date]

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	
		2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
<u>Income and Endowments from:</u>			
Investments	1	378	376
Total Income and Endowments		378	376
<u>Expenditure on:</u>			
Charitable Activities	2	(470)	(423)
Other	3	(4)	(9)
Total Expenditure		(474)	(432)
Net gains/(Losses) on Investments		(572)	385
Net Income/(Expenditure)		(668)	329
<u>Net Movement in funds</u>		(668)	329
<u>Reconciliation of Funds</u>			
Total Funds Brought Forward at 1 st April		13,852	13,523
Total Funds Carried Forward at 31st March		13,184	13,852

The notes contained on pages 18 - 20 form part of these Accounts.

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023

	Note	31/03/23	31/03/22
		£'000	£'000
<u>Fixed Assets</u>			
Investments	1	13,209	13,781
		13,209	13,781
<u>Current Assets</u>			
Debtors	2	103	98
Cash at Bank		300	391
		403	489
<u>Current Liabilities</u>			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	3	(378)	(329)
Net Current Assets		25	160
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	4	(50)	(89)
Total Net Assets		13,184	13,852
Represented By:			
<u>The Funds of the charity:</u>			
Unrestricted Funds		13,184	13,852
Total Unrestricted Funds		13,184	13,852

The notes contained on pages 21 - 22 form part of these Accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31st March 2023

	Note	2022/23	2021/22
		£'000	£'000
<u>Cash Flows from Operating Activities:</u>			
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Operating Activities	1	(470)	(388)
<u>Cash Flows from Investing Activities:</u>			
Dividends, Interest and Rents from Investments		379	381
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Investing Activities		379	381
<u>Cash Flows from Financing Activities</u>			
Net Cash Provided by (Used in) Financing Activities		0	0
Change in Cash and Cash Equivalents in the Reporting Period		(91)	(7)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period		391	398
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period		300	391

The notes contained on page 23 form part of these Accounts.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Barrie Davies
Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director - Finance, Digital and Frontline Services

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale
Tonypany. CF40 2XX

Accounting Policies

Accounting Policies are the principles, bases, conventions and rules by which transactions are recognised, measured and presented in the accounts.

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the inclusion of investments at market value and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the legal requirements contained in the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008 No 629) and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice 2019 (FRS102) except where stated otherwise.

Incoming Resources Policy

Income is credited to the fund in the year to which it relates regardless of when the income is actually received.

Resources Expended Policy

Expenditure is included on an accruals basis i.e. charged to the year to which it relates regardless of when the expenditure is made.

Grants Payable Policy

Grants payable are charged in the year when the offer is conveyed to the recipient. Unused grants are written back when written confirmation is provided stating that funding is no longer required.

Management and Administration Policy

The allocation of Central Support Services costs to the Fund is based upon an estimate of the time spent by employees of Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC in undertaking work associated with the Fund.

Investment Properties

Investment properties are recorded in the accounts at the most recent valuation of market value. Any difference in value arising out of the periodic revaluations will be charged/credited to Unrestricted Funds. The most recent valuation was at 1st December

2020 and was carried out by Chris Clarke Surveyors Ltd. In accordance with FRS 102, investment properties are not depreciated.

Fixed Asset Investments (Other Than Property)

Long Term Investments are recorded in the accounts at current market value. Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, as Host Authority, administers investments on behalf of the Fund. The Treasury Management Policy statement of the Host Authority governs all such transactions.

Any unrealised and realised gains and losses on revaluation and disposal are combined in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Fund Structure

All funds are unrestricted.

Trustee Remuneration and Expenses

The trustee has not received any remuneration or expenses in the year 2022/23.

Policy on Reserves

Reserves are unrestricted and held for the future use of the Fund for the purposes specified in the Trust Deed.

Policy on Investments of Cash

Cash is deemed to be sums of money available for immediate use by the Welsh Church Fund. Such items are cash balances held in the Fund's bank account (less unpresented cheques). The Welsh Church Fund does not hold Cash in Hand.

Policy on Debtors and Creditors

Debtors are amounts recoverable, based on the amount the Charity anticipates it will receive. There is no bad debt provision included within the Statements. Creditors are amounts due from the Welsh Church Act Fund.

Policy on Going Concern

The trustee is responsible for keeping proper accounting records and produce financial statements that comply with the provisions of the trust deed. The Fund is therefore prepared on the basis of a going concern.

Notes to the Statement of Financial Activities**1. Investment Income**

	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Bank Interest	7	1
Interest on Investments	371	375
Total	378	376

2. Charitable Activities

During 2022/23 the Fund awarded total grants amounting to £440,164.81. Those organisations awarded grants equal to or greater than £2,000 are detailed below:

Organisation	Amount £
Ty Ellis Porthcawl	(2,229.60)
Merthyr Tydfil Tennis Club	(5,219.44)
Cylch Meithrin Seren Fach (YGG Abercynon)	(2,422.19)
Temple Baptist, Pontypridd	(10,000.00)
St John the Baptist, Ton Pentre	(10,000.00)
Fernhill and Glenboi Community Centre	(2,384.10)
All Saints Church, Trealaw	(8,546.10)
Citizen Advice Bureau – Taff St Project	(50,000.00)
Hope Rescue, Llanharan - electrics	(10,000.00)
Darranlas Environmental Project	(7,182.00)
Nebo Baptist Church (wall 2), Bridgend	(9,100.00)
Darranlas Community Building	(5,997.59)
Rhondda Fach Methodist Church	(10,000.00)
Friends of Tynybryn Park, Tonyrefail	(50,000.00)
St Dunstan's, Ferndale	(8,585.00)
St George, Cwmparc	(8,517.05)
Brackla Tabernacle, Bridgend	(8,489.88)
St Barnabas, Penygraig	(10,000.00)
St Illtyd Williamstown / Penrhiwfer	(10,000.00)
St Illtyd, Dowlais	(10,000.00)
Rhondda Lawn Tennis Club	(4,155.84)
3D Church, Tonyrefail	(10,000.00)
St Fagan's Church, Trecynon	(10,000.00)
Valley's Kids (Saor)	(8,237.16)
The Arts Factory	(6,640.00)
Accessible Caring Transport	(39,748.20)
Y Siop Fach Sero	(46,211.31)
St James, Llwydcoed	(10,000.00)
St Teilos, Merthyr Mawr	(10,000.00)
St Barnabas, Gilfach Goch	(3,105.00)
Rhondda Lawn Tennis Club	(10,000.00)
Bethany Baptist Church, Hopkinstown	(8,500.00)

Hope Rescue, Llanharan - Broadband	(6,872.39)
Challenging Behaviour Service, Pontypridd	(10,000.00)
Darranlas Community Building	(9,915.14)
Subtotal of grants equal to or greater than £2,000 (35 in number)	(432,057.99)
Grants less than £2,000 (5 in number)	(8,106.82)
Total grants payable for 2022/23 (40 in number)	(440,164.81)
Grants written back to the Fund	10,301.17
Accounting and Technical Support	(39,941.86)
Total Charitable Activities as per Statement of Financial Activities	(469,805.50)

The Welsh Church Fund only awards grants to institutions.

The following table gives a summary analysis of grants awarded by the nature of the project during 2022/23:

Analysis	Total Amount of Grant Awarded	Total Number of Grants
	£	
Social and recreational	81,737.59	8
Other charitable purposes	200,657.68	13
Places of worship	157,769.54	19
Libraries, Museums and Art Galleries	0	0
Total	440,164.81	40

3. Other Costs

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Audit Fees	(4)	(9)
Total	(4)	(9)

4. Related Party Transactions

4.1 Related Transactions with Administrating Authority

Organisation	Nature of Interest	Welsh Church Act Fund Transactions with Organisation			
		Net Value		Balance Outstanding as at 31st March 2023	
		£'000		£'000	
		Payments	Receipts	Payments	Receipts
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	Accounting & Technical Support	(40)	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	Interest Receivable	0	7	0	7
Total		(40)	7	0	7

4.2 Related Transactions with Members of the Council

During 2022/23, twelve Members identified an interest in twelve organisations that have been awarded a grant from the Fund.

Organisation	Member's Relationship	Amount Awarded		Outstanding Amount	
		2022/23	2021/22	31/03/23	31/03/22
St Elvan's Church, Aberdare.	1 Member	0	0	0	2,000
Friends of Aberdare Park	1 Trustee and 1 Member/Trustee	0	0	0	10,000
Pontypridd YMCA	1 Director /Trustee	0	0	15,000	50,000
Gelligaled Park Action group.	Trustee and a Member	0	39,762	0	39,762
St Winifred's Church, Penrhiwceiber	Treasurer	0	10,000	0	0
Darranlas Environmental Group, Mountain Ash	Member *	7,182	8,926	0	2,792
Darranlas Community Building, Mountain Ash	Member *	15,913	10,000	9,915	10,000
Lee Garden Pool Penrhiwceiber	Chair	0	48,560	8,560	28,560
Fernhill & Glenboi Community centre	Member *	2,384	0	2,384	0
Friends of Tynybryn Park	Member	50,000	0	50,000	0
Y Siop Fach Sero	Director	46,211	0	29,297	0
Rhondda Lawn Tennis Club, Treorchy	Member	14,156	20,000	10,000	10,000

* The same one member declared an interest in each of these organisations.

Notes to the Balance Sheet

1. Fixed Asset Investments

1.1 Analysis of Movement in Investments

An analysis of the fixed assets held as investments for the charity is provided below:

	Land £'000	Securities £'000	Totals £'000
1 st April 2022	44	13,737	13,781
Net Deficit on Revaluation	0	(572)	(572)
Market Value at 31st March 2023	44	13,165	13,209

1.2 Investment Securities Analysis

	31/03/23 £'000	31/03/22 £'000
Government Stock	482	479
Charities Official Investment Fund	8,476	8,795
Charities Official Fixed Interest Fund	4,207	4,463
Total Market Value	13,165	13,737
Historical Cost as at 31 st March 2023	7,289	7,289

2. Debtors

An analysis of debtors as at 31st March 2023 is provided below:

	31/03/23 £'000	31/03/22 £'000
Amounts due from RCT CBC	7	1
Accrued Interest on Investments	96	97
Total	103	98

2.1 Accrued Interest relates to investment income relating to 2022/23 paid in 2023/24. It is made up as follows:

	£'000
COIF Fixed Interest Fund	61
COIF Investment Fund	32
2 ½ % Index Linked 2024	3
Total	96

3. Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year

An analysis of creditors as at 31st March 2023 is as follows:

	31/03/23	31/03/22
	£'000	£'000
Miscellaneous Charitable Organisations	(319)	(304)
Audit Wales – fee accrual	(13)	(15)
Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC	(46)	(10)
Total	(378)	(329)

4. Creditors: Amounts Falling Due After More Than One Year

An analysis of creditors as at 31st March 2023 is as follows:

	31/03/23	31/03/22
	£'000	£'000
Miscellaneous Charitable Organisations	(50)	(89)
Total	(50)	(89)

Notes to the Cash Flow**1. Reconciliation of Net Income/(Expenditure) to Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities**

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Net Income/(Expenditure) as per the Statement of Financial Activities	(668)	329
Adjustments for:		
(Gains)/Losses on Investments	572	(385)
Dividends, Interest and Rents from Investments	(378)	(376)
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	(6)	0
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	10	44
Net Cash Provided by (used in) Operating Activities	(470)	(388)

tudalen wag

Appendix 4

Date/Dyddiad:
17th January 2024

Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:
Barrie Davies
(01443) 424026

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

Dear Adrian,

Representations regarding the 2022/23 financial statements for the Welsh Church Act Fund within the Areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of the Welsh Church Act Fund for the Areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils for the year ended 31st March 2023 for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management Representations

Responsibilities:

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and the Charities SoRP; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith;
- The design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Information Provided:

We have provided you with:

- Full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;
 - additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- The results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- Our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects The Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- Our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others.
- Our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.
- The identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.

Financial Statement representations:

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Representations by the Trustee of the Welsh Church Act Fund within the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils.

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by full Council of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council on 17th January 2024.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by

Deputy Chief Executive and
Group Director - Finance, Digital and
Frontline Services

Date 17/01/24

Leading Member

Date 17/01/24

tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24

COUNCIL

17th JANUARY 2024

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

REPORT OF: THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR - FINANCE, DIGITAL & FRONTLINE SERVICES

Author: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report fulfils the requirement to annually consider whether to revise or replace the Council's existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme ("CTRS") and the requirement to adopt a scheme by 31st January 2024.
- 1.2. As part of the review, the report sets out the changes to the CTRS that were introduced in April 2013. It explains the amendments proposed, the funding implications likely and documents the consultation outcomes allowing Members to consider the adoption of the Council's local CTRS for the 2024/25 financial year, which must be adopted by 31st January 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that Members:

- a) Note and adopt the provisions of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations and the amendments made to those regulations by the Amendment Regulations as the Council's local CTRS for 2024/25, subject to the local discretions that the Council is able to exercise and subject to the regulations being approved by Welsh Government on 16th January 2024 and coming into force on 19th January 2024;
- b) Note the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Council on the local discretions applicable to the CTRS for 2024/25; and
- c) Confirm the discretions applicable to the Council's local CTRS for 2024/25 as set out at paragraph 5.3 (Table 2) of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The CTRS in Wales is set by regulations made under Schedule 1B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as inserted by the Local Government Finance Act 2012). On 26th November 2013, the (former) National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) approved two sets of regulations:
- (a) the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Default Scheme Regulations”); and
 - (b) the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Prescribed Requirements Regulations”) (together the “Regulations”).

The Regulations at (b) above prescribe the main features of the CTRS to be adopted by all councils in Wales.

- 3.2. The Prescribed Requirements Regulations contain an obligation, where each year a council must consider whether to revise its scheme, or to replace it with another scheme. Any revision or replacement must be made no later than 31st January in the year preceding the financial year for which the revision or replacement scheme will take effect. However, the Regulations were amended in January 2015 to remove the requirement for Local Authorities to consult in relation to changes made by Welsh Ministers where authorities have no discretion. This means that Local Authorities do not need to consult when the Prescribed Requirements Regulations are amended by Welsh Government (WG) annually, to reflect consequential amendments to other state benefit changes.
- 3.3. Although there is a national scheme for Wales, the Prescribed Requirements Regulations provide limited discretion for the Council to apply minor additional discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme and which provide for additional administrative flexibility. If the Council does decide to offer more generous local discretions this would further increase the cost of the CTRS. These are:-
- (a) The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to persons who have ceased to receive qualifying benefits after they return to work (or increase hours or increase earnings), where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax reduction that is to end as a result of the change in their circumstances;
 - (b) The ability to backdate the application of Council Tax reduction for periods longer than the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made; and
 - (c) Discretion to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow’s Pensions (disregarded when calculating the income of the applicant).
- 3.4. The Prescribed Requirements Regulations require the Council to adopt a CTRS by 31st January each year, regardless of whether it applies any of the discretionary elements set out in the preceding paragraph. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme shall apply under the provisions of the Default Scheme Regulations. The Council can only apply discretion if it adopts a scheme under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations.

- 3.5. Each year, WG updates the Regulations to amend the financial values used to assess an applicant's entitlement. On 5th December 2023 the amending Regulations - (The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2024) (the "Amendment Regulations") - were laid before WG. Due to the WG's procedures which govern the making of the Regulations, the Amendment Regulations are to be formally considered by Plenary session of WG on 16th January 2024 and subject to approval, will come into force on 19th January 2024.
- 3.6. As detailed above, each year WG has to amend the Regulations to ensure that certain financial values used to calculate entitlement to a reduction for non-passported CTRS applicants are up-rated. For 2024/25, these changes relate to: -
- Personal allowances in relation to working age, carer and disabled applicants;
 - Personal allowances in relation to pensioner applicants; and
 - Non-dependant deductions.
- 3.7. In addition to any changes to the up-rating provisions referred to above, the Amendment Regulations incorporate further amendments to reflect consequential changes relating to social security benefits and other technical changes. A summary of all the main changes is set out in Appendix 1 to this report for information.

4. CONSULTATION AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. The Regulations specify that in preparing its CTRS, a council must consult with any person it considers are likely to have an interest. Consequently, this requirement is met by incorporating a number of questions on the discretionary areas in the local CTRS, within the Council's general budget consultation process (which includes council tax levels and service priorities to inform the annual budget setting process).
- 4.2. Phase 1 of the annual budget consultation process for the 2024/25 financial year ran from 14th November to 19th December 2023 and used the Council's Let's Talk Engagement website, delivered face-to-face events in the community and with specific groups / Council Committees / secondary school learners, and provided alternate means of engagement for those having reduced or no access to the internet and for those who preferred to engage through traditional methods.
- 4.3. The overall response from the consultation process on the three discretionary areas available to the Council and which it could apply to its CTRS was as follows: -

Table 1

Discretion Area	No. of Respondents	Yes	No	Don't Know
Do you think that 4 weeks is a reasonable period to continue paying Council Tax Reduction when someone returns to work?	164	118	29	17
Do you think that it is reasonable for the Council to continue to totally disregard War Disablement and War Widow's Pensions income when assessing entitlement to CTR Scheme?	162	85	47	30
Do you think that 6 months is a reasonable period to backdate claims for working age and pensioners?	163	99	45	19

- 4.4. As part of the consultation arrangements set out in paragraph 4.2 a presentation was made to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13th December 2023. At this meeting, the Committee did not highlight any proposed changes to the current arrangements in place, these being:
- Extended Payments - a 4-week extended payment period for people who return to work.
 - War disablement pensions / war widow's pension income - exclude war disablement and war widow pension income when assessing CTRS entitlement.
 - Backdating claims – maintain the backdated claim period of 6 months.
- 4.5. In terms of an Equality Impact Assessment, the Council undertook a comprehensive equality impact assessment in January 2013 based on the original scheme. This has been reviewed in light of the minor changes to each subsequent year's scheme and it is evident that there are no amendments required.
- 4.6. The NAFW undertook a comprehensive Regulatory Impact Assessment in respect of the national Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which accompanied the Regulations when they were considered by the NAFW in November 2013.

5. ADOPTION OF THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

- 5.1 The Council is required to adopt its CTRS by 31st January 2024. This requirement is a statutory duty and applies even if the Council chooses not to apply any of the discretions available to it. If the Council fails to make a scheme, then a default scheme will apply under the Default Scheme Regulations (as amended).
- 5.2 As set out in paragraph 3.3, the Council does have limited discretion to be more generous than the national scheme and provide for additional administrative flexibility (specified under Part 5, paragraphs (32) to (34) of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations).
- 5.3 Taking account of:-
- (a) the responses to the Council's consultation exercise relating to the discretionary elements of the scheme;
 - (b) the existing Housing Benefit Scheme in relation to the treatment of War Pensions (widows, widowers and disablement), which disregards these payments in full; and
 - (c) the fixed funding made available by WG (as detailed at paragraph 6),

it is recommended that the approach to the available discretions should continue in line with the arrangements for 2023/24 as set out in Table 2.

Table 2

<p align="center">Discretionary Parts of the Prescribed Requirements Regulations</p> <p><i>(Part 5 – Other Matters that must be included in an Authority’s scheme)</i></p>	<p align="center">Prescribed Requirements Regulations (Minimum Requirement)</p>	<p align="center">Recommended Discretion to be adopted</p>
<p>Ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to applicants where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax reduction that is to end, as they have ceased receiving qualifying benefits as a result of returning to work, increasing their hours of work, or receiving increased earnings.</p> <p><i>Regulation 32 (3) paragraph (33) of Schedule 1 and Regulation 33 (3), paragraph (35) and (40) of Schedule 6.</i></p>	<p align="center">4 Weeks</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (33) of Schedule 1 will apply, and</p> <p><u>Non- Pensioners:</u> The standard period of 4 weeks specified in paragraph (35) and (40) of Schedule 6 will apply</p>
<p>Ability to backdate an application for CTR with regard to late claims prior to the standard period of 3 months before the claim is made.</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (4) and paragraph (3) and (4) of Schedule 13.</i></p>	<p align="center">3 Months</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> A period of 6 months will apply.</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> A period of 6 months will apply.</p>
<p>Ability to disregard more than the statutory weekly £10 of income received in respect of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions (disregarded when calculating income of the applicant);</p> <p><i>Regulation 34 (5), paragraphs 1(a) and 1(b) Schedule 4 and paragraphs 20(a) and 20(b) of Schedule 9</i></p>	<p align="center">£10</p>	<p><u>Pensioners:</u> The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 1 (a) and (b), Schedule 4 will be disregarded.</p> <p><u>Non-Pensioners:</u> The total value of any pension specified in paragraphs 20 (a) and (b), Schedule 9 will be disregarded.</p>

5.4 It should be noted that there is no additional funding available from WG to fund the discretionary elements of the CTRS. The estimated cost of funding the discretionary elements of the Prescribed Scheme in **2023/24** is set out in Table 3 below:

Table 3

Discretionary Element	Est. Annual Cost (£)	No. of Applicants
Extended Payments	1,000	12
Backdated Payments	15,000	99
War Disablement & War Widow's Pensions	20,000	50
Total estimated cost	36,000	

5.5 Accordingly, it is recommended that the Council adopts the Prescribed Requirements Regulations (as amended by the Amendment Regulations), subject to these regulations being approved by Welsh Government and coming into force, which set out all the components that must be included in a CTR Scheme, as the Council's CTR Scheme for 2024/25 along with the discretions as set out in Table 2.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

6.1. The budgeted annual value of CTRS to be paid in **2023/24** is £25.784M. There are currently 23,444 applicants as compared to 23,579 at December 2022.

6.2. Local Authorities receive fixed funding for the CTRS from WG, which means that as a local authority's caseload, and hence costs, changes from that assumed when the WG funding was set, the local authority bears the financial risk of any variance.

6.3 The amount allocated to councils by WG through the local government settlement takes no account of:

- Any increase in Council Tax levels that may be applied for 2024/25;
- The increase or decrease in the costs of awards under the CTRS if the number of claimants increase/decrease, or if claimants become eligible for more/less help; and
- The provision for Council Tax bad debt.

6.4 The total amount of cash-limited funding for 2024/25 distributed to the local authorities in Wales contained in the provisional Local Government Settlement announced on 20th December 2023 is £244M (this has remained unchanged since 2013/14) and the Council's allocation for 2024/25 is £20.866M (representing 8.6% of the all Wales funding).

6.5 Any change to actual Council Tax levels in 2024/25 made by the Council, will affect the cost of providing the local CTRS, which equates to approximately £258k for each 1% increase in Council Tax.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The equality and diversity and socio-economic duty implications are set out in the main body of the report.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation arrangements have been set out in the main body of the report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The relevant legislation has been referenced throughout the main body of the report.

10. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

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

11.1 The recommendation for the adoption of this CTRS and the local discretions is in line with the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 "Making a Difference" through focussing on supporting the economy, prosperity and promoting people's independence and will contribute to the draft well-being objectives being developed as part of the Council's new Corporate Plan covering the period April 2024 to March 2030. In doing so, it will also contribute to the well-being goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 Each year local authorities in Wales are under a statutory obligation to consider whether to revise their CTRS or to replace it with another scheme and any revision or replacement must be made by no later than 31st January in the year preceding the financial year for which the revision or replacement scheme will take effect.

12.2 This report provides Council with details of the proposed scheme to be applicable for financial year 2024/25.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Amendments to the 2013 Regulations made by 2024

Regulations

1. The new statutory instrument¹ amends the 2013 CTRS Regulations to up-rate certain figures used within those Regulations to calculate entitlement to a Council Tax Reduction, and the amount of any reduction awarded to applicants in 2024/25. It also makes a number of consequential and technical amendments to the 2013 CTRS Regulations to take account of interrelated benefits and ensure they remain fit for purpose.
2. The up-rating increases the various figures used to calculate an applicant's entitlement to a reduction and the amount of the reduction, in line with variations for living costs and earnings. The uprated figures relate to:

Change	Impact
<p>Personal allowances in relation to working age, carer and disabled applicants</p> <p>The financial figures in respect of these allowances have been amended and have increased in line with the cost of living rises. The convention is to uprate in line with the Consumer Price Index September figure from the previous year (2023), which is 6.7%.</p>	<p>Costs</p> <p>Uprating the financial figures in respect of pensioners and working age allowances would slightly increase total reductions under Council Tax Reduction Schemes. However, if the financial figures in relation to Non-Dependant Deductions were also uprated, this would mitigate some of the increase in total reductions. Consequently, total council tax reductions are not expected to rise significantly because of the uprating.</p> <p>Benefits</p> <p>Uprating the financial figures in the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the personal allowance for working age applicants continues to increase in line with the CPI (which is set at 6.7%). For example in 2024-25, the single person allowance would increase from £90.40 to £96.45 (an increase of £6.05). ▪ the personal allowance for pensioners continues to increase in line with the standard minimum guarantee and savings credit. For example in 2024-25, the single person allowance would increase from £217.00 to £235.20 (an increase of £18.20). ▪ Non-dependant deduction rates are uprated, this will ensure the calculation used to assess the eligibility of non-dependant households remains up-to-date. The calculation would continue to make a fair assessment of the income of non-dependants and the cost of council tax. This will ensure the system remains fair and equitable.
<p>Pensioners reaching state pension age: personal allowance</p> <p>The Regulations currently provide for higher or lower personal allowance rates for pensioners depending on whether they are over or under 65 respectively. There are no longer pensioners (within the meaning of the Regulations) who are under the age of 65. An amendment is therefore made to remove those redundant references. The effect of the amendment is that all pensioners in Wales are entitled to the higher rate of personal allowance. This means the Welsh scheme is more generous than in England.</p>	
<p>Non-dependant deductions</p> <p>The financial figures in relation to both the income bands and deductions made in relation to 'non-dependants' will be uprated. If amendments are not made, appropriate deductions would not be made from CTRS awards as the income thresholds would no longer reflect average earnings and the deduction would no longer reflect the overall cost of council tax.</p>	

¹ The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

3. Additional Consequential Amendments

In addition to the uprating of financial figures, this statutory instrument makes a number of consequential amendments to the 2013 CTRS Regulations. These will ensure the 2013 Regulations remain up-to-date and fit for purpose.

Area/Issue	Effect of 2024 “Amendment” Regulations
<p><u>Widowed Parents Allowance and Bereavement Support back payments</u> This will ensure no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they have received a Widowed Parents Allowance (WPA) back payment or a retrospective Bereavement Support Payment (BSP)</p>	<p>The proposed amendment makes provision to disregard any payment received from the calculation of an applicant’s capital under the scheme. The amendment proposes that any backdated BSP award would be aligned with the existing provision for BSP awards and disregarded for a period of 12 months. Any WPA back payments will continue to be disregarded from a person’s capital</p>
<p><u>Post Office Compensation payments</u> The UK Government has announced funding to enable the Post Office to deliver compensation schemes and arrangements for various cohorts of postmasters. These include the Horizon Shortfall Scheme, compensation arrangements for postmasters whose convictions were overturned and a compensation scheme for postmasters who did not receive remuneration during a suspension period. An amendment will ensure no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive any compensation or support payment made in connection with the failings of the Post Office Horizon system</p>	<p>The proposed amendment makes provision to disregard any compensation or support payment received from the calculation of an applicant’s capital and a non-dependant’s deduction under the scheme</p>
<p><u>The Vaccine Damage Payment scheme</u> The Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS) incorporated COVID-19 from December 2020, and the scheme is now processing these claims. The majority of VDPS awards are already disregarded relating to compensation for personal injury. However, this does not currently apply to the partners of vaccinated individuals who receive a payment derived from a VDPS award. The proposed amendment to the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure that no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive a payment under the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 in respect of a partner.</p>	<p>The proposed amendment makes provision to disregard a payment received from the calculation of an applicant’s capital under the scheme</p>
<p><u>The Infected Blood Inquiry</u> The Infected Blood Inquiry published its first interim report in July 2022: this made a number of recommendations for a framework for compensation and redress for the victims of infected blood. The report recommended that interim compensation payments of £100,000 be made to infected persons and bereaved partners who registered with a UK infected blood support scheme. Where an infected person or their bereaved partner died before the interim payment could be made, the Government agreed that the interim payment of £100,000 would be made to that person’s estate.</p>	<p>The proposed amendment to the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure that no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive an interim infected blood compensation payment from their deceased parent’s estate. The amendment makes provision to disregard a payment received from the calculation of an applicant’s capital under the scheme.</p>

4. Minor technical and consequential amendments

Some further minor technical amendments are proposed to the 2013 CTRS Regulations to align provisions in Wales with England and housing benefit provisions. These ensure an applicant who is a pensioner and responsible for a young person who is in receipt of an Armed Forces Independence Payment is taken into account when calculating eligibility. The amendment also ensures that the list of matters which must be disregarded in relation to non-dependant deductions in relation to working age people also applies to pensioners.

A consequential amendment will also reflect changes to the legislative landscape as a result of The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 which becomes operational from April 2024.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

17th JANUARY 2024

REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP) 2022 – 2037 - PREFERRED STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR NORRIS

AUTHOR – OWEN JONES, DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER FOR PLANNING POLICY

Appendices; Appendix 1 – The Revised Local Development Plan (2022 – 2037) Preferred Strategy.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the Preferred Strategy for the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2022 – 2037, (shown in full at Appendix 1.) and seeks Council approval to carry out statutory public consultation on the RLDP Preferred Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that;

- 2.1 The RLDP Preferred Strategy be approved for statutory public and stakeholder consultation.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Preferred Strategy has been prepared in accordance with legislation and national planning policy. It is considered that this Preferred Strategy, otherwise known as the Pre-deposit stage of the RLDP, appropriately meets the tests of soundness required of it at this stage, in that;

- It is consistent with other plans, policies and strategies,
- It appropriately meets the needs and intentions that have been identified for RCT, and

- It is sufficiently achievable and deliverable.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Revised Local Development Plan

4.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf are revising their Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP is the statutory land-use planning document for the County Borough (excluding the area in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority). It identifies where development should take place and sets out planning policies on numerous topics, which then form the basis for decisions on planning applications.

4.3 The current LDP has a plan period of 2006 to 2021, with the Revised LDP (RLDP) for the period 2022 to 2037. However, the current LDP remains in force until the RLDP is adopted (which is timetabled for early 2026).

4.4 What is the Preferred Strategy?

4.5 The document itself forms the completion of the first formal stage of preparation of the RLDP, which is also known as the Pre-deposit stage. It sets out the key Issues, Vision, Objectives and strategy options; before presenting a 'Preferred Strategy'. At this strategic level, it will seek to address the needs of RCT by proposing levels of development growth and where this should be spatially distributed across the County Borough. The Preferred Strategy sets out a small number of strategic level planning policies to be expanded upon in subsequent stages of RLDP preparation.

5.0 The Preferred Strategy

(The full Preferred Strategy is set out in Appendix 1 of this report)

5.1 Issues, Vision and Objectives

5.2 A suite of Issues has been identified through multiple stages and wide-reaching public engagement, consultation with the LDP Forum, the Housing Stakeholder group, the RCT Members Steering group and the Council's internal officer working group. The statutory Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) scoping process also informed these issues. These Issues then informed the preparation of the following stages of the Vision, Objectives, Preferred Strategy and its Strategic Policies.

5.3 The following Vision is recommended for the RLDP and sits comfortably within the Council's Corporate Plan and National Well Being Goals:

The Vision by 2037 is for a more resilient and sustainable RCT:

An area of sustainable, cohesive communities, who are healthy, well connected and who have equal access to high quality homes, jobs, services and facilities.

An area more resilient and considerate to the challenges of climate change with protected and enhanced biodiversity and green spaces and a well-connected sustainable transport system.

An area with a diverse and healthy economy, supported by vibrant and viable town centres and a flourishing tourism sector.

A RCT that celebrates its heritage and is resilient for the future.

5.4 These are the **18 objectives** that have then been identified for the RLDP;

Objective 1:	Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce flood risk.
Objective 2:	Provide an appropriate amount and mix of housing to meet local needs.
Objective 3:	Promote vibrant communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all.
Objective 4:	Encourage healthy and safe lifestyles that promote well-being and improve overall health levels in RCT.
Objective 5:	Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport.
Objective 6:	Promote, protect and enhance cultural heritage and the built environment.
Objective 7:	Promote the use of the Welsh language.
Objective 8:	Protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape.
Objective 9:	Protect and enhance biodiversity.
Objective 10:	Protect the quality and quantity of RCT's water resources.
Objective 11:	Protect and enhance air quality and ensure appropriate soundscapes.
Objective 12:	Promote the efficient use of land, soils and minerals.
Objective 13:	Continue to minimise waste generation and promote more sustainable waste management.
Objective 14:	Provide for a sustainable economy.
Objective 15:	Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities.
Objective 16:	Promote vibrant, adaptable and resilient town centres.
Objective 17:	Address the impacts of the mining legacy in RCT.
Objective 18:	To support the growth of the tourism and leisure sector.

5.5 The Revised LDP Settlement Hierarchy

5.6 A key part of the RLDP process is to undertake a Settlement Assessment that informs the identification of a Settlement Hierarchy. This should ensure that the

developments are focussed in those places where they can be best accommodated and serviced, in line with the scale of the existing settlements. This hierarchy has for the most part remained unchanged from the current LDP. It is considered that the 3 Principal Settlements for growth should remain as Aberdare, Pontypridd and Llantrisant/Talbot Green but the Settlement Assessment also indicates the need for Pontyclun to now form part of the Principal Settlement of Llantrisant/Talbot Green due to the physical interrelationships and social and economic dependencies between them.

- 5.7 In addition to the Settlement Hierarchy, the Strategy also proposes a Town/Settlement Centre hierarchy (which is an evolution of the retail hierarchy in the current LDP) and by its nature is intrinsically linked to the main Settlement Hierarchy (see Strategic Policy 8 of the Preferred Strategy.)

5.8 Growth Options

- 5.9 A Demographic Evidence report has been prepared which sets out a range of growth scenarios; both demographic/housing and employment based. These have been further considered in a Growth Options Paper.

- 5.10 The preferred growth option for the RLDP/Preferred Strategy is to follow the mid-ranged Welsh Government principal projections, resulting in a new housing requirement of 564 dwellings per annum or a total of 8,450, between 2022 and 2037. This approach is considered aspirational but remains achievable and sensible, as it is a 10% increase on the past 5-year average build rate. Seeking to meet this requirement provides the best opportunity to realistically deliver high quality new housing, including affordable homes. This option will also help to continue to prevent depopulation in certain areas and associated decline.

- 5.11 The approach also accords with the growth area proposals for the South East Wales region as set out in 'Future Wales – The National Plan'.

5.12 Spatial Strategy Options

- 5.13 A series of Spatial Strategy Options have been identified, and fully considered, to determine where would be the most appropriate places to deliver the necessary levels of growth. These being:

- **Option 1: Continuation of the current LDP Strategy**
- **Option 2: Strategic Highway Network considering the Principal Settlements**
- **Option 3: Town Centre First**
- **Option 4: Southern Growth Strategy**
- **Option 5: Metro and Public Transport Nodes**
- **Option 6: Key Strategic Site in the South**
- **Option 7: Urban Containment**
- **Option 8: Local Needs Strategy**

- 5.14 Analysis of these options highlighted that there are benefits to each one. However, no single option would be appropriate on its own to meet the necessary levels of

growth, and the breadth of the Vision and Objectives of the RLDP as no single option can deliver enough land to accommodate the identified growth.

- 5.15 Ultimately, it is considered that several key elements of the current LDP strategy are sound; particularly a need to continue with the different strategy approach for the north and south of the County Borough.

5.16 The Strategy

- 5.17 A housing requirement of 8,450 new dwellings has been identified to meet the Vision and strategic Objectives of the Revised LDP. By adding in a 10% flexibility allowance around any unforeseen non-delivery of developments we will need to provide for 9,295 dwellings in the revised LDP.
- 5.18 The RCT Local Housing Market Assessment Draft Findings 2024 found that 5,672 affordable (non-open market dwellings) are needed in RCT over the plan period 2022-2037.
- 5.19 Planning for 9,295 new dwellings will allow for the provision of sufficient market housing and seek to provide as much affordable housing as possible through the RLDP, throughout the plan period.
- 5.20 The overall housing provision will be met by existing permitted 'landbank' sites, new allocations, and 'windfall' sites.
- 5.21 This level of growth should also lead to an increase in employment and job opportunities, whilst helping to maintain levels of residents of a working age.
- 5.22 A further Employment Land Review was commissioned to ascertain employment land need over the plan period to facilitate the expansion of existing businesses and provide new sites for inward investment into the County Borough.
- 5.23 A combined '**Northern Sustainable Communities and Southern Sustainable Growth Strategy**' for the distinct Northern and Southern Strategy Areas is considered to be the most appropriate Revised LDP Preferred Strategy.

5.24 Sustainable Communities in the Northern Strategy Area (NSA)

- 5.25 The primary aim of the Northern Sustainable Communities Strategy is to continue to strengthen the communities there. For the most part, the urban areas in the NSA are those in the Rhondda Fawr, Rhondda Fach and Cynon Valleys.
- 5.26 Some of the key pillars of the Sustainable Communities Strategy will be:
- **South East Wales Metro**
 - **Bringing Empty Homes Back Into Use**
 - **Tourism**
 - **Continued Flexible Settlement Boundaries**

5.27 Key Sites in the NSA

- 5.28 Two Key Sites are proposed, which by definition are seen as 'key' to delivering the Council's strategy.

Potential Key Site 1 – Penrhys Village, Tylorstown

- 5.29 Redevelopment of the 29.8 hectare site for up to 700 new houses. Around 300 of these will be replacement dwellings whilst approximately 500 dwellings are likely to be built during the plan period up to 2037. This will be alongside the replacement and improvement of public facilities and services.

Potential Key Site 2 – Land South of Hirwaun

- 5.30 Following the completion of the open cast operation at Tower, proposals for up to 15 - 20 hectares of employment, up to 30 hectares of tourism opportunities and the remaining 100 hectares for nature conservation and biodiversity enhancement, including public access.

5.31 Sustainable Growth in the Southern Strategy Area (SSA)

- 5.32 The Sustainable Growth in the SSA strategy will seek to provide the necessary growth for existing communities, with additional growth to meet the wider needs of the whole of RCT.

- 5.33 For the most part, the urban areas in the SSA are those around Pontypridd, down to Taffs Well and Church Village in the east, as well as Tonyrefail, down to the wider Llantrisant area and Llanharan in the west.

- 5.34 The Sustainable Growth Strategy will seek opportunities for its delivery via the following mechanisms:

- **The Principal Settlement of Pontypridd**
- **Set Settlement Boundaries**
- **Empty Properties**

5.35 Key Sites in the SSA

- 5.36 As with the NSA, 'Key Sites' are proposed for the SSA, which will help to deliver the strategy.

Potential Key Site 3 – Land at Llanilid, Llanharan

- 5.37 Redevelopment on the previous open cast coal site at Llanilid, Llanharan. The site totals 269 hectares and it is envisaged that the site may deliver over 3,000 houses in total; however, it is unlikely that more than 1,500 will come forward during the RLDP plan period (to 2037).

- 5.38 The proposals for this site includes a range of public services and facilities, employment uses and large areas of public open space, whilst protecting and enhancing a range of important biodiversity features.

Potential Key Site 4 - Llanilltud Faerdref, Church Village

5.39 This Key Site is made up of a number of Candidate Sites in adjoining locations on the south of the wider settlements of Llantwit Fardre and Efail Isaf. The combined 50ha site could accommodate up to 1,000 new homes, along with a range of supporting public services and facilities, to ensure sustainable growth.

5.40 Strategic Policies

5.41 The strategic policies form part of the framework for delivering and implementing the Preferred Strategy of the RLDP. The policy topics are listed below and seek to set out the Council's strategic direction for the relevant areas:

- 1. Climate Change and Carbon Reduction**
- 2. Place-making and Sustainable Communities**
- 3. Flood Risk Management**
- 4. Biodiversity and the Natural Environment**
- 5. Green Infrastructure and Open Space**
- 6. Housing**
- 7. Employment Land and the Economy**
- 8. Settlement Centres**
- 9. Tourism**

5.42 Candidate Sites

5.43 Over a thousand sites have been considered and assessed for their suitability for development through the preparation of the RLDP to date. These being from private landowners and our own Council owned land. Proactive identification of sites has also been undertaken through an Urban Capacity Study.

5.44 Over 300 of these 'Candidate Sites' have then been taken forward following an initial, first stage assessment. and are deemed as having some suitability for development. However, at this stage, this is not a definitive intention to formally allocate the sites for development.

5.45 Evidence Base

5.46 Section 2 of the Preferred Strategy document sets out a Local Evidence Base – which is a list of the many background reports and papers that have helped to inform the Preferred Strategy. These documents are referred to throughout the Preferred Strategy. Many of these were specifically prepared for the RLDP, whilst several have been prepared by departments across the Council in recent years.

5.47 Candidate Sites and Evidence Base Publication

5.48 It is necessary that the Local Evidence Base be published alongside the Preferred Strategy consultation. As these are factual background evidence base papers they need not be specifically approved by Council.

- 5.49 A formal 'Candidate Site Register' with the background details of the approximate 300 sites will also be published. The results of the first stage assessment of the suitability of these sites in accordance with the previously prepared Candidate Site Assessment Methodology, will also be published. It is however considered that these results themselves would not be subject to Council agreement at this stage.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 The RLDP is subject to a bespoke and overarching Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA). This ISA will assess each and every stage of the preparation of the LDP. There are multiple legislative facets to this, including an Equalities Impact Assessment.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Another key element of the ISA is to undertake a Welsh Language Impact Assessment and at each stage of the LDP.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 There has been significant internal consultation with officers and appropriate external organisations.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 In general, the financial implication associated with this report and its proposals remain in line with those agreed at the outset of RLDP preparation in April 2022.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The new LDP will be prepared in accordance with The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (as amended 2015), Planning Policy Wales 2021, the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) regulations.

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

How the subject of the report will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities?

- 11.1 The production of a Revised Local Development Plan will help to deliver the Council's three main corporate priorities of building a strong economy, promoting independence and positive lives for everyone and creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work. The production of this land-use plan will help

to stimulate the local economy through market and social house building, as well as providing for employment and retail development across the County Borough. Working together to shape our communities will instil a sense of pride and allow people to live and work independently, wherever they so choose. The LDP will also help to deliver the transport infrastructure that keeps Rhondda Cynon Taf working and moving, in a sustainable way that benefits current and future generations.

How the Sustainable Development principle, i.e. the five ways of working has been considered?

11.2 The Local Development Plan will be a key project demonstrating the 5 ways of working in action:

- Integration - the preparation of the RLDP brings together all land use planning issues across the County Borough, involving our partners, residents, visitors, employers and service providers in the formulation of the Plan.
- Collaboration - the RLDP will be a key collaboration project for the region enabling stakeholders including residents to work together to form a Plan for the County Borough.
- Involvement - preparation of the RLDP will provide numerous opportunities to engage with our residents and customers, including the business community and ensuring that we are listening to a wide range of views to inform the plan and decision making process.
- Prevention - the RLDP provides an opportunity to understand the root causes of issues and preventing them by being proactive in our thinking and understanding the need to tackle problems at source for example by undertaking needs assessments to inform our priorities.
- Long-term - the RLDP will be all about planning for the future and taking a strategic approach to ensure the County Borough is sustainable and that we understand the future need and demand for sustainable development in the region and how that is best met.

How the subject of the report seeks to maximise the Council's contribution to seven national well-being goals?

11.3 The RLDP will contribute to the seven well-being goals by working together with other public services and third sector organisations to improve the well-being of everybody in Wales. This new approach seeks to improve public services in a sustainable way, for the benefit of all. The RLDP will help to ensure:

- A Prosperous Wales - the RLDP will promote a productive, creative and low-carbon society that recognises the limits of our resources and global environment, by ensuring that our finite resources are used efficiently and proportionately. It will

also help to develop a skilled, well-educated population to work within an economy that generates wealth and provides employment opportunities for all.

- A Resilient Wales - the RLDP will help to ensure that the region maintains and enhances a bio-diverse natural environment with healthy, functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience with the ability to adapt to change.
- A Healthier Wales - the RLDP aims to help build a society in which people's mental and physical well-being is maximised through access to green space, and helps to foster an understanding of choices and behaviours that benefit future health.
- A More Equal Wales - the RLDP will seek to enable people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. It also aims to help communities effectively tackle the loneliness and isolation that can often exist within many of them.
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities - the RLDP, via the place-making principle, will help to foster attractive, safe, viable and well-connected communities that improve the well-being of all residents and visitors.
- A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language - the RLDP will support a society that promotes and protects our culture, heritage and Welsh language, whilst encouraging people to participate in the arts, sport and recreation.
- A Globally Responsible Wales - the RLDP will contribute towards Wales being a nation which, when doing anything to improve our economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being; will take account of whether doing such a thing makes a positive contribution to our global well-being.

Any other national strategies the subject of the report is seeking to address.

- 11.4 The Revised Local Development Plan is also in general conformity with the aims and objectives of Future Wales – The National Plan, which sits above the RLDP in the development plan hierarchy within Wales.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 To conclude, it is recommended that the RLDP Preferred Strategy be approved for public consultation.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL**

17th January 2024

**REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RLDP) 2022 – 2037 - PREFERRED
STRATEGY**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR NORRIS**

Background Papers;

**Appendix 1 – The Revised Local Development Plan 2022 – 2037 – Preferred
Strategy.**

tudalen wag

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APRIL 2022 – APRIL 2037



**PREFERRED
STRATEGY**
JANUARY 2024



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

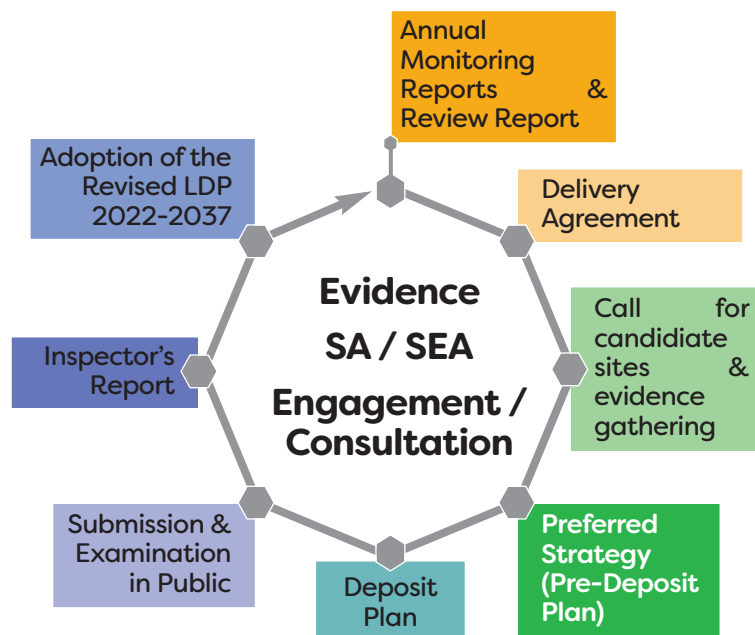


TABLE OF CONTENTS:

SECTION	1	Introduction	02
SECTION	2	National and Regional Context and Local Evidence Base	06
SECTION	3	Issues	18
SECTION	4	The Vision and Objectives	24
SECTION	5	The Settlement Assessment and Settlement Hierarchy	32
SECTION	6	Growth Options	36
SECTION	7	Spatial Strategy Options	42
SECTION	8	Revised LDP Preferred Strategy	48
SECTION	9	Strategic Policies	62

Background

- 1.1.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) are revising their Local Development Plan (LDP) for the County Borough, which will cover the period 2022-2037. The existing LDP covers the period 2006-2021 and was adopted in 2011. The Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) will build upon the existing plan. RCTCBC recognise that the planning system, with the RLDP at its core, has a significant role to play in shaping the County Borough to ensure that it grows in a sustainable manner, whilst meeting community needs and aspirations.
- 1.1.2 The Revised LDP will be the statutory land-use planning document for the County Borough (excluding the area within the jurisdiction of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority) and will set out the vision for Rhondda Cynon Taf and its communities. The Replacement LDP will also set out the amount and location of new development, as well as being the basis for future development management decisions (planning applications).
- 1.1.3 The Council are now at the Preferred Strategy stage of the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) preparation process. A visual representation of the stages involved within the Revised LDP process is set out below, with the current Preferred Strategy stage highlighted in white.



Rhondda Cynon Taf

- 1.1.4 Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) lies at the heart of the South Wales Valleys and covers an area of approximately 37,130ha (excluding land within Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority). At the 2021 census, RCT had a resident population of 237,700, which is a 1.4% increase in population since 2011 (234,000).

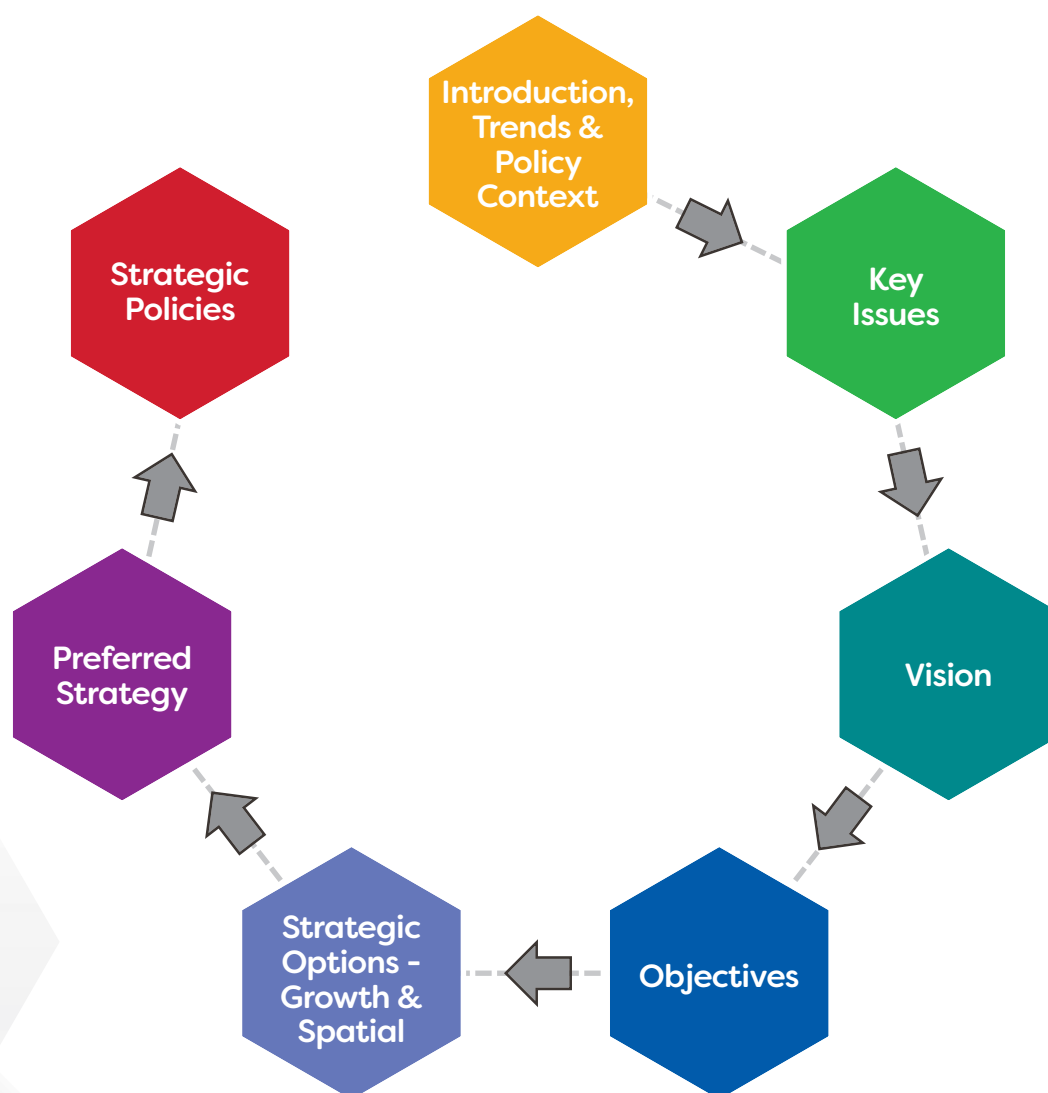
What is a Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP)?

- 1.1.5 The Revised Local Development Plan is a revision of the adopted LDP and will set out the vision and proposals for development within Rhondda Cynon Taf over the period 2022-2037.
- 1.1.6 The RLDP must be based upon robust evidence and a thorough understanding of the needs, constraints and opportunities within RCT. As such, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to prepare and keep an up-to-date “Evidence Base”, which covers all aspects of the social, environmental, economic and cultural characteristics of the County Borough.
- 1.1.7 The RLDP Preferred Strategy builds upon the evidence gathered during the life of the adopted LDP (2006-2021) to determine how the current LDP has fared. This includes evidence contained within the Council’s Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs), existing policies, the Sustainability Appraisal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment) and the Review Report.
- 1.1.8 Further, considerable up-to-date evidence has been prepared and gathered in the formulation stages of the Preferred Strategy. Evidence base documents are referred to throughout the Preferred Strategy, as appropriate, in accordance with the relevant topic areas. This Evidence Base is publicly available material that will continue to be updated throughout the coming stages of the RLDP. The evidence-based approach will ensure the production of a plan that can deliver for RCT and will comply with the test of “soundness” at the Examination stage.
- 1.1.9 **The RCT Revised LDP should seek to:**
- Have a clear and deliverable vision, based on sound place-making principles, embedded into local policy to facilitate sustainable development.
 - Provide a coherent strategy that reflects the aspirations of the Council, key stakeholders and our communities.
 - Facilitate growth in settlements that have identified capacity, in line with the Settlement Hierarchy.
 - Identify areas that can accommodate infrastructure and employment/housing provision, whilst simultaneously protecting RCT’s distinctive built and natural environments.
 - Facilitate, in land-use terms, the objectives of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the National Sustainable Place-making Outcomes, the Council’s Corporate Plan and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-Being Plan.
 - Utilise national policy, plans and guidance, particularly Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales, to provide a robust framework for development within RCT, which defines the role and function of places.
 - Identify how RCT will change and develop over the lifetime of the RLDP (to 2037).

Further details on the Plans and Policy context that the RLDP should accord with are provided within Section 2 of this paper.

What is a Preferred Strategy?

- 1.1.10 Local Development Plan Regulations 14 and 15 require all LPAs to prepare a “Preferred Strategy” which is also known as the Council’s ‘Pre-Deposit’ proposals. The Preferred Strategy stage is prepared prior to the following stage of RLDP preparation, which is the formulation of the final Deposit RLDP, which will be the subject of an independent Examination in public.
- 1.1.11 The pre-deposit stage for Rhondda Cynon Taf sets out the key issues, vision/objectives and strategy options, before presenting a Preferred Strategy, which the Council will pursue. This pre-deposit stage is essentially the ‘backbone’ of the Revised LDP process, formally setting out the levels of growth and spatial distribution for RCT. The Preferred Strategy sets the direction for the RLDP that will allow our stakeholders and communities to provide constructive ‘Representations’ (comments and feedback on proposals) to inform the Deposit Plan (scheduled for publication in January/February 2025).
- 1.1.12 The content and process of developing our Preferred Strategy is displayed in the following diagram:



1.1.13 The RCT Preferred Strategy aims to provide realistic options that reflect our evidence, vision and objectives. RCT intends to meet the evidenced needs of the County Borough and its communities by ensuring that proposals can genuinely be delivered over the plan period (up to 2037), whilst simultaneously conforming to national policy and having due regard for relevant regional and local initiatives.

1.1.14 To reiterate, the Preferred Strategy is the first presentation of the vision and objectives, alongside the strategic growth and spatial options for RCT. It also includes those Key Sites, identified as being integral to the delivery of the RLDP. Whilst the Preferred Strategy contains many details pertaining to the ambitions for the County Borough, it does have limitations. It should be noted that the Preferred Strategy does not contain site-specific allocations or identify settlement boundaries (with the exception of Key Sites) nor does it contain a final evaluation of submitted Candidate Sites. Strategic Policies are set out in the Preferred Strategy, although it doesn't contain detailed policies. These will all feature within the Deposit Plan, scheduled for publication in January/February 2025. The Candidate Site Register is being published alongside the Preferred Strategy and indicates whether a site has progressed through to Stage 2 of the process or has been unsuccessful at Stage 1.





2

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT & LOCAL EVIDENCE BASE

National and Regional Considerations

- 2.11 The RLDP and its Preferred Strategy must be in general conformity with regulations, plans, policies and other guidance at national, regional and local level. Accordingly, these have helped form the preparation of the Preferred Strategy, together with the Evidence Base and are listed below, alongside their relationship to the Preferred Strategy.

NATIONAL:

The following national documentation is applicable throughout Wales:

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, 2021

The National Development Framework, entitled 'Future Wales: The National Plan 2040' is the highest tier of development plan in Wales, focusing on issues and challenges at a national scale. The NDF sets the direction for growth, development and infrastructure investment in Wales until 2040. It sets a strategy and strategic policies for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, decarbonisation, developing resilient ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of communities within Wales.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11), 2021

Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW) sets out the land-use planning policies and overarching framework for sustainable development in Wales, inclusive of the sustainable development principle in decision-making. It also integrates the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WBFGA) into national planning policy.

As with its predecessor, PPW 10, it requires planners to embrace the concept of place-making in both plan making and development management decisions, in order to achieve sustainable places. Given that place-making is central to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act; it is felt that place-making must capitalise on a local community's assets, inspiration and potential, with the intention of creating development that promotes people's health, happiness and well-being.

Development Plans Manual (Edition 3), 2020

The Manual provides up-to-date and fit for purpose practical guidance regarding plan preparation. As such, since the introduction of a raft of planning legislation from c. 2013 onward, alongside changes to national policy, it was deemed an appropriate time to commence revisions to the document.

Changes include the option for LPAs to undertake an 'Integrated Sustainability Assessment', which includes not only SA/SEA but also key elements of The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, The Equalities Act, the Welsh language and Health Impact Assessments. The inclusion of such will enable a more transparent, holistic and rounded assessment of the sustainability implications of the plan.

Building Better Places – The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures – Placemaking and the COVID-19 recovery, 2020

The paper, published in July 2020, highlights the key, existing planning policies and tools that should be used to aid the recovery of Wales, as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The paper encourages planners to display creativity and ingenuity in devising innovative solutions and responses to the environmental, social, cultural and economic recovery of Wales, at all scales. The paper further encourages local planning authorities to be bold in their vision for emerging/revised local development plans (LDPs).

➤ **Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy, 2021**

Llwybr Newydd is the Transport Strategy for Wales, which sets out a 'new path' for transport across the Country over the next 20 years.

Its primary aim is to create a more prosperous, green and equal society for all. As well as setting out short and long-term priorities and ambitions, the Welsh Government also presents nine mini plans that explain how the aims will be delivered within different transport modes and sectors..

➤ **The Planning Act, 2015**

The Planning Act, introduced in 2015, provided a revised legislative framework to reform the planning system. The Act contains five key objectives, in addition to providing a legal basis for the introduction of a National Development Framework (known as Future Wales covering the period 2020-2040) and Strategic Development Plans to cover three regions within Wales.

The SDP for the ten South East Wales authorities, of which RCT is one, will provide a blue-print and strategy for development and investment across the region, although work has not yet commenced on the SDP. Importantly, the Act also makes provisions for the 'use of the Welsh language' to be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

➤ **The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015**

The Well-Being of Future Generation Act provides a framework for improving Wales's welfare, requiring public bodies to think about the long-term implications of their decisions.

The Act places sustainable development at its heart to improve the cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being of Wales. The Act sets out the 'five ways of working', as well as the seven well-being goals that public bodies must achieve.

➤ **The Environment (Wales) Act, 2016**

The Environment Act received Royal Assent on 21st March 2016 and seeks to provide legislation to proactively and sustainably manage the natural resources of Wales.

The Act includes a new biodiversity duty, which aims to aid the reversal of decline and secure the long-term resilience and future of biodiversity in Wales. The Act also tasks Welsh Ministers with setting targets to reduce greenhouse emissions and the setting of carbon budgets.

➤ **The Housing (Wales) Act, 2014**

In September 2014, The Housing (Wales) Act received Royal Assent.

The primary aims of the legislation include: The provision of sufficient regulation governing private rented houses. To amend and to improve the law in relation to homelessness, as well as making provisions for the standards of housing provided by local authorities. Furthermore, the Act also provided a definition of a Gypsy and Traveller, mandated an accommodation needs assessment and required LPAs to meet any identified need. The Act also abolished the housing revenue account subsidy, in addition to allowing mutual housing associations to grant assured tenancies.

➤ The Active Travel (Wales) Act, 2013

The Active Travel (Wales) Act promotes safe routes for walking and cycling, as an alternative to private vehicles.

The Act plays its part in the design of developments, by encouraging links with existing routes to facilitate long-term changes in behaviours and mind-set. A requirement of the act is to map all active travel routes on an active travel network map and utilise this to deliver continued improvements in the quantum and quality of routes, to enhance connectivity.

➤ Circular 005/2018 – Planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Sites, 2018

In June 2018, the Welsh Government published a new Circular entitled Planning for Gypsy, Traveller and Showpeople Sites, which supersedes advice contained in Circulars 30/2007, 78/91 and 76/94.

The Circular updates the definition of a ‘Gypsy and Traveller’ to include Travelling Showpeople, alongside New Travellers where they are able to demonstrate a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in mobile homes. The Circular also takes into account the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, which sets out a framework for local authorities across Wales to ensure the ‘sustainable development principle’.

➤ Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales, 2019

The plan, published by the Welsh Government in 2019, aims to increase efficiency and cut carbon emissions of greenhouse gases by a minimum of 80% by 2050.

This is essential in order to meet the requirements of The Environment (Wales) Act, 2016 and to create fairer, greener and healthier communities. This plan is fundamental to reversing the effects of climate change.



REGIONAL:

City Deal (Cardiff Capital Region)

Llwybr Newydd is the Transport Strategy for Wales, which sets out a 'new path' for transport across the Country over the next 20 years.

Its primary aim is to create a more prosperous, green and equal society for all. As well as setting out short and long-term priorities and ambitions, the Welsh Government also presents nine mini plans that explain how the aims will be delivered within different transport modes and sectors.

Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs)

The Welsh Government, in 2021, produced regulations that established four CJCs comprised of executive leaders of authorities.

One of the CJCs established comprises the CCR for the South East Wales region, which includes RCTCBC. The CJCs are responsible for preparing a Strategic Development Plan, preparing a Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and promoting the economic well-being of the area.

The South East Wales Metro

The Metro project has accounted for over half of the City Deal funding, with the project currently underway throughout the region.

Transport for Wales in partnership with the Welsh Government are responsible for the operation of the Metro railway service, whilst responsibility to bus and active travel provision remains with LPAs. The principal objective is to create an integrated, sustainable transport network throughout the region that is greener and more efficient.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-Being Plan, 2023-2028

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board (PSB) comprises public bodies within Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend, who have come together to deliver services to local communities.

The PSB aim to improve social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being, by creating targets to achieve the objectives of the seven Well-Being goals. The plan aims to create fairer access to opportunities for all communities, whilst recognising the variety of challenges faced by many and how this impacts upon their well-being.

NRW Area Statements – South Central Area Statement, 2020

NRW published seven area statements across Wales however Rhondda Cynon Taf is covered under the South Central Area Statement, published in 2020. Of the seven areas, South Central is the most densely populated, encompassing Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil.

The area also includes the moorland fringes of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, as well as the lowlands of the Vale of Glamorgan and the dramatic valleys uplands. Consequently, the Area Statement contains the objective to 'bridge the urban and natural environments'. The statement contains five key themes, which are: building resilient eco-systems; connecting people with nature; working with water; improving our health; and improving our air quality.

LOCAL EVIDENCE BASE:

➤ Rhondda Cynon Taf Corporate Plan 'Making a difference', 2020-2024

RCTCBC's Corporate Plan covers the period 2020-2024 and contains the vision for the County Borough. This being **"For Rhondda Cynon Taf to be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous."**

The purpose of the Council is to provide strong community leadership and create a healthy environment for people and businesses to prosper. To this end, the Council has three main priorities, which are set forth in within the plan:

1. **PEOPLE:** Are healthy, independent, and successful.
2. **PLACES:** Where people are proud to live, work and play.
3. **PROSPERITY:** Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.

➤ Tackling Climate Change Rhondda Cynon Taf Climate Change Strategy, 2022 – 2025

The RCT Climate Change Strategy aims to meet the Council's commitments to reduce carbon emissions across the County Borough and in doing so, effectively tackle climate change.

It sets out that by 2030:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf will be carbon neutral;
- The whole County Borough will be as close as possible to carbon neutral; and
- Our work with partners will have ensured that all public and private organisations that operate in the County Borough will be carbon neutral by 2040.

Rhondda Cynon Taf will have contributed to the Welsh Government's ambition of a net zero in the public sector by 2030.

➤ LDP Review Report, 2019 (Also acting as a synopsis of all AMRs)

The Council compiled a Review Report to inform the decision to begin the preparation of a Revised LDP. The Review Report provides a critical analysis of the evidence gathered since the adoption of the LDP via the monitoring process.

It considers factors such as the delivery of allocations and other development, alongside the performance and effectiveness of planning policy. The principal source of the review consists of the Council's Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) that are sent to the Welsh Government annually. The AMRs monitor the performance and implementation of the plan, as well as considering any relevant contextual changes in global economic circumstances and newly published policy, guidance or legislation.

➤ Settlement Hierarchy Assessment Paper, 2023

The Settlement Hierarchy, as determined by the Settlement Assessment, informs the Spatial Strategy of the RLDP and is utilised to ascertain which settlements are the most sustainable and have the capacity to deliver the requisite growth over the plan period.

LPAs are required to ensure that decisions on the location of development consider issues such as: sustainable growth patterns; supporting of services and facilities; the relationship between settlements; and the movement of people.

➤ Retail and Commercial Centres Hierarchy Paper, 2023

Local Planning Authorities are required to identify a Retail and Commercial Centre Hierarchy for their Local Development Plans (LDPs). This paper sets out the relationship of the Retail and Commercial Centre Hierarchy with the Settlement Hierarchy and LDP Strategy.

Higher order settlements will typically have a large catchment area and range of uses, whilst lower order settlements are designated to meet the daily convenience needs of the communities that they serve.

➤ Vision, Issues and Objectives Paper, 2023

The Vision, Issues and Objectives Paper was compiled in 2023 and outlines the key findings of the initial stage of the Revised LDP for RCT. The paper identifies the social, economic, environmental and broader issues that exist across the County Borough, specifically, those that the LDP can and should seek to address.

The issues of the RLDP have been condensed to produce a concise Vision for the plan. The Issues and Vision are considered to formulate defined Objectives for the RLDP, over the plan period. Consequently, the outcomes identified form the foundation of the RLDP and the preparation of subsequent stages.

➤ Demographic Evidence Report, 2023

RCTCBC commissioned Edge Analytics to prepare a Demographic Evidence Report in 2022. The report uses POPGROUP technology to produce a range of growth scenarios for the County Borough, incorporating the Welsh Government population and household projections, in addition to demographic and economic statistics from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and StatsWales.

The analysis outlines the population and household change for each growth scenario, from 2022 to 2037, including new dwellings, average net migration and employment growth per annum.

➤ Housing Supply Paper, 2023

The Housing Supply paper details the number of dwellings that are expected to be built from the current housing landbank (sites currently with permission or under construction) during the plan period.

Additionally, it estimates the number of windfall sites (both small and large), which may come forward by 2037. The report concludes with the identification of the scale of allocations that need to be made in order to meet the determined RLDP housing provision.

Local Housing Market Assessment Draft Findings 2024

The LHMA analyses the current unmet need for affordable housing in accordance with the most recent Welsh Government methods of calculation.

The assessment determines the future affordable housing need, across the housing market areas in RCT, in association with the determined population and household growth proposed by the RLDP.

The Urban Capacity Study, 2022

RCTCBC has compiled an Urban Capacity Study to ascertain the capacity of existing urban land to deliver future housing and other development within the County Borough. The desk based study sought to identify potential land for the Revised LDP, as well as provide an insight into the number of windfall developments likely to occur over the plan period (2022-2037).

Whilst the study estimates the potential for accommodating new dwellings, it cannot predict which sites may be delivered in the future. The study was contained to those sites within the defined settlement boundary, with all other land (e.g. open space, flood risk zones or sites with ecological value/interest) excluded.

Growth Options Paper, 2023

The Growth Options Paper details the proposed growth options for RCT. It details how the various scenarios proposed are influenced by and could potentially affect, the total population, demographics, dwellings requirements and tenures, as well as having implications for employment land and projected growth.

Within the paper, a number of scenarios have been tested and analysed to determine the most appropriate level of growth for the RLDP over the plan period 2022-2037.

Spatial Strategy Options Paper, 2023

The Spatial Strategy Options Paper has been prepared to set out the spatial strategy options for the Revised LDP. It seeks to reflect the key national, regional and local policies relevant to the formulation of the spatial strategy options.

In order to frame and adopt a suitable spatial strategy, it is necessary to look at a number of alternative approaches or options, where the requisite levels of growth can be accommodated. These options must be realistic and seek to address the objectives of the RLDP. This should ultimately be a significant factor in the determination of the RLDP's wider Strategy, ensuring that the Vision and Objectives of the RLDP can be achieved.

Empty Homes Strategy, 2022-2025

The Empty Homes Strategy provides a framework for bringing empty homes back into beneficial use in RCT. It was felt necessary to produce a bespoke strategy for RCT, due to the high numbers of empty homes across the County Borough, where there is continuing pressure to deliver affordable housing.

It is however noted that these dwellings cannot be considered in the same manner as 'new' dwellings, in terms of contributing to the overall housing need, identified in the RLDP.

Draft Prosperous Homes, Prosperous Lives 2023-2028 – A Draft Housing Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf, 2003

This Housing Strategy provides the focus for delivering the housing priorities set forth within the Council’s Corporate Plan Making a Difference, 2020-2024. The Council has a variety of roles and responsibilities, both strategic and operational, across all housing services and organisations.

From 2023-2028, the Council aims to work collaboratively with its partners to deliver safe, good quality affordable homes and housing services. With the reduction of available public sector resources, this Strategy relies upon creativity, innovation, ingenuity and partnership working to provide a robust strategic direction and focus on inward investment.

Employment Land Review, 2023

In 2022, the Council commissioned the BE Group, in conjunction with PER Consulting, to produce an Employment Land Review (ELR) for the County Borough. The ELR includes an economic development evidence base for the County Borough and the ‘larger than local’ area (across LPA boundaries), as well as assessing the policy context.

Moreover, it contains the three elements of the ELR itself: the property market assessment, the audit of existing employment sites and the calculation of future land requirements. In terms of land requirement, the 2015 employment guidance sets out two methodologies for determining this figure, both of which were used within RCTCBC’s ELR.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Tourism Strategy

The RCT Tourism Strategy sets out a vision for RCT as the premier destination in the UK for “experience” based visits and vacations showcasing our first-class landscape, culture, and heritage.

In order to achieve this, the strategy sets out goals to ensure that RCT: is at the cutting edge of adventure tourism; is the premier destination for those seeking an active lifestyle; and maximises the benefits of its outstanding landscapes. Furthermore, the strategy seeks to utilise the culture and heritage of RCT to the full, thus benefitting residents and tourists, in addition to creating a first class visitor experience. This will include over-night accommodation that is not just a place to stay but an experience in its own right.

Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA), 2022

The SFCA, produced by JBA Consulting in November 2022, seeks to provide robust evidence to inform policy development and decisions on land-use allocations. The study has had due regard to national planning policy and guidance, as well as the relevant Technical Advice Note, this being TAN 15 entitled Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion.

The aims of the study include:

- Informing potential development opportunities, having due regard to flood risk management;
- Identifying the extent and severity of flood risk within the County Borough to ensure that development is steered away from those areas; and
- To provide a reference document that can be relied upon for initial advice and guidance.

Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS)

An LFRMS has been produced by RCT, which includes a strategy and action plan. This details the objectives, measures and actions that have been developed to outline, at a high level, how RCT intends to manage local flood risk. It also sets out how to adopt a holistic approach to flood risk management.

This is the second Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, replacing the first strategy, which was published in 2013.

Candidate Site Register (Findings of the Stage 1 Assessment), 2023

In accordance with the LDP Regulations, RCTCBC must prepare a Candidate Site Register (CSR), which should be published at the Preferred Strategy stage.

This includes all sites received during the Call for Candidate Sites process and the results of their first stage assessments, in line with the Candidate Site Methodology.

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, 2022

In May 2022, RCTCBC commissioned LUC to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Revised LDP. The Development Plans Manual (Ed. 3) recommends that the SA/SEA also incorporate other assessments, such as Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Welsh Language Assessment.

It should also address the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015 and The Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Consequently, the process is referred to as an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA).

The purpose of the Scoping Report produced by LUC is to provide the initial context for the scope of the ISA of the RLDP. There will then be statutory ISA Reports for each of the official stages and other elements of the RLDP.

Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA), 2022

In addition to the ISA, LUC are also undertaking work on the HRA on behalf of RCTCBC. The HRA provides an assessment of the potential harm and impact that a proposed plan could have on specially protected sites.

RCT has a number of sites considered to be of special wildlife or conservational importance, which are protected by International law. When compiling the RLDP, RCTCBC must be very aware of any development proposals, within the vicinity of such sites, to ensure that they are protected from harm.

Viability Report

In 2022, RCT commissioned Avison Young to undertake a viability assessment of residential development across the County Borough. This will assist the Council in assessing the general viability throughout RCT, as well as the barriers to successfully bringing forward suitable Candidate Sites.

It will also give an indication of where the provision of affordable housing can realistically be anticipated. The study was based on the current LDP policy requirements.

Draft Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), 2022

The Draft GTAA, produced in February 2022 by Opinion Research Services, assessed the need for future Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in RCT. The principal objective is to provide a robust assessment of existing and future needs for accommodation in the short-term and over the life of the Revised LDP (2022-2037).

The accommodation needs have been compiled through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder engagement and engagement with members of the Travelling Communities. The study concludes that RCT will need to meet the needs of the existing and projected Gypsy and Traveller population via the Revised LDP.

Summary of the Draft Spatial Strategy Options Paper and Consideration for Transport Modelling, 2023

This paper is the result of modelling work undertaken to determine the additional trips created when considered against various options of spatial growth in RCT.

This also indicates where this additional travel would take place.

TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIES:



Porth Town Centre Strategy, 2018/2019:

The strategy seeks to enable a vibrant and enticing town, with a strong offer, which recognises the centre as the heart of our communities. In order to achieve this and to address the significant challenges faced by commercial and retail centres generally; the strategy sets out an integrated and holistic approach to regeneration.

This approach takes note of the distinctive role that Porth plays and its important location for services, transport, employment and housing delivery. In order to deliver the strategy, the Council aims to harness any opportunities presented from funding streams, such as the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.



Aberdare Town Centre Strategy, 2023/2024:

The strategy recognises that in the wake of the COVID-19 global pandemic, Aberdare faces significant challenges, despite remaining the heart of its surrounding communities.

The Council is committed, via the strategy and its Corporate Plan (Making a Difference, 2020-2024), to create vibrant, thriving places where people wish to live, work and socialise. Achieving the aims of the strategy will be contingent upon partnership working to harness the collective energy to implement the requisite interventions.

The strategy sets forth a framework to guide investment, whilst taking account of its role and functions, in supporting local communities via the provision of services and facilities, regional transport connections, employment opportunities, housing and retail, leisure and cultural experiences. It seeks to capitalise on the surrounding new strategic infrastructure and the Metro to provide additional opportunities and encourage further investment.



Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan, 2022:

The plan outlines the proposed regeneration of Pontypridd, building on shared aspirations for the town and its role within the Cardiff Capital Region. The plan identifies several core ambitions that will guide future investment to the town, alongside design drivers to ensure that new development meets these ambitions.

The ambitions create a vision for Pontypridd: as a business destination; as a great place to live, as a place that is connected and accessible, as a green waterside town; as a unique townscape; as a cultural and social destination; and as an inclusive and resilient town.

The design drivers set in place to achieve these objectives will focus on development, connectivity, townscape, green infrastructure and the public realm, whilst building upon the social and cultural aspects of the town. Furthermore, there are five spatial areas within the town, which will be the focus of targeted investment, these being: The Southern Gateway, Town Centre Core, Market Quarter, Northern Gateway and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

Introduction

- 3.1.1 An initial stage of the Revision of the LDP is to identify key issues, challenges and drivers facing RCT.
- 3.1.2 The identification of these for the RLDP was achieved through multiple stages and wide-reaching public engagement, consultation with the LDP Forum, the Housing Stakeholder group, the RCT Members Steering group and the Council's internal officer working group.
- 3.1.3 The integrated sustainability appraisal (ISA) also reconsidered the issues that were set out in the current LDP and reviewed these to see which were still relevant. Baseline data and evidence was interrogated to ascertain which issues from the current plan were still relevant whilst also to establish if there were any new issues which have arisen.
- 3.1.4 These Issues set out early in the plan making process what the RLDP should address. They then form the foundation for the preparation of the following stages of the Vision, Objectives, Preferred Strategy and its Strategic Policies.
- 3.1.5 The Issues, and how they were gathered, are listed in full in the Vision, Issues and Objectives paper (2023). A summary of the key Issues, including the challenges and drivers, is provided below, and are grouped into what is considered the most appropriate topic areas:



HOUSING ISSUES:

01. Housing for all:

More affordable and private market housing is needed in RCT.

02. Mix of housing for all.

There is a need for a diverse range of housing sizes and types to be developed for all members of society, all ages and their individual needs.

03. Sustainable buildings:

More houses should be built with consideration of carbon neutral and carbon zero standards.

04. Design of housing developments:

New housing development should continue to improve their design for more cohesive future communities.

05. Viability of housing:

Financial viability to enable significant market led housing development is an issue in the north of RCT in particular. Delivery of new housing has not been as balanced as it should across all areas of RCT over recent years.

06. Location of housing:

Development should come forward in sustainable locations, on brownfield sites in the settlement boundary where possible.

07. Housing and transport:

There are some communities that have less access to active travel, public transport and highways infrastructure than others.

08. Quality of housing:

A large proportion of the housing stock in RCT is older, and investment in its upkeep should be continued.

09. Empty properties:

There are empty houses/properties across RCT that should be brought back into beneficial use.

10. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO):

High numbers of HMO that exist in some communities should be appropriately managed.

11. Housing and Welsh language:

Housing development should support the Welsh language and not be a detriment to it.

12. Gypsy and Traveller Community;

There is a need to provide appropriate and sufficient housing for the Gypsy and Traveller community.



ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT ISSUES:

13. Employment:

Some parts of the County Borough have higher levels of deprivation and unemployment.

14. Increase employment:

More employment is needed in RCT to keep improving and strengthening the economy.

15. Location of employment:

There is an imbalance in the scale of employment across RCT, particularly north to south and therefore employment throughout RCT is not as easily accessible to all.

ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT ISSUES (CONTINUED):

16. Diversification:

More diversity and modernisation in the employment market would be welcomed.

17. Employment estates;

The building stock in some of the employment and industrial estates would benefit from modernisation or redevelopment.

18. Employment and town centres:

More employment opportunities are needed in town centres.

19. Education:

There are areas within RCT that have lower than national average levels of education attainment.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES:

20. Reducing the need to travel;

There is a need to reduce the need to travel, particularly through the location of new development.

21. Public Transport:

Some communities and areas in RCT are not as well served by public transport and active travel facilities as others. This may be type, frequency or integration between modes. These facilities should be encouraged and continue to be improved for all.

22. Metro:

The South Wales Metro is welcomed and should be supported through appropriate location of future development.

23. Congestion and roads:

There are areas of traffic congestion during peak times around RCT and should be addressed where possible.

24. Connectivity and integration:

There is generally less good transport connectivity between some areas within RCT, particularly when travelling east to west.

25. Electric Vehicles:

There is not enough electric vehicle charging infrastructure in RCT.

HEALTH & WELLBEING ISSUES:

26. Physical and mental health and wellbeing:

When considered against national indicators, there are some poor levels of physical and mental health in RCT, and this worse in some areas than others.

27. Healthcare provision:

Primary healthcare provision needs to meet the demands of the growing population.

28. Air quality and pollution:

Some small areas of RCT have pockets of poor air quality.

29. Access to open/green space, outdoors and physical activity:

Some parts of RCT have less accessible open and green spaces than others.

30. Crime and safety:

As with all areas, RCT has issues with crime, and where possible, developments should seek to design out potential for crime.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ISSUES:

31. Green Infrastructure, green and open spaces:

There is a need to protect, enhance and provide further green and blue infrastructure. More good quality, accessible open and green spaces in RCT is needed in places.

32. Ecology and biodiversity:

There is a need to protect and enhance biodiversity features and natural assets, particularly in line with the nature emergency that has been declared at the national level.

33. Landscape:

Sensitive landscapes across RCT should continue to be protected and also give consideration to the Brecon Beacons National Park.

CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES:

34. Renewable energy:

Further sustainable and appropriate renewable energy development schemes are needed.

35. Flooding:

Flooding and its impacts must continue to be managed in RCT.

36. Green Infrastructure and carbon storage:

There is a need to preserve and enhance green infrastructure and all suitable natural assets that can help to address climate change.

37. Sustainable/ Carbon neutral design:

Developments should be designed in a more sustainable and carbon considerate way.

38. Wildfires:

Managing wildfire risk is important for safety, the environment and for health and well-being

WASTE ISSUES

39. Recycling and reuse:

There is a need to continue to encourage and improve positive recycling rates and reduce the generation of all waste.

40. Waste collection:

There is a need to ensure developments are designed with waste collections in mind.

41. Circular economy:

More consideration and support is needed for the circular economy.

42. Fly tipping:

Fly tipping is an issue in RCT. There is a need to ensure physical and chemical protection of the natural environment.

MINERALS ISSUES

43. Extraction:

There should not be more coal extraction in RCT.

44. Quarry aggregate extraction in RCT should be appropriate and necessary.

45. Mining legacy:

There is a need to address the mining legacy and its impacts.

CULTURE, HERITAGE & WELSH LANGUAGE ISSUES

46. Listed Buildings, conservation, and heritage:

Listed buildings, conservation areas and heritage assets should be preserved and enhanced for multiple benefits.

47. Welsh language:

There is a need to protect, support and encourage the Welsh language

48. Education:

Improvement of educational attainment must be continued.

49. Education:

School capacity must continue to grow to meet the growing need in some areas of RCT.

50. The Arts:

The Arts should be further supported.

51. Community activities:

There is a need to improve community cohesion and create strong communities.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES:

52. Health:

Primary healthcare provision needs to meet the demands of the growing population.

53. Access to Services and facilities:

There are some communities that have less accessible services and facilities than others, which should be taken into account when proposing new housing.

TOURISM & LEISURE ISSUES:

54. Tourism:

There is a need to build on recent tourism successes in RCT, to further help support the economy.

55. Tourist accommodation:

Further suitable accommodation is needed for growth in the Tourism sector.

56. Promotion of Tourism and extended visits:

Ways should be sought to encourage visitors to stay longer in RCT. This may include promotion of our cultural, heritage and natural assets.

57. Promotion and support of businesses:

More promotion and support for tourism and its businesses in RCT is welcomed.

58. Leisure facilities:

leisure uses and facilities need to continue to be supported.



TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL ISSUES

59. Town centres:

The role of town centres needs to change. The mix of uses needs to change and a flexible approach needs to be taken for future prosperity.

60. Housing in Town Centres:

Housing in town centres should be supported although it needs to be appropriate and suitable.

61. Investment in town centres:

continued investment in town centres is needed to maintain future viability.



COAL MINING LEGACY ISSUES

62. Tip safety:

there is a need to address tip safety.

63. Reclamation:

The barriers to reclamation need to be addressed.

64. Ecology and biodiversity:

The high ecology and biodiversity value of mining legacy sites needs to be recognised and effectively considered and integrated into development proposals, tip safety and management delivery.





4

4

THE VISION & OBJECTIVES

Introduction

- 4.1.1 A Vision and a set of supporting Objectives have been formulated for the RLDP to ensure that the plan addresses the key Issues that have been identified. It sets out the purpose of the plan and how it is intended that RCT will change and develop over the plan period to 2037. The Vision and Objectives are interlinked and should be considered together.
- 4.1.2 The Vision accords with relevant national, regional and local strategies and policies. The Council's Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan have directly informed the Vision of the RLDP, alongside the Issues identified. This is to ensure that there is synergy and consistency between all three documents, which are striving for the same overall outcome for RCT.
- 4.1.3 The consistent themes that have emerged from the above include climate change, health, cohesive communities and the importance of the environment and green space. The Vision has been formulated on this basis.
- 4.1.4 Rhondda Cynon Taf is a very distinctive place with a rich history, culture, important wildlife, beautiful landscapes and friendly communities. What is also distinctive about RCT is the differences between places. The previous LDP started the work of recognising and addressing these differences, and building on the strengths. This RLDP will continue this good work and build on the successes it has seen.

Vision

4.15 The Vision by 2037 is for a more resilient and sustainable RCT:

- ◆ **An area of sustainable, cohesive communities who are healthy, well connected and who have equal access to high quality homes, jobs, services and facilities.**
- ◆ **An area more resilient and considerate to the challenges of climate change with protected and enhanced biodiversity and green spaces and a well-connected sustainable transport system.**
- ◆ **An area with a diverse and healthy economy, supported by vibrant and viable town centres and a flourishing tourism sector. An RCT that celebrates its heritage and is resilient for the future.**

4.16 The Vision will be delivered through the Plan's Objectives, which are set out in the next section.

RLDP Objectives

4.17 Clear Objectives need to be prepared at the outset of the Revised LDP. They set out in detail the wider intentions of the Vision of the RLDP. These Objectives will be monitored throughout the plan period, which will ultimately indicate if the RLDP has been delivered successfully.

4.18 Objectives have been formulated from the Vision and heavily informed by the breadth of Issues that are shown in the previous section. Further detail of how the Issues and Vision have informed the preparation of the Objectives can be seen in the **Vision, Issues and Objectives Paper**.

4.19 Further, specific Objectives were identified for the Integrated Sustainable Appraisal process, which also reflect national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans, including the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well Being Plan.

4.110 It has been determined that the 15 ISA Objectives identified are fully appropriate to be taken forward as overall RLDP Objectives, as they fully align with our Vision and identified Issues. There are then a further 3 Objectives identified that would not be part of the ISA process, that are considered necessary for the RLDP to achieve.

4.111 Therefore, in order to support the delivery of the RLDP and its Vision, 18 specific Objectives have been identified and are listed below.

4.112 Under each specific objective, associated aims have been included to provide some information on the kinds of areas within the topic, which could be used to form the basis of detailed policies, as the plan preparation moves forward to the deposit draft.

OBJECTIVE 1: **Mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change and reduce flood risk**

Associated aims and objectives:

- To support the increase in electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Locate development in sustainable locations.
- Ensure that employment locations are accessible to all.
- To protect, enhance and improve access to areas of good quality greenspace and open space in RCT.
- Protect, enhance and provide further green and blue infrastructure assets and networks for their multi-functional roles.
- Continue to manage our natural assets in RCT in a more cohesive way, seeking to also identify multifaceted benefits from this.
- Increase the production and supply of renewable energy and where possible reduce carbon generating energy consumption.
- To reduce the impacts of flooding and ensure development and communities are not put at risk of flooding.
- Continue to identify, manage, protect and enhance green infrastructure and other natural assets, seeking to identify benefits such as helping to address climate change.
- To promote and where appropriate require sustainable/carbon net zero design throughout RCT.
- Conserve and enhance our biodiversity rich landscapes to maximise habitat and species resilience to future climate change.

OBJECTIVE 2: **Provide an appropriate amount and mix of housing to meet local needs**

Associated aims and objectives:

- To provide diversity in the housing market through the delivery of a range of house types and sizes catering for the needs of all communities in RCT.
- Increase the amount of good quality housing that is affordable across both social and private markets.
- To provide viable housing sites in RCT and to encourage the delivery of brownfield development.
- Reduce the amount of empty properties in RCT and bring them back into use for several beneficial reasons.
- Increase the amount of new housing that is built to a sustainable/carbon net zero ●Appropriately manage Houses in Multiple Occupation and their impacts.
- To achieve a high standard of design and placemaking in developments.
- To seek to identify suitable sites for new housing development in all parts of RCT to allow for housing need and opportunities for all.
- Provide for the housing needs of an aging population in both new build and within existing housing stock.
- To provide high-quality homes.
- The need to provide appropriate and sufficient housing for Gypsy and Traveller communities.

3

OBJECTIVE 3:**Promote vibrant communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all****Associated aims and objectives:**

- To provide appropriate, accessible, and adequate services and facilities to existing and growing communities of RCT.
- Promote integrated communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all.
- Identify a suitable hierarchy of all retail centres, which provides services and facilities at a regional, local and neighbourhood level.
- Seek to support education and training in RCT where possible.
- To achieve high quality new and redeveloped employment sites.
- Improve infrastructure in RCT and reduce congestion.
- Improve the levels of education and training in RCT.
- Ensure there are sufficient school places where populations and school place demand is evolving, particularly where new development occurs.
- To achieve a high standard of design for all developments and their occupiers.

4

OBJECTIVE 4:**Encourage healthy and safe lifestyles that promote well-being and improve overall health levels in RCT****Associated aims and objectives:**

- Support the provision of sufficient healthcare and facilities, with access to them.
- To protect, enhance and improve access to areas of good quality greenspace and open space in RCT. This can contribute to improved physical and mental health and well-being of residents across RCT.
- Seek opportunities to tackle crime through planning in RCT, to ensure that people living, working and visiting feel safe.
- Protect, enhance and provide further green and blue infrastructure assets and networks for their multi-functional roles.
- Continue to manage, protect and enhance green infrastructure and other natural assets, seeking to identify benefits such as enhancing nature and helping to address climate change.

4

5

OBJECTIVE 5: Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport

Associated aims and objectives:

- To locate development in sustainable locations that have good access to a range of sustainable modes of transport.
- Improve the public/sustainable transport network in terms of quality, location and cost.
- To improve the frequency of public transport and the connectivity of different modes to allow a more holistic public transport network.
- Support the objectives and delivery of the South Wales Metro.
- Improve the connectivity of public transport in RCT between different areas and different modes.
- Improve the active travel network and encourage its use for all.



6

OBJECTIVE 6: Promote, protect and enhance cultural heritage and the built environment.

Associated aims and objectives:

- To protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment (listed buildings, conservation areas and heritage assets) as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations.
- Seek to develop opportunities to extend the heritage-based tourism industry in RCT.
- Support the arts culture and associated heritage of RCT.

7

OBJECTIVE 7: Promote the use of the Welsh language

Associated aims and objectives:

- To support a thriving Welsh language in association with the identification of locations of development.
- Support and establish the conditions in RCT, which allow the Welsh language to thrive.

8

OBJECTIVE 8: Protect and enhance the quality and character of the landscape

Associated aims and objectives:

- To protect and enhance our unique landscapes that may be sensitive to development pressures.

9

OBJECTIVE 9: Protect and enhance biodiversity

Associated aims and objectives:

- To protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological features from inappropriate development and its associated effects.
- Recognise the ecology and biodiversity in areas of mining legacy.
- Recognise the unique role the rich resource of semi-natural habitat and species diversity in RCT provides as assets for the well-being of RCT residents.
- Actively recognise, manage and conserve the unique ecology and biodiversity of our mining legacy, effectively integrating this with tip safety and maintenance requirements.

11

OBJECTIVE 11: Protect and enhance air quality and ensure appropriate soundscapes

Associated aims and objectives:

- Seek to improve air quality across the County Borough.
- Seek to improve soundscapes across the County Borough.

12

OBJECTIVE 12: Promote the efficient use of land, soils and minerals

Associated aims and objectives:

- Encourage the delivery of brownfield development.
- Better manage our natural assets in RCT in a more cohesive way, which identifies and delivers multifaceted, but mutually supporting benefits.
- Ensure all quarry extraction is appropriate, necessary and in accordance with all standards and conditions.
- Promote the efficient and appropriate use of minerals, including the safeguarding of resources and ensuring that adequate reserves are allocated to meet local, regional and national needs.
- Encourage the recycling and re-use of aggregates and building materials, where possible.

10

OBJECTIVE 10: Protect the quality and quantity of RCT's water resources

Associated aims and objectives:

- Protect, enhance and provide further green and blue infrastructure assets and networks for their multi-functional roles.
- Improve the water environment and seek to address the negative effects upon it.

13

OBJECTIVE 13: **Continue to minimise waste generation and promote more sustainable waste management**

Associated aims and objectives:

- Continue to encourage, support and improve recycling in RCT, whilst supporting the overall reduction of waste.
- Ensure that new housing estate of all sizes are appropriately designed to allow for larger vehicles to access them, particularly for the collection of waste.
- Ensure that all residual waste that cannot be recycled is disposed of in a sustainable manner that does not create any pollution.
- Support the circular economy to ensure that built assets, materials, products and components are re-used and remain in use for as long as possible.

14

OBJECTIVE 14: **Provide for a sustainable economy**

Associated aims and objectives:

- To decrease the levels of deprivation in RCT and to seek to support employment opportunities.
- Address the impact of the coronavirus in RCT.
- To provide for a sustainable economy.
- Seek to develop opportunities to extend the heritage-based tourism industry in RCT.

15

OBJECTIVE 15: **Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities**

Associated aims and objectives:

- To support existing employment sites across RCT and seek to regenerate the older and derelict stock on sites. To allocate new employment opportunities in appropriate locations.
- Provide a diverse range of job opportunities.
- Increase the amount of job opportunities in RCT.
- Increase the amount of employment opportunities in town centre locations.



16

OBJECTIVE 16: Promote vibrant, adaptable & resilient Town Centres

Associated aims and objectives:

- Support and encourage an appropriate changing role and diversification of the town or commercial centres and provide the flexibility for them to adapt to change.
- Provide appropriate housing in town centre locations at the right scale that should increase the vitality of the town centres.
- Continue to provide sufficient and appropriate infrastructure in town centres, including the linking of all transport, public transport and active travel modes
- To create an appropriate retail hierarchy, which provides services and facilities at a regional, local and neighbourhood level.
- To increase the amount of employment opportunities in town centre locations.

17

OBJECTIVE 17: Address the impacts of the mining legacy in RCT

Associated aims and objectives:

- Appropriately address the risk associated with tips from coal and other mining.
- Seek to identify options to redevelop brownfield sites that are affected by our mining legacy, both on and below the ground.
- Ensure there is appropriate reclamation of mining legacy sites.
- Recognise the ecology and biodiversity in areas of mining legacy.

18

OBJECTIVE 18: To support the growth of the tourism and leisure sector

Associated aims and objectives:

- To help support the provision of suitable accommodation for the tourism sector.
- To support the growth of tourism and associated opportunities in RCT.
- To support the growth of eco/green tourism in RCT.
- To improve tourism facilities and associated infrastructure and accessibility for everyone.
- To support the leisure sector and it's evolving needs and development.



THE SETTLEMENT ASSESSMENT & SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY

Introduction

- 5.1.1 A key part of the RLDP process is to undertake a Settlement Assessment that informs the identification of a Settlement Hierarchy. This should ensure that decisions on the location of development in the RLDP consider issues such as sustainable growth patterns, supporting of services and facilities, and the relationship between the scale of settlements and how they are used by people.
- 5.1.2 RCTCBC has undertaken this process to determine if the current hierarchy is still correct. This is set out in greater detail in the **Settlement Assessment and Settlement Hierarchy Paper**. The assessment was based on the current LDP Settlement Hierarchy at the outset.
- 5.1.3 The agreed regional methodology for undertaking Settlement Assessments was utilised in the first instance; although as the paper sets out, appropriate, additional considerations were made. Both qualitative and quantitative assessment took place, including a very comprehensive analysis of all settlements. Settlements were assessed to ascertain the relationship between them, their sustainability credentials, the level and proximity of services and facilities present, population size, distance to and frequency of public transport links and the percentage of Welsh speakers present. This was ultimately to determine their ability and capacity to accommodate further development.

The Revised LDP Settlement Hierarchy

- 5.14 The outcomes of the Settlement Assessment indicated the need for a small number of amendments to the current LDP Settlement Hierarchy.
- 5.15 Firstly, to make a more clear distinction with the closely associated Retail Hierarchy, 'Principal Towns' are now referred to as 'Principal Settlements.'
- 5.16 Secondly, Pontyclun is indicated as a smaller settlement in the current LDP, (although it was within the Principal Town of Llantrisant/Talbot Green in earlier iterations of the current LDP preparation). However, the Settlement Assessment concluded that Pontyclun now forms part of what is now a Principal Settlement, given the clear interdependent, social, economic and geographical relationships between these places. From this point forward, this Principal Settlement is referred to as 'Talbot Green, Pontyclun and Llantrisant'. The housing and employment areas throughout are considered to be indivisible, in the context of the larger settlement. Residents of Talbot Green, Pontyclun and Llantrisant rely on the commercial and public transport opportunities throughout the settlement, which are interconnected.
- 5.17 Further, the village of Llwydcoed is now considered to be a smaller settlement, being slightly more detached than those places that comprise the Principal Settlement of Aberdare (these being Aberdare, Aberaman, Abernant, Trecynon and Cwmdare). Llwydcoed is more akin to the Cwmbach and Abercwmboi/Cwmaman settlements, as although they retain an inter-dependent relationship with Aberdare, they are further removed and more independent.
- 5.18 All other settlements within the Hierarchy have remained the same therefore the Settlement Hierarchy for the County Borough is as follows:



Principal Settlements

- **Aberdare**
- **Talbot Green, Pontyclun and Llantrisant**
- **Pontypridd**

- 5.19 The Principal Settlements will remain the primary, important hubs and gateways for new investment, innovation and sustainable development. This is at an RCT and regional level. The Principal Settlements have significant public transport links and active travel routes, which facilitate movement around the County Borough and the wider region.



Key Settlements

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| ● Ferndale | ● Porth |
| ● Hirwaun | ● Tonypandy |
| ● Llanharan | ● Tonyrefail |
| ● Mountain Ash | ● Treorchy |

5.110 Key Settlements are geographically smaller and less strategically significant than the Principal Settlements. Nonetheless, these settlements are extremely important, acting as centres for commercial and community activities and sustainable development and investment. Furthermore, the majority of Key Settlements have the requisite public transport facilities to support growth.

Smaller Settlements

- **Aberaman South**
- **Abercynon**
- **Beddau**
- **Church Village**
- **Cilfynydd**
- **Cwmbach**
- **Cymmer**
- **Efail Isaf**
- **Gilfach Goch**
- **Glyncoch**
- **Hawthorn**
- **Llanharry**
- **Llanilltud Faerdref**
- **Llwydcoed**
- **Maerdy**
- **Penrhiwceiber**
- **Pentre**
- **Penywaun**
- **Rhigos**
- **Rhydyfelin**
- **Taffs Well**
- **Tonteg**
- **Treherbert**
- **Tylorstown**
- **Ynyshir**
- **Ynysybwl**
- **Ystrad**

5.111 As with the Principal Settlements and Key Settlements, Smaller Settlements are sustainably located with the services and public transport links to support development. The Smaller Settlements will play an important role in delivering the Strategy by supporting the vitality of the higher order settlements and accommodating levels of growth. They will help meet the needs of local communities, retaining and expanding the provision of services and facilities.

Settlements Outside Settlement Boundaries

Name	Location	Type
● North View Terrace	Aberaman	2
● Goitre Coed Isaf	Abercynon	2
● Gelynog Court	Beddau	1
● Blaencwm	Blaencwm	1
● Coedely	Coedely	1
● Bwllfadare Terrace	Cwmdare	2
● Heol Creigiau	Efail Isaf	1
● Groesfaen	Groesfaen	1
● Halt Road	Hirwaun	2
● Seymour Avenue	Llanharan	2
● Meiros Valley	Llanharan	1
● Trem-y-Fforest	Llanharry	2
● Degar	Llanharry	1



Settlements Outside Settlement Boundaries (continued)

Name	Location	Type
● Gwaun Llanhari	Llanharry	1
● Castell-y-Mwnws	Llanharry	1
● Mwyndy	Llantrisant	1
● Greys Place	Llwydcoed	2
● Pantaquesta	Miskin	1
● Highlands	Penycoedcae	1
● Penycoedcae	Penycoedcae	1
● Cefn Rhigos	Rhigos	1
● Rhiwsaeson	Rhiwsaeson	1
● Talygarn	Talygarn	1
● Talygarn House	Talygarn	1
● Pantybrad	Tonyrefail	1
● Tylacoch Place	Treorchy	2
● Ynysmaerdy	Ynysmaerdy	1
● Pleasant View	Ynysybwl	2
● Daren Ddu	Ynysybwl	1

5.1.12 The Settlement Hierarchy also acknowledges that there are twenty-nine settlements of ten or more dwellings outside the defined settlement boundary. In accordance with national planning policy, these settlements are not suited to further development because they are in unsustainable locations and would not meet the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes.

- **Settlement Type 1: Dwelling cluster**
- **Settlement Type 2: Terrace or street**

5.1.13 It should also be noted that the overall Settlement Hierarchy is integrally linked to the Retail and Commercial Centre Hierarchy. That has been identified within a strategic policy later in the Preferred Strategy. However, it should be noted that from this point forward in the RLDP, what has been referred to as the Retail and Commercial Centres (and the background hierarchy paper) is now known simply as the 'Settlement Centres' i.e. the centres of the settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy.



Introduction

- 6.1.1 A fundamental part of the preparation the Revised LDP is to establish the most suitable level of growth for the plan to deliver. This is determined by a multitude of social, economic and demographic evidence, needs and aspirations. Primarily, this is related to the scale of housing which should be delivered in the RLDP. However, this is also intrinsically linked to the economy of RCT, in terms of employment growth and seeking to ensure a balanced future demographic in the County Borough, for its continued prosperity.
- 6.1.2 ‘Edge Analytics’ have prepared a **Demographic Evidence** report for RCT. It sets out a detailed demographic and employment profile for the County Borough. It then configures a range of growth scenarios, both demographic and employment based. It concludes with an associated range of dwelling and employment growth outcomes for each of these scenarios from 2022 to 2037.
- 6.1.3 The **Growth Options Paper** follows on from this, setting out our analysis of these growth scenarios to determine what is most suitable for the Revised LDP, against a raft of relevant evidence and considerations.
- 6.1.4 Other such evidence that has informed this process includes:
- ◆ **LDP Review Report**
 - ◆ **Welsh Government 2018 Household and Population Projections**
 - ◆ **Office for National Statistics and Stats Wales**
 - ◆ **Housing Supply Paper**
 - ◆ **Candidate Site Assessments**
 - ◆ **The Urban Capacity Study**
 - ◆ **Local Housing Market Assessment**

Growth Scenarios

Scenarios that showed similar outcomes were grouped for their analysis, as follows:

MID-RANGE GROWTH SCENARIOS:

- 6.15 **The first of the mid-range growth scenarios is based on the Welsh Government (WG) 2018 Principal Population Projections. The second is the Dwelling-led 5 year scenario. The WG-2018 option is considered to be the main (or ‘central’) projection, and its forecasts are based on assumptions such as mortality, migration, household composition, and future fertility, which are considered most reflective of demographic patterns at the time of publication. The Dwelling-led 5 year option has formulated projections utilising RCT’s average annual housing completion rate of 509 dwellings per annum (2016/17 – 2020/21).**
- 6.16 These projections have been translated to new housing requirements of 8,450 and 7,635 across the Revised LDP plan period, or 564 and 509 dwellings to be built per annum, respectively. The associated expected annual employment growth would be 266 and 187 jobs respectively.

Name of Projection Scenario	Summary	Total population change 2022-37 (% change)	Total households change 2022-37 (% change)	Total Dwellings (Dwellings per year)	Employment Growth per year
WG-2018	Principal Population Projections based on fertility, mortality, migration and household composition assumptions.	8,020 (3.3%)	8,009 (7.5%)	8,450 (564)	266
Dwelling - led 5Y	Models on an average annual dwelling growth equal to RCT’s average annual housing completion rate 2016/17 – 2020/21.	6,406 (2.7%)	7,234 (6.8%)	7,635 (509)	187

- 6.17 Overall, the two mid-ranged growth scenarios are supported by the most substantial evidence. These scenarios each present realistically achievable growth scenarios, and the dwelling and job growth projected by these scenarios are reflective of RCT’s position within the National Growth Area of Cardiff, Newport and The Valleys. The mid-ranged growth options have the benefit of providing a balance to delivering an ambitious but achievable amount of much needed private and affordable housing in sustainable locations, while minimising potential environmental impacts. Both of these scenarios are very positive and aspirational targets that could resolve multiple objectives of the revised LDP.

HIGHER GROWTH SCENARIOS:

- 6.18 **Two further scenarios have been considered that have higher levels of growth. The first follows the Welsh Government's 2018 High Population Projections and is based on high assumptions of fertility, mortality and migration compared to the principal projection. The second, PG (Pop Group company software) 5 Year scenario, calibrates population/household projections based on migration patterns of the last 5 years.**
- 6.19 The new housing requirements of these scenarios are 721 and 682 per annum, and the annual employment growth would be 343 and 355 jobs respectively.

Name of Projection Scenario	Summary	Total population change 2022-37 (% change)	Total households change 2022-37 (% change)	Total Dwellings (Dwellings per year)	Employment Growth per year
Higher Variant	Based on higher assumptions of fertility, life expectancy and migration compared to the Principal Population Projections.	13,490 (5.6%)	10,238 (9.5%)	10,815 (721)	343
PG-5Y	Calibrates migration assumptions using ONS data for Mid-year Population Estimates over the last 5 years (2015/16 – 2019/20)	12,135 (5.0%)	9,686 (9.0%)	10,230 (682)	355

- 6.110 These higher growth options would further accord with the aspirations of the national growth areas; increase the working age population and deliver greater numbers of affordable housing and jobs. However, there remains notable uncertainty and limited evidence that the dwelling requirements could realistically be achieved or delivered in RCT within the plan period to 2037. This would require far greater than average past build rates and expected market demand (indeed, the current LDP was perhaps too aspirational in this respect). Availability of greater amounts of suitable new land for allocation would prove a challenge. Overall, the higher growth options are considered a high-risk strategy, with perhaps unrealistic requirements and aspirations.

LOW GROWTH SCENARIOS :

- 6.1.11 **The third set of growth scenarios include the WG-2018-Low Population scenario. In contrast to the ‘higher’ variant, the lower variant is based on low assumptions of fertility, mortality and migration, compared to the Principal Projection. The PG-Long Term scenario is then based on migration assumptions reflective of ONS Mid-year Population Estimates from 2001-2020 (19 years).**
- 6.1.12 The new housing requirements of these scenarios are 353 and 382 per annum, and the annual employment growth would be 182 and 92 jobs respectively.

Name of Projection Scenario	Summary	Total population change 2022-37 (% change)	Total households change 2022-37 (% change)	Total Dwellings (Dwellings per year)	Employment Growth per year
Lower Variant	Based on lower assumptions of fertility, life expectancy and migration compared to the Principal Population Projections.	129 (0.1%)	5,013 (4.7%)	5,295 (353)	182
Employment-led Policy-on	Calibrates migration assumptions using ONS data for Mid-year Population Estimates (2001/02 – 2019/20)	1,867 (0.8%)	5,429 (5.1%)	5,730 (382)	92

- 6.1.13 The lower growth options are perhaps more easily achievable mainly through existing landbank sites, windfall sites and fewer allocations. However, these growth options are less ambitious and would be somewhat contrary to the aspirations of the National Growth Area set out in Future Wales – The National Plan. There is also recognised concern that these growth options would not meet the housing needs of the County Borough, both in terms of affordable housing and market housing. The impact on population growth would also cause further decline in the working age population.

EMPLOYMENT-LED SCENARIOS:

- 6.114 The final set of growth scenarios are the ‘Employment-led Oxford Economics’ (OE) and ‘Employment-led Policy-on’. The first considers what the impact would be of a ‘Policy-off’ approach, where population growth is driven by the forecast employment growth trends, without any policy intervention. On the other hand, the Employment-led Policy-on scenario considers the impact to population growth, driven by intervention in employment trends. The BE Group in conjunction with PER Consulting have prepared an **Employment Land Review** evidence base paper that sets out adjustments to the Oxford Economics forecasts; and assumes specific economic policy intervention to support growth primarily in the B2/B8 industrial land use classes.
- 6.115 The new housing requirements of these scenarios are 447 and 588 per annum, and the annual employment growth would be 32 and 168 jobs respectively.

Name of Projection Scenario	Summary	Total population change 2022-37 (% change)	Total households change 2022-37 (% change)	Total Dwellings (Dwellings per year)	Employment Growth per year
Employment-led OE	Models the population growth based on the Oxford Economics forecast for employment growth of +32 per year.	3,725 (1.5%)	6,348 (5.8%)	6,705 (447)	32
Employment-led Policy-on	Models the population growth based on the adjusted average annual employment growth of +168 per year for RCT, assuming growth primarily in the industrial land use classes.	8,416 (3.4%)	8,357 (7.6%)	8,820 (588)	168

- 6.116 The employment-led scenarios provide realistic, achievable options, though each with differing outcomes. Both of the scenarios are projected to lead to a decrease in the working age population by the end of the plan period, although this is far more significant in the OE scenario (2.75% decline) than the Policy-On scenario (0.65% decline). Similar to the mid-ranged scenarios, these growth options would be unlikely to achieve the identified need of affordable housing, as set out in the Local Housing Market Assessment 2024 Draft Findings. The OE scenario in particular is considered unlikely to be appropriate for RCT, due to low forecasts of employment and housing growth.

Preferred Growth Option for the Revised LDP – The Welsh Government 2018 Principal Projections.

- 6.1.17 Given consideration to the analysis, three options stand out as being the most appropriate growth options for the RLDP. These are the two mid-range demographic scenarios and the Policy-on employment scenario. These are projected to deliver the most appropriate and considered levels of housing and employment growth. However, the latter is projected to deliver fewer new jobs than the mid-ranged demographic scenarios and has a negative impact on the working age population.
- 6.1.18 From the two mid-ranged growth scenarios, the WG-2018 Principal Projection option is considered to produce preferential outcomes for the County Borough compared to the Dwelling-led 5Y variant. The greater housing requirement associated with the WG-2018 option will lead to a greater number of affordable housing and market housing built. It is a more aspirational housing target with regards to being around 10% greater than the past 5 year average housing completion rate, whilst also in-keeping with the national growth area. The analysis method and its parameters also indicate that this would provide over 1,000 more new jobs than the Dwelling-led 5Y growth option. The WG-2018 option is further projected to foresee an increase in the working age population of RCT.
- 6.1.19 It is recognised that delivering the identified housing need is very challenging however seeking to meet the WG-2018 projections provides the better opportunity to deliver a variety of high quality new housing, including affordable housing. It is felt that aspiring to lower growth levels than these would not be appropriate; although this would be subject to ensuring that the RCT RLDP can fully evidence certainty over its delivery, throughout the plan's preparation.
- 6.1.20 The Housing Supply Paper sets out the evidence to indicate how this growth option of 8,450 dwellings can be achieved (with an additional, appropriate buffer of housing land). This will be delivered through the housing landbank, an initial total of land from potentially suitable Candidate Sites and a likely windfall housing land contribution.

The Employment Land Review paper and the strategic employment policy later in the Preferred Strategy, also set out how the RLDP will seek to achieve the proposed employment growth.

Neighbouring Local Authority and South East Wales Regional Considerations

- 6.1.21 It is necessary to note that there are high levels of housing delivery proposed in neighbouring LPAs and South East Wales in general, and this has created an additional consideration that RCT must take account of. Much of this growth is greater than the WG higher growth projections for the respective Authorities. Regional analysis and reports also indicate proposals for growth significantly above the NDF levels. Our evidence base analysis indicates some interdependency between our housing markets and our neighbours'. All this has been fully considered by RCT. However, it remains that there will always be matters ongoing, and proposals in neighbouring authorities, that remain outside our control and may be subject to change.
- 6.1.22 The Principal Projections that RCT have determined to plan for, remain proportionally lower than others, and aligned with National Policy. We have a duty to ensure we fully understand our own housing, economic and demographic needs in RCT. The RLDP should ensure that we address and meet these specific needs, fulfil our own aspirations for appropriate growth for RCT, alongside the consideration of the NDF regional growth areas and neighbouring authorities.

SPATIAL STRATEGY OPTIONS

Introduction

- 7.1.1 As well as determining how much RCT needs to grow, another crucial element of the Preferred Strategy is where this growth will be accommodated. Although housing is an essential element of the plan, the overall growth considered through the Preferred Strategy is not limited to just homes but also to economic and social development over the plan period.
- 7.1.2 When developing the Spatial Strategy Options for the RLDP, many factors were considered. Firstly, the spatial options had to accord with national policy, such as the NDF and Planning Policy Wales, which sets out the 'gateway test' in which plans and proposals must be assessed against the strategic and spatial choices issues and the national sustainable placemaking outcomes. This key gateway test ensures that important issues are explored with opportunities identified, along with potential mitigation measures.
- 7.1.3 The spatial options also have to move in the same direction as other local policy and strategy. These include the Well-being Plan, the RCT Corporate Plan and multiple other strategy documents.
- 7.1.4 Further, in order to develop the Spatial Strategy Options, the performance of the current LDP was taken into account. This provided excellent evidence of what elements of the previous spatial strategy had worked, what had not and what should be considered to be changed. This was achieved through the analysis of the Annual Monitoring Reports and the LDP Review Report, which shows where development has occurred and is being delivered.
- 7.1.5 During the visioning and engagement processes mentioned earlier (and in considerable detail in the accompanying evidence base documents of the **Pre-Deposit Consultation Report** and the **Vision, Issues and Objectives Paper**) a number of specific location-based issues were identified. These were used to inform the development of the Spatial Strategy Options for the Preferred Strategy, which in turn has to deliver the Vision and Objectives of the RLDP.



- 7.1.6 Other sources of background and evidence that informed the Spatial options included:
- ◆ Candidate Sites submitted and Candidate Site Methodology
 - ◆ The Settlement Hierarchy and Assessment Paper
 - ◆ The Urban Capacity Study
 - ◆ The Growth Options Paper
 - ◆ The Housing Supply Paper
 - ◆ The Employment Land Review
 - ◆ The Viability Reports
 - ◆ The Local Housing Market assessment
 - ◆ The Housing Strategy
 - ◆ The Transport Modelling Study
- 7.1.7 Also considered is what is evolving on the ground and what could be derived from them; such as the significant investment and development of the South Wales Metro, the growth in the tourism industry and the changing nature of the town centres.
- 7.1.8 A series of Spatial Strategy Options were formulated based on all the above, concluding with the following:
- ◆ **OPTION 1:**
Continuation of the Current LDP Strategy
 - ◆ **OPTION 2:**
Strategic Highway Network considering the Principal Settlements
 - ◆ **OPTION 3:**
Town Centre First
 - ◆ **OPTION 4:**
Southern Growth Strategy
 - ◆ **OPTION 5:**
Metro and Public Transport Nodes
 - ◆ **OPTION 6:**
Key Strategic Site in the South
 - ◆ **OPTION 7:**
Urban Containment
 - ◆ **OPTION 8:**
Local Needs Strategy
- 7.1.9 A comprehensive description, analysis and assessment of these options can be found in the **Spatial Strategy Options Paper**.

Background to the Spatial Strategy Options and their Assessment

- 7.1.10 All options were considered and assessed against the comprehensive evidence base as listed above. However, a key determining factor was the deliverability of each option, particularly in terms of the scale of land availability. While brownfield-only development in existing urban centres/areas may perform well in sustainability terms; if the approach cannot deliver the required amount of housing and commercial land, it is not realistic.
- 7.1.11 The Spatial Strategy Options are intrinsically linked with the **Growth Option Paper** and its requirements and conclusions. Failing to deliver the required jobs and homes would also negatively impact upon RCT. It may result in higher levels of trip generation as people are forced to live and work further apart. Therefore, a key challenge for RCT is to balance sustainability aspirations with the realistic deliverability of development under each option, bearing in mind the attractiveness of the southern area to developers compared with the north. **The Housing Supply Paper**, which considers the landbank of available housing land; the Candidate Sites that have gone through early assessments; and the Windfall Sites analysis, also heavily influences the decisions on options.
- 7.1.12 The Spatial Strategy Options were further considered against the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), which used the ISA objectives for assessment. The full results of this process can be found in the **ISA of Spatial Options Paper**. Overall, the ISA identified a wide range of positive and negative effects across the options. Further RLDP objectives were also considered against the options.
- 7.1.13 Another key factor in terms of deliverability of options is the market viability of different parts of the County Borough. High-level viability assessment, in the **Viability Reports** was commissioned to provide information on viability/market areas to inform the RLDP.

● **OPTION 1:**

Continuation of the current LDP Strategy

- 7.1.14 The current LDP strategy is a hybrid strategy, which provides development in locations that meet local needs whilst promoting sustainable growth. The strategy area is divided into two distinct parts, North and South where a different policy approach is taken for each. Development in the current strategy is focussed around the Principal Towns and Key Settlements, as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy, whilst also allocating large scale mixed-use development on eight Strategic Sites.
- 7.1.15 It is clear from the monitoring of the LDP that some elements of this strategy have worked and others have not. The current Strategy has seen a considerable 7,784 new houses built during the plan period. A total of 3,050 dwellings were built in the Northern Strategy Area and 4,734 in the Southern Strategy Area. However, this was only just over half of the allocated amount.
- 7.1.16 The completion rate on all allocations was low, (both housing and employment) and particularly so on a number of Strategic Sites that were heavily relied upon for delivery. Development has continued in earnest on the Llanilid site in recent years and development has occurred on the employment element of Robertstown/Abernant and preparation of the employment element at Land South of Hirwaun. Recent advancements should see further development on Mwyndy/Talbot Green and Abernant in the near future. The fact remains that at least three brownfield Strategic Sites cannot currently be relied upon for high-density development. The Strategy has however seen substantial development on non-allocated/windfall sites, particularly brownfield sites that have contributed greatly to the objectives of the LDP and its policies. This has also been witnessed with regards to commercial development and redevelopment within existing employment sites.

7.1.17 In assessing this option, the north/south split element and intentions of the Strategy are still relevant, alongside the settlement hierarchy. This current Strategy may not be fully appropriate to be taken forward in its entirety, although there are clear positive elements that should remain.

◆ **OPTION 2:** **Strategic Highway Network considering the Principal Settlements**

7.1.18 This option proposes development in those parts of the County Borough that benefit the most from their proximity to the M4, A470 and A465 corridors. This generally aligns with the Principal Settlements of Talbot Green/Pontyclun/Llantrisant, Pontypridd and Aberdare, being at the head of the Settlement Hierarchy.

7.1.19 To a certain extent, this could be classed as an option, which further promotes car use as it is based around the strategic highway network. This of course would not be in line with national policy, which promotes a modal shift away from car-based development. However rather than just a car-based strategy, it seeks to expand the ongoing regeneration in and around these Principal Settlement corridors. This includes the boost in tourism in the northern Cynon Valley, the regeneration seen in Pontypridd and the market demand in the Taff Ely area. With regards to the A465 'Heads of the Valleys' road in particular, the considerable investment by the Welsh Government in the northern valleys corridor was intended to increase economic prosperity in this sub-region. This is clearly something that the RLDP must maximise the benefits of, which should include general economic growth and the strengthening of the evolving tourism economy in the north of RCT.

◆ **OPTION 3:** **Town Centre First**

7.1.20 This option seeks a town centre first approach to the location of development, with a sequential approach used. It identifies development sites which are in close proximity to the Principal Settlements and Key Settlements, as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy. This option promotes sustainable travel by locating development close to public transport and close to employment opportunities, services and facilities to achieve sustainable living and modal shift.

7.1.21 This option would clearly accord with national policy and fit in with the wider Settlement Hierarchy. It is very sustainable, being close to facilities whilst it would be an efficient use of land and minimise the need to travel. Thus providing sustainable transport options, when transport is required. It would also support the continued regeneration of RCT's town centres. However, it is very apparent that there is not enough suitable land to achieve the objectives of the RLDP, and in particular the necessary scale of development growth, with this strategy option alone. A Town Centre First approach, as set out in national policy, should always be a strong premise in an LDP and should be set out in the plan's policies. In particular, the Urban Capacity Study evidence base document indicates the limitations of this option.

● **OPTION 4:** **Southern Growth Strategy**

- 7.1.22 This strategy option focuses on locating growth in the southern area of RCT (Taff Ely area) with a particular focus on the M4 corridor. The key elements of this option are to locate the majority of growth in the south, which would require greenfield release. This would see limited growth in the northern areas, which would just accommodate local need.
- 7.1.23 The major benefit with this option is that it can deliver the required level of growth and has a proven track record of delivery, whilst also being an area of demand that is viable. This option would allow the ability to improve community and other infrastructure and could deliver more affordable housing. This area of RCT is more limited in public transport infrastructure and some areas are not very sustainable.

● **OPTION 5:** **Metro and Public Transport Nodes**

- 7.1.24 This option would focus development around public transport hubs, corridors and existing stations and maximise development within walking or cycling distance to Metro stations and hubs, which in general accords with the Settlement Hierarchy. It would seek growth in those areas best served by public transport and reduce the need to travel by private vehicle.
- 7.1.25 This would have significant, positive effects associated with sustainable and active modes of travel and providing access to jobs without being so reliant on car use; ultimately reducing the need to travel. The reasonably dispersed development that would occur under this option would also have positive effects in terms of stimulating regeneration in different parts of the County Borough, as well as supporting retail and commercial centres. However, it is very apparent that there is not enough suitable land to achieve the objectives of the RLDP, and in particular the scale of growth, with this strategy option alone.

● **OPTION 6:** **Key Strategic Site in the South**

- 7.1.26 This option would see the allocation of a large Key Site in the south of the County Borough, which would accommodate a significant majority of the new housing and other development over the plan period supported by smaller allocations spread through the County Borough to address local need.
- 7.1.27 By allocating a Key Site in the south, which has a proven track record of delivery, it is likely that this option would deliver the majority of the growth needed for the plan period. By allocating a larger site it would be possible to deliver a mix of uses and to include appropriate infrastructure and facilities. Sustainability in some areas is a concern, as is limited public transport. There is also the risk with a large site that the delivery may be slower than multiple smaller sites. Furthermore, if a larger site fails to deliver, it will likely lead to the strategy not being met.

● **OPTION 7:** **Urban Containment**

- 7.1.28 This strategy option seeks to deliver growth within the current urban area without the need to release new land for development. The key elements of this strategy seek to support the re use, conversion and redevelopment of empty, underused and derelict properties and land (i.e. development on brownfield land) within current settlement limits. The strategy would also be supported by windfall releases and current committed sites and follows the pattern of the Settlement Hierarchy.



7.1.29 This would have significant positive effects associated with facilitating more use of sustainable and active modes of travel within the existing communities. The reasonably dispersed development that would occur under this option would also have positive effects in terms of stimulating regeneration in different parts of the County Borough. It would also offer good opportunities for using brownfield land and delivering development close to existing services, facilities and transport links. However the strategy option would result in overall lower levels of growth, notwithstanding the fact that there is not sufficient land available to deliver this option.

◆ **OPTION 8:** **Local Needs Strategy**

7.1.30 This option is based on the principle of addressing the needs of each individual settlement, which would result in a dispersed form of growth across RCT. This would result in proportionate development allocations to reflect the size and scale of associated settlements along with the affordable and market housing need.

7.1.31 This option would see growth where it is needed, which would reduce the pressure on other areas of RCT.

7.1.32 Given that future development would be within existing settlements, the option would have significant positive effects associated with more use of sustainable and active modes of travel and reduction of car use. The reasonably dispersed development that would occur under this option would also have positive effects in terms of stimulating regeneration in different parts of the County Borough. However there is not sufficient land to deliver the required growth in many of the areas of need. Viability in some of these areas would also reduce the likelihood of sufficient delivery of affordable housing.

Potential Preferred Spatial Strategy

7.1.33 In conclusion, the analysis of these options highlight that there are very positive aspects to each one. However, no single option would be appropriate on its own to meet the necessary levels of growth, and the breadth of the Vision and Objectives of the RLDP.

7.1.34 However, it has been determined that the fundamental elements of the current LDP Spatial Strategy remain appropriate, as a sound foundation for the Revised LDP. The evidence base suggests that there remains a clear need for the continuation of a distinct difference in strategy approach for the north and the south of the County Borough.

7.1.35 The scale of growth that can be accommodated in the south over the whole plan period is shown to be greater than in the north; and at a scale that is necessary to meet our required housing and employment needs. Although there are more known opportunities for housing growth in the initial part of the plan period, the northern area would need to benefit from a varied approach to delivering growth over the whole plan period.

7.1.36 Nevertheless, in considering the evidence that has informed the Spatial Strategy Options, and the analysis of them; the positive aspects of each option would contribute to meeting the objectives of the LDP, and the distinct requirements and characteristics of the northern and southern parts of the County Borough.

REVISED LDP PREFERRED STRATEGY

Aims of the Preferred Strategy

8.1.1 The Preferred Strategy builds upon the Vision of the Revised LDP, which seeks a more resilient and sustainable RCT:

- ◆ **An area of sustainable, cohesive communities who are healthy, well connected and who have equal access to high quality homes, jobs, services and facilities.**
- ◆ **An area more resilient and considerate to the challenges of climate change with protected and enhanced biodiversity and green spaces and a well-connected sustainable transport system.**
- ◆ **An area with a diverse and healthy economy, supported by vibrant and viable town centres and a flourishing tourism sector. An RCT that celebrates its heritage and is resilient for the future.**

8.1.2 The Preferred Strategy, at its highest level, seeks to ensure an approach that will achieve this Vision and the identified Objectives. It is supported by a framework of Strategic Policies.

8.1.3 The findings of the Strategic Growth and Spatial Options, alongside the Settlement Hierarchy, (and all the evidence gathered to inform them), come together to formulate the most appropriate and deliverable Preferred Strategy.

Proposed Level of Growth

- 8.1.4 A suitable level of growth for the RLDP for the period 2022-2037 has been determined, which has been derived from the Welsh Government 2018 Principal Population Projections. These are based on fertility, mortality, migration and household composition assumptions. The projections equate to new housing requirements of 8,450 across the Revised LDP plan period, or 564 dwellings to be built per annum. The assumed level of jobs growth associated with this, through the modelling calculation, is a total of 3,990 or 266 each year.
- 8.1.5 The dwelling and job growth projected by these scenarios are reflective of RCT's position within the National Growth Area of Cardiff, Newport and The Valleys in Future Wales – The National Plan.
- 8.1.6 It is both positive and aspirational in seeking to achieve the necessary levels of market and affordable housing and economic growth in RCT. Although challenging, it is considered achievable and deliverable.
- 8.1.7 The **Housing Supply Paper** and the strategic housing policy, later in the Preferred Strategy, sets out the evidence to indicate that this growth option housing requirement of 8,450 dwellings can be achieved (with an additional 10% buffer to set the housing provision).
- 8.1.8 The Employment Land Review paper and the strategic employment policy, further set out how the RLDP will seek to achieve the proposed employment growth.
- 8.1.9 This level of growth will be achieved by an appropriate Spatial Strategy.

Spatial Strategy

- 8.1.10 The findings of the Spatial Options analysis have been quite clear in that there is not an individual approach that could deliver the proposed growth, and ultimately the whole RLDP effectively. However, it identifies that several of the Spatial Strategy Options have elements of them that would be appropriate and able to contribute significantly to its delivery.
- 8.1.11 It is necessary to propose a Preferred Strategy that is a combination of the most positive aspects of the **Spatial Strategy Options**. This should also take into account the distinctive social, environmental and economic characteristics of different parts of the County Borough, and the identified and required level of growth, aligned with where this can be achieved.

- 8.112 A key Spatial Strategy consideration for the whole of the County Borough is associated with the affordable housing need, as set out in the **Spatial Strategy Options**, and informed by the **Local Housing Market Assessment Draft Findings**. The **Housing Supply Paper** then sets out the relationship between the intended methods of delivery of the overall housing provision and the delivery of affordable housing. The Strategy below proposes a spatial spread of delivery of the overall housing provision that closely aligns with the identified sub housing market areas and their affordable housing need. Later sections of this Preferred Strategy set out the location of the proposed strategic scale of housing delivery in the RLDP, and its relationship with these specific areas.
- 8.113 Different parts of the County Borough exhibit very distinct and different characteristics, particularly between the north and south. This has led to different Issues being identified and needing to be addressed. One of the key findings of the Strategy Options is that the fundamental elements of the current LDP Spatial Strategy remains appropriate, as a foundation for the Revised LDP. There is a clear need for the continuation of a distinct difference in strategy approach for the north and the south of the County Borough, to address the Issues and achieve the Objectives of the RLDP.
- 8.114 However, additional Spatial Strategy elements and Strategic Policies are needed to build upon the considerable successes of the existing plan to date. These will positively address those objectives in the current LDP that have not been as successful, or where new issues have arisen and need addressing, or where up to date opportunities have been realised. Elements of the current LDP strategy that are no longer required, will be removed or addressed.

Preferred Strategy

- 8.115 The overall Vision, Objectives and Growth intentions of the RLDP are in place for all the County Borough. Similarly, most of the Strategic Policies that follow, and their intentions, apply to most areas of RCT.
- 8.116 However, specific strategy and some policy approaches for the geographically defined Northern and Southern Strategy Areas will ensure a more appropriate and prosperous, plan-led future for these respective areas.
- 8.117 The Revised LDP Preferred Strategy is therefore defined as a combined '**Northern Sustainable Communities and Southern Sustainable Growth Strategy**', for the distinct Northern and Southern Strategy Areas.




Sustainable Communities in the Northern Strategy Area

- 8.1.18 The spatial strategy for the north of RCT seeks to set out distinct approaches and interventions in the Northern Strategy Area (NSA). The primary aim of the Northern Sustainable Community Strategy is to continue to strengthen the communities therein. For the most part, the urban areas in the NSA are those in the Rhondda Fawr, Rhondda Fach and Cynon Valleys.
- 8.1.19 The current LDP has seen considerable development and economic growth in some areas in the NSA. This RLDP will seek opportunities to extend this trend to all areas within the NSA. It also aims to ensure the continued halting of depopulation, as has been positively achieved by the current LDP Strategy.

Housing Delivery

- 8.1.20 The levels of housing growth in the NSA will contribute significantly to the overall RLDP level of growth, but will be lower here comparatively than in the Southern Strategy Area. Anticipated growth is also greater in the front end of the plan period than the latter. The combined large and small housing landbank indicates a significant 1,561 dwellings that are likely to come forward in the first half of the plan period, in the NSA. Most of the larger sites are around the Principal Settlement of Aberdare, with a range of medium and smaller sites across the area:



NSA	Dwellings in Landbank
Rhondda	592
Cynon	969
TOTAL	1,561

- 8.1.21 8.1.21 Continued delivery of windfall housing is also expected throughout the RLDP plan period, with more opportunities in the NSA, as identified through the Urban Capacity Study and from past trends analysis in the Housing Supply Paper.
- 8.1.22 It remains that there is less scope and reliance for new housing allocations to support the NSA in the latter stages of the plan. Fewer and smaller appropriate Candidate Sites have come forward. Many of our NSA valleys communities are within high-level flood risk zones, rendering much suitably located brownfield land limited in its potential for redevelopment. Similarly, the urban edges of the NSA are important ecological habits for protected biodiversity.
- 8.1.23 Although there is significant Open Space and Green Infrastructure in the County Borough, we need to continue to protect, improve and enhance this and to improve access where possible. These areas play so many important roles in our communities.
- 8.1.24 The Viability Report indicates that larger, and particularly greenfield sites would have the more appropriate levels of market-led viability for their confident delivery in the NSA. Allocations will be made at the Deposit Stage of the RLDP; although it is indicated that in general, the NSA would provide approximately a third of the housing provision identified for RCT.

Employment

- 8.1.25 There are many employment sites in the NSA, of different scales, age and condition. There have been multiple, positive new commercial development and redevelopment schemes on these sites throughout the current plan period. There remain many opportunities for further development on known employment landbank sites and windfall redevelopment on the employment estates in the NSA. These would contribute to the expected jobs growth associated with the level of housing growth proposed. This is set out further in the Employment Land Review Paper and the Strategic Employment Policy.
- 8.1.26 Proposals for a potential key housing site and a key mixed employment site are set out further, below.

Settlement Hierarchy

- 8.1.27 Development in the NSA should align, where possible, with the identified RLDP Settlement Hierarchy. The Principal Settlement of Aberdare, along with the Key Settlements of Hirwaun, Mountain Ash, Ferndale, Porth, Treorchy and Tonypany, play an essential role in their communities across the NSA. These settlements provide a wide range of social, economic and environmental services and facilities for existing communities. They have been shown, and are encouraged to be, the most appropriate locations for accommodating future growth – of all types of development. Equally, overall development growth is seen as key in supporting the future of these places.
- 8.1.28 The associated Settlement Centres play a significant role in the heart of these Settlements, and new development, (or redevelopment of existing property) here should further support them and their detailed future strategies. This is set out further in strategic policy below.
- 8.1.29 Development would be acceptable in smaller settlements, which have suitable facilities and appropriate sustainable transport links to the higher order settlements.
- 8.1.30 The spatial options for locating development in Settlement Centres, around metro hubs, meeting local needs and urban containment where possible, are therefore very appropriate in the NSA and are incorporated into the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Development in the NSA will be encouraged to align with these approaches, which allow for very sustainable forms of development. This, in essence, follows National Policy by seeking a Town Centre First approach to the location of new development. This overarching principle of sustainable locations would translate the intentions of the RLDP into the Council's approach to tackle Climate Change and reduce the production of Carbon. This is set out further in strategic policy below.



Other proposed methods of delivery of the Northern Sustainable Communities Strategy:

◆ FLEXIBLE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

- 8.1.31 Although it is difficult to quantify, it is expected that windfall sites will continue to deliver housing in the NSA, at a rate that may go up to 100 a year from 2026 onwards. As with the current LDP, it is proposed that the Settlement Boundaries here may be more flexible. This is to give the chance for suitable sites to come forward over the plan period; as searches for sites whilst preparing the RLDP have otherwise shown one or several of the constraints mentioned above e.g. flood risk, ecology, value in terms of public open space etc. More detailed policies will be prepared for the Deposit Stage.

◆ SOUTH EAST WALES METRO

- 8.1.32 The significant investment in the South Wales Metro, which serves significant urban areas of the NSA in the Rhondda and Cynon Valleys, should be taken advantage of wherever possible. New development near to the stations will be supported, in principle. The Council continues to improve a comprehensive Active Travel network to make these facilities more accessible.

◆ EMPTY HOMES

- 8.1.33 RCT sets out keen ambitions to bring empty residential properties back into use. Although this process is essentially bringing new houses onto the market, they cannot be considered like-for-like, as a new dwelling that would be included in the housing provision. The Housing Supply Paper and Strategic Housing Policy sets this out further, although there are currently 2,120 empty homes located in the NSA. With recent past rates of completion as high as 273 in 2021/22, along with current available funding, it is expected that the Council's Empty Homes Strategy will continue to form the source of many available new, starter family homes; this will clearly play a major role in the Northern Sustainable Communities Strategy.

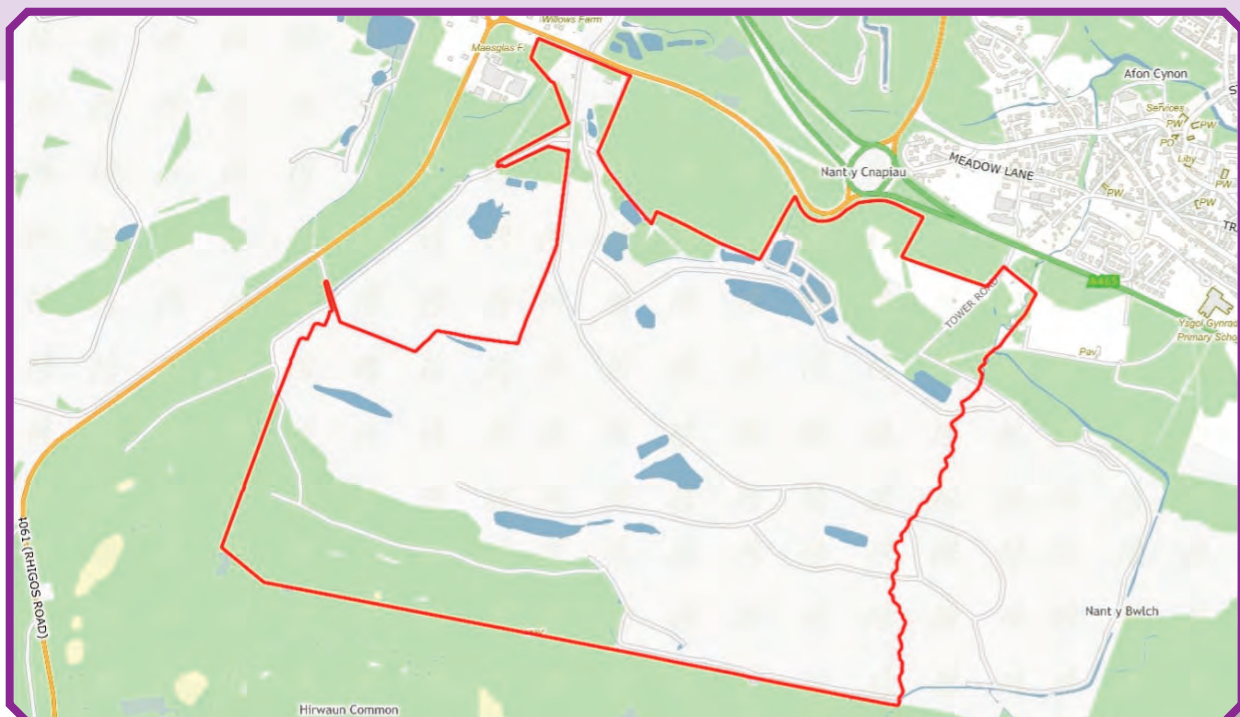
◆ TOURISM

- 8.1.34 The Tourism industry in RCT has continued to see considerable growth in recent years, whilst our Tourism Strategy seeks to continue its success. This is particularly the case in the Northern Strategy Area, where the open countryside and proximity to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and its features, is a growing attraction not just for the residents of RCT but also nationally and internationally. There is strong attraction to the South Wales Valleys from UK wide adventure sports enthusiasts, with the ever-expanding Zip World Tower at Hirwaun being a headline for RCT.
- 8.1.35 The heritage of the County Borough also attracts from far and wide, along with day trips from the region to our town centres and parks. This Preferred Strategy includes a strategic tourism policy for the RLDP, particularly in the NSA. This will set out some higher-level guidance and encouragement for suitable Tourism proposals. This would be the facilities themselves, both in our Settlement Centres and in appropriate countryside locations. It similarly sets out the suitability for accommodation development i.e. hotels, rental accommodation or even holiday parks.
- 8.1.36 This is considered a key strategic intention for the future of the NSA. Not only does this industry bring considerable investment and spending to the area, but it is seen as a very realistic diversification for the area in terms of new employment opportunities. It also gives our Settlement Centres a much-needed positive prospect for the future. Again, a major role in the Northern Sustainable Communities Strategy.



8.1.42 **POTENTIAL KEY SITE 2** **Land South of Hirwaun**

- 8.1.43 The land allocated for employment in the current LDP Strategic Site at Hirwaun underwent a vast opencast mining operation throughout the current LDP plan period. This was for the pre-extraction of coal reserves, to allow the allocated development to continue. This work has been completed, and the site extends to approximately 160 hectares.
- 8.1.44 The RLDP sees the site as being able to broaden its proposed uses. This includes the continuation of the proposed employment uses, with 15 to 20 hectares of employment land suitable here. There is then seen an opportunity for 30 - 40 hectares of land for future tourism opportunities and investment. Much of the remainder of the site is then subject to the re-establishment of biodiversity and natural habitats, along with future nature conservation; this is associated with the agreed restoration of the site following the opencast scheme. However, it is further considered that this natural area may be appropriately designed to allow for suitable public access and ecological and geomorphological tourism. This would be on site but may also include links to the wider countryside, with its multiple natural attractions and modern tourism destinations.
- 8.1.45 The scale of this proposal is clearly key in the NSA. However, it is also considered key to take full advantage of the significant Welsh Government investment in dualling the adjacent A465 'Heads of the Valleys' trunk road. This road opens up this South Wales Valleys sub-region to the midlands of England and West Wales. It is essential that RCT grasp this opportunity to bring investment to the NSA, rather than let it drive past.
- 8.1.46 Furthermore, a combined Transport for Wales and RCT proposal has had Weltag 2 approval for the continuation of the passenger rail line from Aberdare up to Hirwaun Industrial Estate. The new stations proposed at Hirwaun and Hirwaun Industrial Estate would make the wider area far more sustainable in terms of the public transport options serving them. The station at the industrial estate would also be in close proximity to the potential Key Site.



Sustainable Growth Strategy in the Southern Strategy Area

- 8.1.47 **The spatial strategy for the south of RCT sets out specific approaches to achieving a high proposed level of housing growth in this Southern Strategy Area (SSA), particularly when compared to the NSA. The Sustainable Growth Strategy will seek to provide the necessary growth for existing communities, with additional growth to meet the wider needs of the whole of RCT and accord with Future Wales – The National Plan.**
- 8.1.48 The current LDP has seen considerable development and economic growth in some areas in the SSA. For the most part, the urban areas in the SSA are those around Pontypridd down to Taffs Well and Church Village in the east, and Tonyrefail down to the wider Llantrisant area to Llanharan in the west. This RLDP will seek opportunities to provide new housing and economic development in areas where there is a more proven market-led delivery and sustainably located and suitable development land.

Housing Delivery

- 8.1.49 The levels of housing growth in the SSA will contribute the greater proportion of the overall RLDP level of growth, in comparison with the NSA. This will be achieved through the continued development of sites within the housing landbank and through the identification of suitable, sustainable new allocations. The combined large and small housing landbank indicates that a significant 2,562 dwellings are likely to come forward in the SSA, in the first half of the plan period:

SSA Southern Strategy Area	Dwellings in Landbank
Taff East	225
Taff West	2,337
TOTAL	2,562

- 8.1.50 The majority of these dwellings are on large sites in the west of the SSA, and particularly on the Strategic Sites at Llanilid and Cefn Yr Hendy/Talbot Green. There are significantly fewer landbank sites in the eastern side of the SSA. Although there will be unforeseen windfall sites that do come forward, they are not as likely to be in the same number as is expected in the NSA; which is indicated in the Urban Capacity Study and from past trends analysis in the Housing Supply Paper.
- 8.1.51 Many Candidate Sites have come forward in the SSA, several of which are significant in size. A substantial amount of these have constraints similar to those in the NSA, particularly in existing urban areas and on brownfield sites. However, more opportunities are presenting themselves in the SSA for suitable housing sites. The scale of growth requires that the proposed sites are in sustainable locations, whilst trying to spread the delivery across the Settlement Hierarchy.
- 8.1.52 It remains that RCT needs to protect, improve and enhance our Open Space and Green Infrastructure in the County Borough. There are far fewer large areas of open access land for the residents of the SSA than in the NSA, which indicates a need for new development to provide, extend or improve access to such places.

- 8.1.53 **The Viability Report** indicates that all types of development sites in the SSA may have a fair level of market led viability to ensure their delivery, and the southern part of the SSA is the most viable in RCT overall. Allocations will be made at the Deposit Stage of the RLDP, although it is indicated that in general, the SSA would provide approximately two thirds of the housing provision identified for the RLDP.
- 8.1.54 It is inevitable that many of these allocations will need to be greenfield releases due to the distinct lack of brownfield land available in this area.
- 8.1.55 Allocations in the SSA will need to be carefully chosen and will be larger in size to allow further supporting infrastructure to be developed, where possible, as set out in the associated **Spatial Strategy Options**. There are proposals to improve the public transport infrastructure in the SSA. Improved bus services have been considered from Bridgend through to Llanharan and Pontypridd and across the central South Wales Valleys. Continued advancement of proposals to bring forward light rail infrastructure from central Cardiff out into northwest Cardiff, should extend into south east RCT. Consideration is also given to whether further main train line capacity to serve the south west of the County Borough could materialise in the plan period.

Employment

- 8.1.56 There are many employment sites in the SSA, of different scales, age and condition. There have been many positive new developments and redevelopment schemes on these sites throughout the current plan period. Major industrial and commercial estates of sub-regional importance such as Treforest Industrial Estate, Llantrisant Business Park and the wider Talbot Green Industrial Estate are thriving, with very low levels of vacancy. There still remain opportunities for further windfall redevelopment on these and other estates and capacity for new development on employment landbank sites. These would contribute to the expected jobs growth associated with the level of housing growth proposed. This is set out further in the Employment Land Review Paper and the Strategic Employment Policy.
- 8.1.57 Proposals for a potential Key Site for mixed housing, employment and open space uses, along with ecological management are set out further, below.

Settlement Hierarchy

- 8.1.58 Development in the SSA should align, where possible, with the identified RLDP Settlement Hierarchy. The Principal Settlements of Pontypridd and Talbot Green/Pontyclun/Llantrisant, along with the Key Settlements of Llanharan and Tonyrefail, play an essential role in their communities across the SSA. These settlements provide a wide range of social, economic and environmental services and facilities for existing communities. They have been shown, and are encouraged to be, the most appropriate locations for the accommodating future growth. Equally, overall development growth is seen as key in supporting the future of these places.
- 8.1.59 The associated Settlement Centres play a significant role in the heart of these Settlements, and new development, (or redevelopment of existing property) here should further support them and their detailed future strategies. This is set out further in strategic policy below.

8.160 The spatial options for locating development in Settlement Centres, around metro hubs, meeting local needs and urban containment where possible, are still very appropriate in the SSA and are incorporated into the Sustainable Growth Strategy. Development in the SSA will be encouraged to align with these approaches, which allow for very sustainable forms of development. This in essence follows National Policy of seeking a Town Centre First approach to the location of new development. This overarching principle of sustainable locations would translate the intentions of the RLDP into the Council's approach to tackle Climate Change and reduce the production of Carbon. This is set out further in strategic policy below. However, it is acknowledged that the level of growth proposed here would see some settlements expand substantially, albeit sustainably.

Other proposed methods of delivery of the Southern Sustainable Growth Strategy:

◆ THE PRINCIPAL SETTLEMENT OF PONTYPRIDD

- 8.161 The Principal Settlement of Pontypridd has limited capacity for housing growth, in terms of available land for development. Development within the Settlement Centre in Pontypridd will be supported, although will not likely produce high numbers of dwellings. Further, housing development is needed in and around this Principal Settlement for its continued prosperity, local needs and its ambitions as a leading destination in the region. Conversely, further development is needed here to take full advantage of its capacity to provide for a greater population. This would include through the Settlement Centre and its retail and leisure facilities and services therein, the University at Treforest, and the Treforest Industrial Estate. This eastern side of the SSA also benefits the most from the ongoing South Wales Metro development.
- 8.162 It is continued from the current LDP, that in principle, development would be acceptable in smaller settlements, which have suitable and sustainable links to the wider Pontypridd settlement, including, but not limited to, the areas around e.g. Church Village, Llanilltud Faerdref and Beddau. Further, as mentioned above, it is necessary to seek to address the considerable affordable housing need in the wider Pontypridd area in these edge of centre settlements.

◆ SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

- 8.163 There will be rigidly defined settlement boundaries in the SSA, which would prevent incremental development proposals coming forward. Sites will be allocated appropriately in sustainable locations, and as indicated, often larger sites, which can benefit from their economies of scale of development. Major sections of the SSA have been formed by the continued development of housing estates over the past 70 years. Accordingly, the pattern of development does not support incremental small developments on its edges.

◆ TOURISM AND EMPTY PROPERTIES

- 8.164 The opportunities and reliance on the policy interventions of empty properties and tourism in the SSA are not likely to be as great as in the NSA.
- 8.165 There are empty properties in the south that will come forward through the Empty Properties scheme, but not at the same scale or rate as in the NSA.
- 8.166 The SSA has its tourism attractions such as the Royal Mint and Pontypridd Town. However, it is considered to have more of a tourism link to Cardiff than perhaps to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. Tourism facilities will be supported in the SSA, although past trends have included more local leisure based facilities, such as diversification of agriculture in the countryside. Accommodation facilities will be promoted in the settlements and not in countryside locations, as set out further in strategic policy.

Key Sites in the SSA

8.167 It should be noted at this point that the Strategic Site at the Former Cwm Coking Works will no longer be considered in this way. The LDP plan period has indicated the ongoing uncertainty and constraints associated with the site and its development proposals. We cannot confidently rely upon it for the scale of delivery it has been allocated for. The site has been considered for Cardiff Capital Region funding to help bring it forward. If this comes forward as anticipated, the site may be considered for alternative uses, such as a Regeneration Site, through the Deposit Stage of the RLDP.



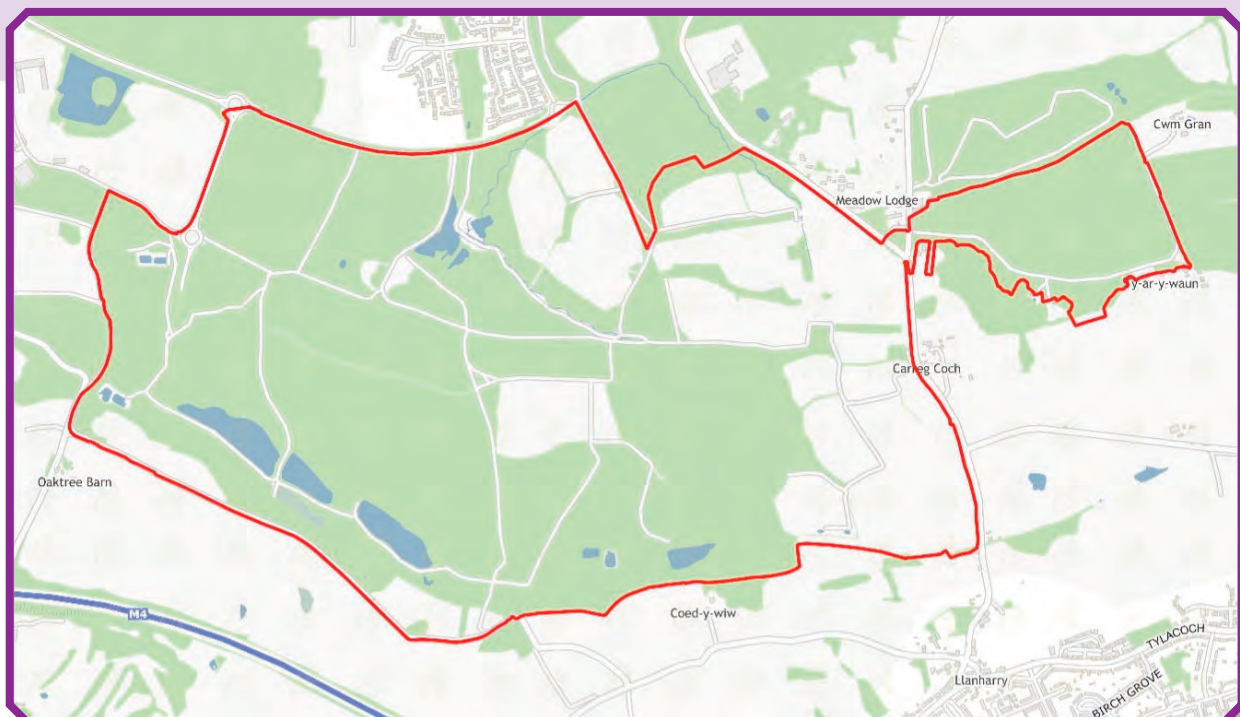
8.168 **POTENTIAL KEY SITE 3** **Land at Llanilid**

8.169 **This Key Site is located on the previous open cast coal site at Llanilid, adjoining the south of the Key Settlement of Llanharan; being a strategic location in RCT. The site totals 269 hectares. The proposal for the site builds upon the success of the Strategic Site allocation in the current LDP, which is currently under construction. The site provides the opportunity to regenerate a previous open cast site to create a sustainable mixed-use development.**

8.170 The proposals for this site include residential development, schools, employment, local and district centres, and play and open spaces. The proposal also includes the retention of vast swathes of public open space and green infrastructure, whilst protecting and enhancing a range of important biodiversity features.

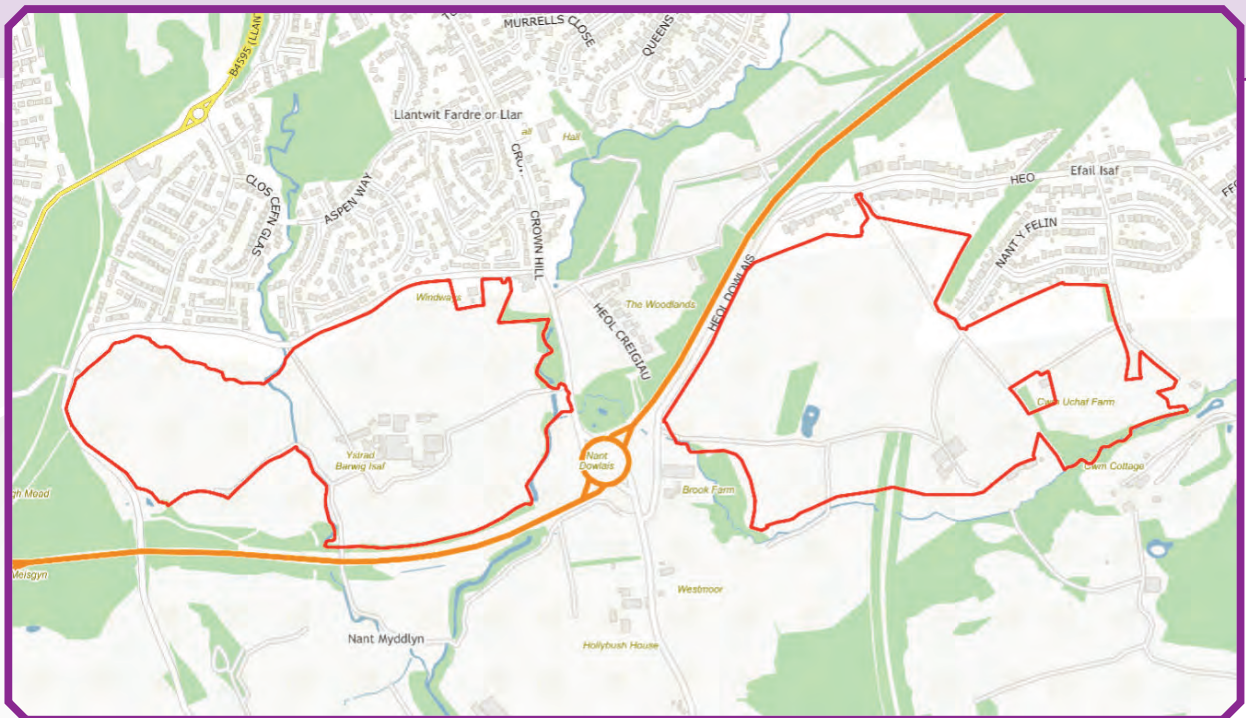
8.171 Proposals for the site seek to incorporate exemplar design and place-making and a network of sustainable transport that will serve the development, and link to the existing communities.

8.172 The site is seen as being capable of delivering a significant number of dwellings and employment land over the plan period in the Key Settlement. Due to the significant size of the site, the proposals are intended to be delivered over this plan period and further into the next one after 2037. It is envisaged that the site may deliver over 3,000 houses in total, however it is unlikely that more than 1,500 will come forward during the plan period to 2037.



8.1.39 **POTENTIAL KEY SITE 4** **Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf**

- 8.1.74 **This potential Key Site is made up of a number of Candidate Sites in adjoining locations on the south of the wider settlements of Llanilltud Faerdref and Efail Isaf.**
- 8.1.75 When combined, the whole site totals 50 hectares of greenfield land. It is considered that this Key Site could accommodate up to approximately 1,000 new homes, along with a range of proposed supporting uses to ensure the sustainable growth of the site. These include a new school, local shops, shared working hub, formal playing fields and areas, informal public open space and green infrastructure networks.
- 8.1.76 The retention of existing landscape features alongside pedestrian and cycle access links, will ensure the most modern accessible design and place-making. It is noted that the line of the former railway that runs through the eastern element of the site should be safeguarded for any future active or other sustainable travel options. The site benefits from safe access, where necessary, over and under the Church Village bypass, into the nearby settlements. It is considered that this new housing growth will bring the benefits of increased facilities and community infrastructure to existing communities, whilst increased footfall will benefit the local centres.
- 8.1.77 The site is in a strategic location with good access to social, employment, educational, public transport and major highway facilities that exist close to the site, in the wider area of the Pontypridd Principal Settlement and Treforest Industrial Estate. This Key Site is further seen as an opportunity to support the prosperity of Pontypridd, whilst making a significant contribution to the delivery of the necessary overall growth of the RLDP.



PREFERRED STRATEGY KEY DIAGRAM



Revised Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy Key Diagram

Legend

- SSA
- NSA
- Potential Key Site
 1. Penrhys Village, Tylorstown
 2. Land South of Hirwaun
 3. Land at Llanillid, Llanharan
 4. Llanilltud Faerdref/Efail Isaf
- Key Settlements
- Principal Settlement
- A Road
- RAILWAY
- Area not in LDP
- LDP Boundary



© Crown copyright [and database rights] 2023 OS 100023458

© Hawlfraint y Goron [a hawliau cronfa ddata] 2023 OS 100023458

STRATEGIC POLICIES

SP1:

Climate Change and Carbon

This Policy supports Objectives:

1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13

1

Development proposals must demonstrate climate consideration, aim to reduce carbon emissions and where possible mitigate against the causes of climate change.

All allocations for development in the Revised LDP will be located in sustainable locations. This has been determined in accordance with the Candidate Site Methodology, which itself accords with national planning policy. Sustainable locations are places, which would reduce the need to travel and have reduced dependence on private vehicles. This would therefore contribute to the reduction in future carbon emissions.

All other new development proposals throughout the plan period will be expected to be in sustainable locations.

The design of new development should also be more carbon considerate. Development proposals should:

- Promote construction methods and materials that would seek to achieve carbon neutral buildings.
- Incorporate low or renewable sources of energy and technologies.
- Maximise the opportunities for Electric vehicle charging.
- Seek to embrace the circular economy, ensuring resource efficiency, local materials and sustainable construction methods to avoid unnecessary wastage.

Natural assets play a large part in tackling climate change. The Revised LDP will seek to:

- Protect green infrastructure and the multifunctional role it can play in reducing carbon emissions e.g. the management of peat bogs, protection of carbon storing semi-natural habitats and soils, appropriate forms of planting, protection of trees and natural regeneration of woodland.
- Some green infrastructure can also contribute to urban well-being e.g. provide cooling in times of extreme heat.

SP1: Climate Change and Carbon (continued)

1

- Safeguard high quality agricultural land to support and promote opportunities for farming and local food production, to reduce carbon emissions and food miles.
- Brownfield land is used in preference to greenfield land, where possible.

Renewable Energy

Appropriate renewable energy schemes are supported. This will be subject to further detailed analysis of the NDF search areas, which would indicate appropriate locations and capacity for future development in RCT; this will be set out in more detail at the Deposit stage.

Waste

We will continue to reduce the amount of waste generated and continue to recycle and deliver innovative recycling solutions.

The Council is committed to playing its part in tackling the causes of climate change by reducing carbon emissions. We are making good progress, but we all need to do more, and faster, if we are help to reverse the damage to our planet and adapt to the changes already happening, both within the Council and within the County Borough.

Welsh Government made a climate emergency declaration in 2019. As such, it is imperative that the RLDP reduces carbon emissions that contribute towards the potentially devastating impacts of climate change. In order to do so the Council has developed a climate change strategy **Think Climate Change**. The RLDP will support this strategy to deliver its ambitions.

The RLDP will ensure that the allocations included within it are in sustainable locations, which reduce the need to travel and thus reduce carbon emissions. This is set out clearly in the **Candidate Site Methodology**, which the sites have been assessed against. All other new development throughout the plan period will also be expected to reduce carbon emission and be in sustainable locations, which reduces the need to travel and lessens the reliance on the private vehicle.

Future Wales – The National Plan requires that the Town Centre First principle is used when locating development. Our Settlement Centres are highly sustainable locations, which have good access to services and facilities and also more sustainable modes of transport. A sequential approach should be taken thereafter for locating development.

Should it not be possible to locate a development close to the settlement centre then the provision of adequate services, facilities and community and physical infrastructure will be required, alongside improvements to sustainable transport modes including public transport and active travel routes.

The design of buildings is equally as important as the location and design of sites. The RLDP will seek to ensure that more developments are low or zero carbon, using sustainable materials that support the objectives of the circular economy. Buildings should be designed to the highest standards, using high quality sustainable materials and energy efficient heating technologies, thereby reducing energy consumption.

The County Borough's green spaces, open spaces, naturally rich diversity of semi-natural habitats and soils, trees, and soils play a crucial role in carbon reduction and in tackling climate change, for example through carbon storage, natural cooling and helping reduce pollution. Therefore, the RLDP will seek to protect and enhance these important natural assets.

Our good quality agricultural land provides the opportunity to grow our own food, reducing food miles. High value agricultural land will be protected, in line with national policy.

The use of brownfield land in preference to greenfield land for development will be supported, however it is acknowledged that there is a lack of brownfield land in RCT to deliver all new development.

Appropriate renewable energy schemes will be supported and more detailed policies will be prepared at the Deposit stage. The RLDP will strive to further reduce waste generation and to support the continued excellent work in recycling and innovation in this area. Waste will be subject to detailed policies at deposit stage.

SP2:

Placemaking and Sustainable Communities

This Policy supports Objectives:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13

2

New development will be expected to contribute to the vision of the future of RCT, which is for communities that are inclusive, cohesive, safe, supported and valued.

Development should include proposals for a mix of uses, where possible, that ensure the creation of sustainable places. This is not only for the site itself but also for the community it is to become part of. Multiple new developments can bring benefits for the existing community, be they housing, employment, retail, travel, leisure or open space uses etc.

In doing so, all development will be expected to be designed to a high standard that promotes the prosperity, health, happiness and well-being of the community as set out in the principles of Welsh Government planning policy and the concept of 'Placemaking'.

To achieve this, development should be:

Design

- Be accessible, connected, safe and allowing ease of movement both within the development and to the wider existing community for all users.
- Responsive to climate change and adaptable.
- Respond to the local context and character, respecting and enhancing the distinct natural, historic, cultural and built environments within RCT.
- Design for effective biodiversity, habitat and tree protection, mitigation and enhancement.
- Be appropriate in scale, density and layout.
- With regards to housing, they should provide an appropriate and diverse mix of housing types and sizes, which cater for the needs of all, and which can adapt to changing needs over time.

Well-being of Communities

- Contribute to the health and well-being of communities, including safeguarding amenity, public realm, provision of open space, recreation space and landscaping.
- Incorporate new and connected green infrastructure, promoting biodiversity.

Sufficient Infrastructure

- Ensure that there is capacity and availability of infrastructure to serve new development and its communities. Where this is not the case, development will be required to contribute to the improvement of such infrastructure and/or provide new infrastructure.

Resources

- Incorporate, where possible, on-site energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.
- Sustainably manage water and waste.



SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities (continued)

2 The Revised Local Development Plan is committed to the creation of sustainable communities and places, which offer a high standard of living. The plan embraces the concept of place-making, as set out in national policy, which seeks to create high quality development, promote people's prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being.

The RLDP will also support the vision of the Well-being Plan, which seeks a more equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. It aims to create healthy local neighbourhoods, as well as sustainable and resilient neighbourhoods. This policy supports the delivery of developments, which can contribute to these aims.

The creation of well-designed and high-quality development sites which create attractive, inclusive, and accessible communities to live, work and socialise are a priority for the RLDP. Development should allow people to feel safe, live within cohesive communities and help reduce inequalities experienced by some.

Proposals must consider the relationship, function and context of the site within its wider surroundings. This will include creating linkages between established and new development, strengthening connections between people and place.

The strong culture, heritage, and traditional character of Rhondda Cynon Taf and its assets should be respected and enhanced through the design process.

Developments should promote wellbeing and good physical and mental health, through including features such as green and open space, play space, access to nature, active travel routes and other spaces to encourage community cohesion. Where possible, these features should be linked to those existing in the wider community network.

SP3:

Flood Risk Management

This Policy supports Objectives:

1, 3, 4, 9 and 10

3

The RLDP will seek to ensure that new developments are located in places, which would not put them at an unacceptable risk of flooding, whilst ensuring that all development is appropriately flood resilient and resistant.

It will ensure that any new development does not increase local flood risk within and around the site being developed, nor in any of our existing communities.

The RLDP will further identify opportunities to reduce the potential scale and impact of flooding, such as:

- Flood resilient methods of construction of new buildings and the overall development of sites.
- Enhancing and providing further green and blue infrastructure assets and networks for their multi-functional roles, including the reduction of flood risk through methods such as attenuation.
- Managing our natural assets in a more effective way, that could bring multifaceted benefits such as the management of heavy rainfall. This would include, but not be limited to, improving the condition of our peat bogs, floodplains and wetlands, protecting soils and minimising soil sealing, protecting trees and increasing areas of woodland regeneration and creation in RCT.

More frequent and intense rainfall together with the topography of RCT increases the risk of flash flooding in RCT. More frequent rain also leaves the ground saturated which further increases the risk. The steep sided valleys cause rapid runoff of surface water towards the urban areas in the lower reaches, through ordinary watercourses and to the main rivers.

Planning Policy Wales sets out a range of comprehensive policy considerations for development proposals and flood risk. Technical Advice Note 15 sets out further guidance for development proposals associated with flooding from all sources.

The main rivers in RCT include the River Taff, River Rhondda, River Cynon and River Ely, which are all prone to flooding during periods of heavy rainfall. Main river flooding is often caused by river levels ‘overtopping’ their ‘banks’ and/or ‘breaching’ of defence structures. This risk is high in RCT, and is primarily owed to the urban extent of communities located in and around the river flood plains.

Local flood risk is defined as the risk from ordinary watercourses (or smaller streams and rivers), surface water and groundwater sources. Managing local flood risk is the responsibility of Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs); being RCT Council. Flooding from surface water and ordinary watercourses is the most common source of flooding in RCT.

This strategic flood risk policy further accords with and sits alongside the RCT Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan, the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment, the Statutory Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for surface water drainage management (with RCT CBC being the SuDS Approval Body for new developments here).

It is intended that a comprehensive policy approach will be formulated at the subsequent Deposit Stage of the RLDP. This will include appropriate Development Management policies for proposals within the (Welsh Government) identified local flood risk zones. There will also be further policy to seek to reduce all local and main river flood risk in RCT, to expand upon some of the concepts raised in these Preferred Strategy policies .

SP4:

Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

This Policy supports Objectives:

1, 4, 9 and 10

4

RCT is an area of biodiverse and varied landscapes, supporting a range of priority habitats and species. The Revised LDP will seek to maintain and enhance these qualities and features and leave the natural environment in a more biodiverse and resilient condition.

Our biodiversity landscape is protected by Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) designations. As set out in PPW, SAC and SSSI designations are the responsibility of NRW. SINC's are a Local Planning Authority designation.

Development and SINC:

- Development should be avoided on designated SINC sites.
- The intention of RCT is to provide strong protection for those elements of biodiversity in our SINC that are irreplaceable.
- Some SINC's support habitats that may have some capacity for mitigation, compensation and enhancement. Proposals on these sites will be expected to evidence that acceptable mitigation, compensation and enhancement is possible, whilst protecting the habitats and species for which they were designated.

All Development:

- All future development must evidence effective biodiversity mitigation and enhancement.
- On SINC, there will be a requirement for effective mitigation to be delivered on site. Only in cases where biodiversity delivery will be demonstrably more effective, and where local biodiversity connectivity, area and function are not compromised, will off-site provision be considered.
- Where mitigation or enhancement is demonstrably not achievable onsite, but where the mitigation and enhancement of habitat or species impacts incurred by development can be effectively delivered, off-site provision may be considered.

Welsh Government have declared a Nature Emergency and seek to embed further biodiversity considerations into the planning process; with revisions to Planning Policy Wales (expected) in autumn 2023. This also builds upon the Biodiversity Duty for public bodies established in S.6 of the Environment (Wales) Act.

Due to the high baseline biodiversity context of RCT, implementation of the diverse objectives of the RLDP, including both development and ecological aspirations, will be challenging. This strategic biodiversity policy aims to address Welsh Government policy in the context of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The SINC system provides the framework for biodiversity conservation in RCT and sets out the habitats and species of conservation concern, which require protection. Other areas of ecological importance in RCT include Local Nature Reserves, Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves, Living Landscapes sites and Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS).

Further detailed development management policies will be prepared for the Deposit Plan and the current supplementary planning guidance will be reviewed.

SP5:

Green Infrastructure and Open Space

This Policy supports Objectives:

1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 18

5

All Green Infrastructure plays a significant role in providing appropriate habitats for biodiversity in RCT. The protection, management and enhancement of such places in RCT is therefore a key responsibility of the RLDP.

Further, several of the objectives and strategic policies within the Preferred Strategy allude to the wider ranging benefits of natural and more formal open spaces, including:

- Providing natural habitats for a range of biodiversity
- Physical and Mental Health and Well-being
- Active travel
- Sport and Recreation
- Flood Risk attenuation
- Carbon Storage
- Cooling Environments

There is a duty in the RLDP to ensure we fully identify and understand our Green Infrastructure in the County Borough. Accordingly, the Deposit Stage of the RLDP will undertake a comprehensive Green Infrastructure assessment, including additional Open Space and Play Space assessments.

These assessments will be further utilised to prepare a range of policy that would seek to:

- Appropriately protect Green Infrastructure and other public open spaces,
- Increase the number and total area of green space,
- Enhance the quality of green space through the implementation of well-designed management plans, and
- Consider potential additional uses for them such as flood alleviation and carbon storage.

Special Landscape Areas

It has been determined that the Special Landscape Areas (SLA) that were comprehensively identified in the current LDP will remain in place in the RLDP. The annual monitoring of the LDP has indicated that no change has occurred within these landscapes that has resulted in them losing their high quality features for which they were designated. The Deposit Stage of the RLDP will review the current SLA policies to ensure that they will continue to appropriately protect and enhance the quality and character of these landscapes.

Green Wedges

It is intended to undertake a review of Green Wedges for the Deposit Stage of the RLDP, utilising a new methodology, as prepared for the South East Wales Region.



SP6:

Housing

This Policy supports Objectives:

1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 12

6

A housing requirement of 8,450 new dwellings has been identified to meet the Vision and strategic Objectives of the Revised LDP. The LDP Manual indicates a need to add a further minimum 10% flexibility allowance to the figure, to insure against any unforeseen issues and non-delivery of sites or overall numbers. The total Housing Provision for the RLDP plan period from 2022-2037 is therefore 9,295 dwellings.

This positive level of housing provision will be achieved through three broad methods of delivery:

- Allocating deliverable land in appropriate locations that accord with the Preferred Strategy. These allocations will be fully determined at the Deposit Stage, although Potential Key Sites have been identified that may contribute significant numbers.
- The continued development of the committed sites within the identified Housing Landbank (as set out in the Housing Supply Paper).
- Supporting the development of windfall sites for residential development on appropriate sites, within settlement boundaries where established, in accordance with the Preferred Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy.

The table below, sourced from the **Housing Supply Paper**, indicates in detail how this overall provision is set out.

Rhondda Cynon Taf RLDP 2022-2037 Housing Provision			
Housing Provision	1	Dwelling Requirement	8,450
	2	10% Flexibility Allowance	845
	3	Total Housing Provision 2022-2037	9,295
Landbank Supply	4	Small sites landbank	621
	5	Large sites landbank	3,502
	6	Non-delivery allowance (20% reduction)	-825
	7	Current 'Landbank' sub total	3,298
Windfall Allowances	8	Small windfall sites	1,032
	9	Large windfall sites	1,596
	10	Windfall allowances sub total	2,628
Allocations Needed	11	Dwelling needed from allocations in order to meet the housing provision. i.e. Total Housing Provision, minus the landbank supply and windfall allowances.	3,369

The dwelling requirement was determined through the consideration of multiple areas of the evidence base. The outcome of this is set out in the Growth Options section of the Preferred Strategy.

SP6: Housing (continued)

6 The scale of spatial distribution of new housing allocations will align with the Preferred Strategy, with more houses to be allocated in the South than in the North. Initial assessment of the Candidate Sites has indicated that there are sufficient sites to accommodate the level of additional need. This distribution is in general alignment with the past completions over the current LDP plan period, which is also mirrored in the current landbank sites.

There are a known 1,561 dwellings on committed landbank sites with a fair expectation to come forward in the Northern Strategy Area in the first half of the RLDP plan period; with 2,562 in the Southern Strategy Area. Landbank sites have either already commenced or have secured planning permission and are deemed to be genuinely available for development.

By their nature, Windfall sites have not yet been fully identified. However, analysis of past trends in the **Housing Supply Paper**, (including the dismissal of abnormal trends), along with a proactive search for potential sites through a formal **Urban Capacity Study**, has indicated a reasonable likely contribution. Future windfall development proposals would be preferred on previously developed land and provided on a 'Town Centre First' approach, where possible. Proposals for the conversion of suitable structures to residential development in appropriate locations is also encouraged.

Other strategic policies that should be read alongside this in relation to future residential development, include firstly the Settlement Centres Policy, which sets out considerations for residential developments in Settlement Centres. The Placemaking and Sustainable Communities Policy, alongside the Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Policy then set out policy criteria from these perspectives.

Further detailed development management policy to guide future residential development will be included at the Deposit Stage of the RDLP. It will also set out further considerations for allowing exception and other sites for affordable housing.

It is necessary to provide diversity in the housing market and ensure a range of house types and sizes to cater for the needs of all members of our communities in RCT. The identified level of provision should help to increase the amount of good quality housing that is affordable across both social and private markets. Although it is inevitable that the scale of housing delivered will be greater in the south than in the north, it remains that significant new housebuilding will occur in all parts of RCT to allow for housing need and opportunities for all.

It is further considered that suitable provision of new housing is proposed in those areas of RCT with the highest proportions of Welsh Speakers.

Affordable Housing

The RCT Local Housing Market Assessment Draft Findings 2024 found that 5,672 affordable/non-open market dwellings are needed in RCT over the plan period 2022-2037. This equates to 378 each year on average or 67.1% of the total housing requirement of 8,450 dwellings. This would provide for both the current unmet needs and future needs of affordable housing, however any losses to the current affordable housing stock (such as demolition) would increase the number of affordable dwellings needed by a corresponding amount. Conversely, vacant affordable properties, which return to use, will reduce the need.

RCT has historically delivered approximately 25% of the overall annual dwelling completions as affordable since the adoption of the current LDP. Based on this average rate, RCT would need to develop an unrealistic 1,512 dwellings per year in order to meet the 378 affordable dwellings need.

If the current trend were to continue over the plan period, then it would be expected that approximately 140 affordable dwellings could be provided on average each year over the plan period, equating to a total of approximately 2,112. Given completion rates of affordable housing in more recent years, and the higher proposed level of overall housing delivery, this seems a very achievable figure.

SP6: Housing (continued)

6 Analysis within the **Housing Supply Paper** adds further confidence to this. Through current landbank affordable housing permissions, windfall sites and proposed allocations, it is considered feasible that up to 159 affordable dwellings could be delivered each year on average. This is further backed by the spatial distribution of the housing provision in the Preferred Strategy, which generally aligns with the **Local Housing Market Assessment's** identified housing market areas and scale of need. This 159 dwellings per annum would again equate to around 25% of the overall housing provision.

Further analysis of the viability of housing sites will seek to ensure definitive policies that will set out the required scale of developer contributions to the affordable housing need. This is expected to vary and correspond with the areas identified in the high-level **Viability Report**, prepared for the Preferred Strategy. These policies will be set out at the Deposit stage of the RLDP, which will also give further detail on how these contributions will be sought.

The successful delivery of wider affordable housing proposals from other sources will continue over the plan period, such as the WG Social Housing Grant, investment from RCT Council and continued re-investment by Registered Social Landlords in the County Borough.

Empty Homes

RCT has strategic intentions to bring empty residential properties back into use. Although this process is essentially bringing new houses onto the market, they cannot be considered like-for-like as a new dwelling that would be included in the housing provision. There are currently 2,894 empty properties across the County Borough, 2,120 of which are located in the Northern Strategy Area, while the remaining 774 are located in the Southern Strategy Area. With recent past rates of completion as high as 273 in 2021/22, along with current available funding, it is expected that this will continue to form the source of many available new, starter family homes, particularly in the northern strategy area.

A housing trajectory will be prepared for the Deposit stage of plan preparation, which will illustrate the phasing and delivery of housing allocations and known landbank sites over the lifetime of the plan. This will allow for effective monitoring of housing in the Revised LDP and ensure a sufficient supply of housing.

Gypsy and Traveller Communities Accommodation Needs

The Council and the RLDP are required to provide for the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller Communities. The Housing Act (Wales) 2014 updates the definition of a 'Gypsy and Traveller' to include Travelling Showpeople, alongside New Travellers where they are able to demonstrate a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in mobile homes. The Act mandates that the accommodation needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities must be assessed; agreed by the Welsh Government; and adequate provision made. The mechanism for assessing provision is the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA).

RCTCBC's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, produced in February 2022 by Opinion Research Services, assessed the need for future Gypsy and Traveller accommodation throughout the County Borough. The principal objective of the study was to provide a robust assessment of existing and future needs for accommodation in the short-term and over the life of the Revised LDP (2022-2037). The accommodation needs have been compiled through a combination of desk-based research and stakeholder engagement, including members of the Travelling Communities.

RCT's GTAA is presently in draft form and is subject to approval by the Welsh Government. The assessment identifies an unmet need; as such, there will be a requirement to allocate sufficient pitches to address this. The assessment concludes that 27 pitches will be required over the plan period, which accounts for anticipated new household formation, based on current demographics. Having had due regard to the findings of the GTAA, the Council will provide the necessary policy framework to allow for the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities to be met, at the Deposit stage of RLDP plan preparation.

SP7:

Employment Land and the Economy

This Policy supports Objectives:

1, 14, 15, 16 and 18

7

The RLDP aims to provide for a sustainable economy throughout RCT and to seek opportunities to support employment growth. New and expanding RCT businesses, along with inward investment opportunities will continue to be strongly supported, where appropriate in RCT.

Whilst supporting the Town Centre First national policy principle (for most development proposals), certain industrial and commercial ventures are more suitably located away from these centres.

Development proposals for new B1, B2 and B8 use classes will be supported, where otherwise considered acceptable and appropriate, on:

- Allocated Employment Sites.
- Available land on existing employment landbank sites.
- Redevelopment of existing employment landbank sites and or/units which are derelict, vacant or no longer fit for purpose. This may include the redevelopment of whole sites, down to the subdivision of units.

In exception to the above, opportunities for B1 office proposals should be sought in more appropriately located Settlement Centres. Where this is not possible, a sequential search approach for sites will be required, in line with the national Town Centres First principle.

Employment Allocations and Land within Existing Employment Landbank Sites

	Hectarage
Employment Allocation (within the Key Site) at the former Tower Colliery site South of Hirwaun (NSA)	15 Ha
Employment Allocation at the Llanilid Key Site (SSA)	10 Ha
Available land within Existing Employment Landbank Sites in the NSA	19.8 Ha
Available land within Existing Employment Landbank Sites in the SSA	23.9 Ha
Total Employment Land Availability	68.7 Ha

Employment allocations and landbank sites are to be safeguarded to ensure that they are available for employment purposes. Therefore:

- Non B class uses are more appropriately located in the Settlement Centres and should be proposed there. Where this is not possible, a sequential search approach for sites will be required, in line with the Town Centres First principle.
- Those non B class use proposals that exhibit the characteristics of B1, B2 and B8 uses, and which could appropriately be accommodated on an employment site, may be supported.
- Small, ancillary uses which support the wider function of an employment site may be supported.
- Any proposals that would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the ability for existing or future B class uses to operate, or which would detract from the future vitality and viability of the employment site, will not be supported.

SP7: Employment Land and the Economy (continued)

7 The RLDP must maintain a suitable level of available employment land to facilitate new and allow for the expansion of existing RCT businesses, along with inward investment into the County Borough. RCTCBC commissioned the BE Group to undertake an Employment Land Review to ascertain need over the plan period. Using both methodologies detailed within the 2015 Welsh Government guidance Building an Economic Development Evidence Base to Support a Local Development Plan, there is a recommended need for 49 hectares of employment land from 2022-2037, including an appropriate allowance for a buffer, as detailed within the Development Plans Manual (Ed. 3).

As set out above, the Council has identified approximately 68 hectares of available employment land. This includes a new allocated site on the Llanilid Key Site and the re-allocation of the Tower Colliery site on the Land South of Hirwaun Key Site. There are also several sites in the Council's existing employment landbank. It should be noted that the proposed employment land at Llanilid is in addition to that identified in the Employment Land Review.

These sites will be safeguarded for employment opportunities throughout the RLDP plan period. This will ensure a continued supply of employment land, which will meet the needs of the economy locally and cater for potential inward investment opportunities. It is acknowledged that the total land available is greater than the overall need identified. However, not all of our existing employment landbank sites would necessarily be of a sufficient scale, or commercially attractive for larger investment opportunities. The Key Site allocations will ensure that opportunities for significant inward investment can be accommodated in excellent strategic locations, providing additional employment opportunities locally, whilst simultaneously having excellent access to the strategic rail and highway network.

Having this availability of employment land is integral to meeting the identified level of growth for the RLDP i.e. the realisation of the housing requirement and the associated expected increase in jobs over the plan period. This policy sits alongside the Settlement Centres policy in promoting opportunities for increased employment and achieving a sustainable economy across RCT.

It is nevertheless acknowledged that the expected jobs increase is to come from sources other than just these employment sites. The proposed level of housing growth for RCT will also result in increased jobs growth from other areas. This would include, but is certainly not limited to, public services and institutions, self employed/employed people who may not have a specific base (agile type working) and of course the growing number of people working from home.



Settlement Centres

This Policy supports Objectives:

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 18

The Settlement Centres in RCT

The centres of the settlements in RCT are identified in many ways, and by formal and informal references. These would include town centres, retail centres, high streets, village centres, local centres or neighbourhood centres, etc. For clarity, the RLDP now considers these collectively as our 'Settlement Centres'.

The Settlement Centres are naturally linked to the wider settlement they are centrally located within, and therefore the RLDP Settlement Hierarchy. The many Settlement Centres across RCT all play a major role in their individual communities. Dependent on their scale and function, a number have a greater role supporting wider parts of RCT, whilst some have a recognised role and influence in the wider South East Wales region.

Shown below are the Settlement Centres in line with the Settlement Hierarchy. It is noted that some of the Principal Settlements and Key Settlements have more than one centre, due to their overall size. There is a clear primary centre in these places, with some secondary centres that serve certain parts of the wider settlement on a more local scale.

SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY - SETTLEMENT CENTRES

PRINCIPAL SETTLEMENT CENTRES

Primary centre	Secondary centre
Aberdare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberaman • Gadlys • Trecynon
Pontypridd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treforest
Talbot Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pontyclun • Llantrisant Old Town

KEY SETTLEMENTS CENTRES

Primary centre	Secondary centre
Ferndale	
Hirwaun	
Llanharan	
Mountain Ash	
Porth	
Tonypandy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penygraig • Williamstown
Tonyrefail	
Treorchy	

SP8: Settlement Centres (continued)

SMALLER SETTLEMENT CENTRES

• Abercynon	• Taffs Well
• Church Village	• Ton Pentre
• Gelli	• Tonteg (Main Road Precinct and Cardigan Close Precinct)
• Llanharry	• Trebanog
• Llwydcoed	• Treherbert
• Maerdy	• Tyn-y-Nant
• Penrhiwceiber	• Tynewydd
• Pentre	• Ynyshir
• Penywaun	• Ynysybwl
• Rhydyfelin	• Ystrad

8 Placemaking in our Settlement Centres

There is a need to maintain much of the established functions of our Settlement Centres. However, the RLDP strongly supports their evolution to become all-encompassing, integrated and interconnected places for people to visit, enjoy, work and live. This would be in line with the national 'Town Centre First' principles.

The RLDP seeks to provide suitable flexibility to allow the centres to adapt and prosper, encouraging proposals that would enhance their vibrancy, vitality and viability. Our centres will also be supported to ensure that they can continue to appropriately serve the needs of their communities and RCT.

This policy therefore supports proposals that:

- Encourage a diverse and appropriate mix of uses, which supports the day and evening economies whilst increasing footfall throughout;
- Support all appropriate uses that would bring investment and people to the centres. This would include (but not be limited to), traditional 'A' class uses, community, leisure and hospitality proposals and development which supports the tourism offer in RCT;
- Provide appropriate, accessible, and adequate services and facilities to existing and growing communities of RCT;
- Provide appropriate commercial uses that would provide further employment opportunities;
- Are well designed and contribute positively to the overall built and natural environment of the centre;
- Create opportunities to utilise vacant land or buildings.

Residential developments in Settlement Centres will be supported in principle where:

- They provide appropriate new housing that will increase the vibrancy and vitality of the town centres; and
- Appropriate residential amenity of future occupiers is ensured; and
- The continued retail and all other commercial activities of surrounding properties should not be compromised; and
- In the cases of redevelopment or conversion of premises, residential development does not replace existing street level general commercial uses; and
- The development site is free from constraint; and where possible,
- Retail, service, leisure or wider commercial uses are located on ground floors of new developments in the centres.

SP8: Settlement Centres (continued)

8 All types of development proposals within the Settlement Centres should be of an appropriate scale and use commensurate with the scale of the centre.

A single boundary for each Settlement Centre will be confirmed in the Deposit Stage RLDP.

This policy seeks to ensure the future prosperity and suitability of our Settlement Centres. The principles within it should help to maintain their viability and vitality and also continue to provide appropriate services and facilities at a local, county wide and regional level. Further detail on the process of identification of these centres is set out in **The Settlement Centre Paper**. For note, the changes from the current LDP include the identification of new centres at Llanharry, Penywaun, Llwydcoed and The Precinct at Cardigan Close, Tonteg.

The Principal Settlement and Key Settlement Centres will be focal points for additional growth and strategic redevelopment opportunities. Appropriate commercial, leisure and residential (etc) uses will be encouraged within these locations, alongside their traditional functions to increase footfall and attract people from their communities, across RCT and from further afield. The three Principal Settlement Centres will continue to perform a sub-regional role, acting as the higher-level shopping, services, facilities and general visitor destination, for a wide catchment. The Key Settlement Centres will continue providing a similar role, albeit on a smaller scale and serving their respective areas within RCT.

The Smaller Settlement Centres play a very important role in providing for daily convenience shopping needs and other smaller services of the local communities. It is expected that any future proposals in these centres should accord with this policy, although it is acknowledged this would be at a commensurate scale.

These Settlement Centre locations are for the most part ones that also have good provision of, and/or good links to a variety of sustainable public transport modes or existing active travel routes. Many centres will see the benefits of the considerable investment in the South Wales Metro. This all clearly supports the principles of reducing dependence on private motor vehicles.

Furthermore, residential development in our Settlement Centres, or 'centre first' approach, is a key national planning policy aspiration. This policy will help to promote our centres for appropriate residential development, providing further diversity, and the most sustainable options, in the housing market in RCT.



Tudalen 200

Tourism

**This Policy supports Objectives:
6, 7, 14, 15, 16 and 18**

Rhondda Cynon Taf is an area with a rich heritage and beautiful natural assets, which makes it a great destination for tourism. The RLDP seeks to grow the tourism sector in RCT through supporting the development of sustainable tourism in appropriate locations.

The RDLP will support and encourage:

- Tourism developments that will attract visitors from across the UK and further afield.
- Adventure, outdoor and 'eco' tourism proposals, which integrate into the area's natural beauty.
- Proposals that support and improve the tourism offer within the Principal Settlements and Key Settlements and that add to their future vitality and viability.
- Appropriate diversification of agricultural and other countryside businesses.

The RLDP will ensure that tourism proposals:

- Provide adequate infrastructure so as not to have an unacceptable adverse impact on existing communities.
- Would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on biodiversity, landscape or other designated features.
- Would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on existing tourism features or their settings.

The Preferred Strategy identifies a specific role for the expansion of the tourism industry in the NSA, to allow for an opportunity for diversification in the economy here. A Key Site that will incorporate tourism-based proposals, amongst other uses, has been identified on the former Tower Colliery site, Land South of Hirwaun.

In the NSA, proposals for tourism accommodation outside the settlement boundary will be subject to the above criteria. In the SSA tourist accommodation will only be supported within the settlement boundaries.

Further detailed development management policies will be prepared for the Deposit Plan.

The RDLP will support the aims of the RCT Tourism strategy, which seeks to increase tourist accommodation and support proposals that promote extended tourism trips.

The RDLP would like to build on the successes in this sector to see an expanded tourism offer for RCT.

The north and south of RCT have distinctly different characteristics, which means that in line with their respective strategy areas, a different approach to tourism is required. The northern strategy area with its high quality natural landscape features, culture and history means that it is appropriately placed to deliver a high quality tourism offer. The area has seen the growth in the tourism sector over the last few years with the opening and expansion of Zip World Tower and the ever-strong attraction of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. Walking and cycle routes in the area bring in considerable tourism usage and opportunities. This area is also undergoing some major infrastructure improvements through the dualling of the A465, and the South Wales Metro scheme making it even more accessible. The Rhondda Heritage Park is an established facility in the lower Rhondda.

SP9: Tourism (continued)

9 By encouraging the expansion of the tourism offer and industry in the NSA, the Preferred Strategy intends that it can offer diversification of the economy and create much needed jobs. Therefore, the approach in the NSA is to encourage the development of a sustainable tourism industry, which builds on the current tourism offer. The RLDP will seek to ensure that the north creates a tourism sector that attracts visitors from across the UK and internationally.

The Southern Strategy Area also has some existing larger tourism destinations including the Principal Settlement of Pontypridd, with its facilities such as the National Lido of Wales, and the Royal Mint Experience in Llantrisant; along with others on a smaller scale, including its attractive landscapes, which attract from a more local catchment. The SSA is also recognised as playing a part in accommodating for the demand for those who visit Cardiff. Tourism in this strategy area will be carefully supported to ensure the appropriate sustainable expansion of our current tourism offers in the SSA.

The RLDP supports and encourages the conversion and re-use of historic and heritage buildings and assets into uses for tourism in our Principle Towns and Key Settlements. This will secure the future of these valuable assets but also bring a benefit to the built environment and these existing communities alike, which in turn will attract more visitors.

The tourism industry makes an important contribution within Rhondda Cynon Taf; consequently, the Council will encourage proposals that enhance the tourism offer within the County Borough. This will include providing tourism accommodation, widening the scope of the tourism offer and improving the visitor experience.

Tourism is an important and growing sector for Rhondda Cynon Taf. As identified by the Welsh Government, it is a priority sector for Wales generally accounting for 9% of jobs in the country. The Rhondda Cynon Taf Tourism Strategy estimates that tourism within the County Borough is worth over £179 million to the local economy. As such, the strategy states: “it is vital that communities become aware of the importance of capturing the benefits of increased visitors and local businesses develop skills which will benefit the customer service and tourism sector” (RCTCBC, 2021, p10). This is supported by the Council’s Corporate Plan (2020-2024) Making a Difference and the Public Service Board Well-being Plan Our Cwm Taf. The plans recognise the importance of developing the tourism offer, whilst supporting businesses within the region and acknowledging that the strength in RCT’s visitor offer stems from our local communities.





tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

17th JANUARY 2024

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES (AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION/RETURNING OFFICER)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires local authorities to conduct a review of parliamentary polling districts, places and stations at least every five years. The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the outcome of the review and associated consultation exercise undertaken during Autumn/Winter 2023 and to consider the suggested proposals for amendments to certain existing Polling Districts, Places and/or Stations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council:

- 2.1 Notes the responses received in relation to the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Review which are summarised at Appendix 2 to the report;
- 2.2 Approves the proposals to amend existing Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report and notes that the Electoral Registration Officer would implement any consequential changes to the register of electors; and
- 2.3 Notes that the Returning Officer will continue to monitor Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations as outlined in Appendix 1 and/or where no suitable alternative venue is available at any relevant time note any changes would be made in consultation with the relevant Local Member(s).

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 3.1 A **Polling District** is a geographical sub-division of an electoral area, i.e. a UK Parliamentary Constituency or a local Electoral Division, commonly referred to as a Ward.
- 3.2 A **Polling Place** is a geographical area in which a Polling Station is located. It can be defined as tightly as a particular building or as widely as the entire Polling District. The Polling Place shall be an area in the Polling District, except where special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the Polling District.
- 3.3 A **Polling Station** is the actual area or specific room where the process of voting takes place i.e. where voters cast their votes. It must be located within the Polling Place designated for the particular Polling Station.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

- 4.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Electoral Administration Act 2006 and the Review of Polling District & Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC has a duty to divide the district into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each polling district. It also has to keep these arrangements under review.
- 4.2 In order to comply with the above legislation the Council is required to complete a full review of all polling districts and polling places every five years. However this does not prevent changes being made at any time prior to the next review.
- 4.3 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. This compulsory review had to be started and completed between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 (inclusive).
- 4.4 Subsequent compulsory reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.

5. AIM OF THE POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATION REVIEW

- 5.1 Local Authorities must seek to ensure that:
- a) All of the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
 - b) So far as is reasonable and practicable, all Polling Places are accessible to all their electors, including those with disabilities;
 - c) Each Community shall, in the absence of special circumstances, be a separate Polling District.

- 5.2 The Polling Districts, Places and Stations Review does not cover the following areas:
- a) The boundaries of UK Parliamentary Constituencies;
 - b) The borders, names and electoral areas of Local Authorities.
- 5.3 For UK parliamentary elections, the powers and duties of the Returning Officer are discharged by the designated 'Acting Returning Officer'. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Acting Returning Officer is the Electoral Registration Officer appointed by the Council (Mr. Andy Wilkins).
- 5.4 The choice of fully accessible buildings for use as polling stations is limited, and they are not always located in an area which is convenient for electors. As the Council has rationalised its accommodation this has created some additional issues if arrangements cannot be made to ensure continued use of a premises as a Polling Station. Electoral Services staff, on behalf of the (Acting) Returning Officer, undertake a continuous assessment of the premises used as polling stations, in order to seek alternative more suitable solutions where necessary. Furthermore, the review has sought to minimise disruption to schools and to find a permanent polling place to cease the use of hiring portacabins where ever practicable.

5.5 Timetable for the review

Start of the review (Publication of Notice of Review of Polling Districts and Places)	9th October 2023
Deadline for receiving representations and submissions	17th November 2023
Electoral Services and Returning Officer's comments published	4th December 2023
Deadline for receipt of representations on the Returning Officer's Comments	15th December 2023
Council to consider proposals and agree recommendations	17th January 2024
Revised arrangements come into force	1st February 2024

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1. A public notice was published and included on the Council's website. All ward members, MSs, MPs, Community Council clerks, Local Disability Forums, RCT Older Persons Advisory Group as well as the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and the (Acting) Returning Officers for Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil due to the parliamentary cross boundary arrangements, have been consulted. The Deputy Returning Officer also attended a meeting of the Local Disability Forum to discuss the review and obtain feedback.

6.2. Comments received as part of the review are set out in Appendix 2.

7. EQUALITY AND ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening process took place prior to the consultation period. The outcome indicated that it was low priority and a full report was not required. The aims of the review are to ensure so far as is reasonable and practicable, all Polling Places are accessible to all their electors, including those with disabilities and this is therefore at the forefront of the Returning Officers' considerations.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report. However Members should note the use of hiring portacabins is in the region of circa £2K+ and therefore in respect of Local Elections this is a cost that is borne by the Council and/or relevant Community Council. The Returning Officer is able to utilise Council owned buildings and Schools (subject to payment of associated utility costs) free of charge.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The results of the review and suggested changes, where relevant are highlighted in Appendix 1 to the report. There are a number of polling stations which are generally suitable but alternatives have been identified. There is a Polling district where we have not been able to confirm/finalise a suitable polling station as yet and we continue to search for a location ahead of the next election. Members should note any future changes are made in consultation with the Local Ward Member(s).

APPENDIX 1

Situation of Polling Stations RHONDDA AND OGMORE UK PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY (UNLESS STATED)	RCT Electoral Ward	Polling District	Polling District Name	Returning Officer Comments
Gilfach Goch Community Association, Cambrian Avenue, GILFACH GOCH, CF39 8TG	GILFACH GOCH	OAA	HENDREFORGAN	NO CHANGE
Community Centre (Cambrian Ave), Cambrian Avenue, GILFACH GOCH, CF39 8TG		OAB	GARDEN VILLAGE	NO CHANGE
Gilfach Goch Day Centre, 37-39 High Street, Gilfach Goch, CF39 8SR		OAC	GILFACH LOWER	NO CHANGE
Gilfach Goch Day Centre, 37-39 High Street, Gilfach Goch, CF39 8SR		OAD	GILFACH HIGHER	NO CHANGE
Coedely Community Centre, Ely Valley Road, Coedely, TONYREFAIL CF39 8BL	TONYREFAIL EAST	PQA	COEDEL	NO CHANGE
Bethlehem English Baptist Church, Bethania Hill, Tonyrefail, Porth, CF39 8FS		PQB	CWMLAI	NO CHANGE
Pritchard Street Community Centre, Pritchard Street, TONYREFAIL, CF39 8PA		PQC	TONYREFAIL	NO CHANGE
Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, Llantrisant Road, Tonyrefail, PORTH CF39 8PR		PQD	GELLIDAWEL	NO CHANGE
Capel Resource / Education Centre, Heol Ty Llwyd, TONYREFAIL, CF39 8LW		PQE	CAPEL	NO CHANGE
Capel Resource / Education Centre, Heol Ty Llwyd, TONYREFAIL, CF39 8LW		PQF	SCHOOL STREET	NO CHANGE
Edmondstown O.A.P. Hall, Edmondstown Road, Edmondstown, TONYPANDY CF40 1NR	TONYREFAIL WEST	PRA	EDMONDSTOWN	NO CHANGE
Williamstown Primary School, Dinas Isaf West, Williamstown, TONYPANDY CF40 1AG		PRB	PENRHIW-FER	NO CHANGE
Tonyrefail Leisure Centre, Waunrhydd Road, Tonyrefail, PORTH CF39 8EW		PRC	BRYNGOLAU / TYNBYRYN	NO CHANGE
Community Centre Thomastown, The Square, Thomastown, TONYREFAIL CF39 8DS		PRD	THOMASTOWN	NO CHANGE
Fernhill and Blaenrhondda Social Club, Near Chapel Street, Blaenrhondda, Treherbert, CF42 5SB	TREHERBERT	RAA	BLAENRHONDDA	NO CHANGE
Blaencwm Day Centre, Hendrewen Road, Blaencwm, TREORCHY CF42 5DR		RAB	BLAENCWM	NO CHANGE
Blaen Y Cwm Chapel, Wyndham Street, Tynewydd, TREORCHY CF42 5BT		RAC	TYNEWYDD	NO CHANGE
OAP Hall (Tynewydd), Gwendoline Street, Tynewydd, TREHERBERT CF42 5LW		RAD	TYNEWYDD LOWER	NO CHANGE
The Old Library, Bute Street, Treherbert, CF42 5NR		RAE	TREHERBERT	NO CHANGE
Penyrenghlyn Primary School, Baglan Street, Treherbert, TREORCHY CF42 5AW		RAF	PENYRENGLYN	NO CHANGE
Ynyswen Welfare Hall, Ynyswen Road, Treorchy, RHONDDA CF42 6EB	TREORCHY	RBA	YNYSWEN	NO CHANGE
St Matthews Church Hall, Bute Street, Treorchy, RHONDDA CF42 6BB		RBB	TREORCHY	NO CHANGE
Treorchy and Cwmparc Boys and Girls Club, Station Road, Treorchy, Rhondda CF42 6UA		RBC	TREORCHY (CENTRAL)	NO CHANGE
Pencelli Bowling Pavilion, Pencelli Park, Treorchy, RHONDDA CF42 6UH		RBD	PENCELLI	NO CHANGE
St Georges Church Hall, Tallis Street, Cwmparc, RHONDDA CF42 6LY		RBE	CWMPARC (LOWER)	NO CHANGE
Parc Hall Cwmparc, Park Road, Cwmparc, TREORCHY CF42 6LD		RBF	CWMPARC	NO CHANGE
Oasis Church Hall, Llewellyn Street, Pentre, RHONDDA CF41 7BY	PENTRE	RCA	PENTRE	NO CHANGE
Church Hall (St John Baptist), Church Road, Ton Pentre, PENTRE CF41 7EN		RCB	TON & PENTRE	NO CHANGE
Ton and Gelli Community Centre, Off Dinam Park Avenue, Ton-Pentre, Pentre, CF41 7DX		RCC	TON PENTRE	NO CHANGE
Mount Zion Chapel, Ty Isaf Road, Gelli, CF41 7TX	YSTRAD	RDA	GELLI	NO CHANGE
Mount Zion Chapel, Ty Isaf Road, Gelli, CF41 7TX		RDB	BRONLLWYN	NO CHANGE
Ystrad Con Club - Scoobys, 51-53 William Street, Ystrad, Rhondda, CF41 7QU		RDC	BODRINGALLT (UPPER)	CHANGE TO YSTRAD RUGBY CLUB, GELLIGALED ROAD AND MERGE WITH RDD
Bodringallt Primary School, Bodringallt Terrace, Ystrad, RHONDDA CF41 7QE		RDD	BODRINGALLT	CHANGE TO YSTRAD RUGBY CLUB, GELLIGALED ROAD AND MERGE WITH RDC
Providence Church Ystrad, Trafalgar Terrace, Ystrad, RHONDDA CF41 7RG		RDE	BODRINGALLT (CENTRAL/LOWER)	NO CHANGE
Coleg Y Gymoedd, Room RD119, Llwynypia Campus, Llwynypia CF40 2TQ	LLWYN-Y-PIA	REA	PONTRHONDDA	NO CHANGE
Coleg Y Gymoedd, Room RD119, Llwynypia Campus, Llwynypia CF40 2TQ		REE	NEW AREA FROM YSTRAD	NO CHANGE
Rhondda Sea Cadets Hall, Llwynypia Road, Llwynypia, TONYPANDY CF40 2JQ		REB	LLWYNYPIA	NO CHANGE
Llwynypia Primary School, School Street, Llwynypia, TONYPANDY CF40 2HL		REC	THE TERRACES	CHANGE TO LLWYNYPIA BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB
St Cynons Church Hall, Partridge Road, Llwynypia, TONYPANDY CF40 2LT		RED	PARTRIDGE	NO CHANGE
St Cynons Church Hall, Partridge Road, Llwynypia, TONYPANDY CF40 2LT		REF	NEW AREA FROM TREALAW	NO CHANGE

Tudalen 209

APPENDIX 1

Clydach Vale Community Centre, Clydach Road, Clydach Vale, TONYPANDY CF40 2BD	CWM CLYDACH	RFA	BLAENCLYDACH	NO CHANGE
Clydach Vale Community Centre, Clydach Road, Clydach Vale, TONYPANDY CF40 2BD		RFB	CWM CLYDACH	NO CHANGE
Situation of Polling Stations RHONDDA AND OGMORE UK PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY (UNLESS STATED)	RCT Electoral Ward	Polling District	Polling District Name	Returning Officer Comments
Hope Church Rhondda, Dunraven Street, TONYPANDY, CF40 1AN	TONYPANDY	RGA	TONYPANDY	NO CHANGE
Tonypandy Library, De Winton Street, TONYPANDY, CF40 2QZ		RGB	TONYPANDY (UPPER)	NO CHANGE
All Saints Church Hall, Rhys Street, Trealaw, TONYPANDY CF40 2PX	TREALAW	RHA	YNYSCYNON	NO CHANGE
Alaw Primary School, Egypt Street, Trealaw, TONYPANDY CF40 2UU		RHB	TREALAW	NO CHANGE
Soar Centre, Tylacelyn Road, Penygraig, TONYPANDY CF40 1JZ	PEN-Y-GRAIG	RIA	PENYGRAIG	NO CHANGE
Tai Education Centre - New Site, Former Ysgol Yr Eos, Bishop Street, Penygraig CF40 1PQ		RIB	GRAIG YR EOS	NO CHANGE
Tai Education Centre - New Site, Former Ysgol Yr Eos, Bishop Street, Penygraig CF40 1PQ		RID	DINAS (BELLE VUE)	NO CHANGE PROPOSED. COMMENTS RECEIVED ABOUT LACK OF PARKING. NO ALTERNATIVE IN POLLING DISTRICT AREA.
Penygraig Boys and Girls Club, Brook Street, Williamstown, RHONDDA CF40 1RD		RIC	WILLIAMSTOWN	NO CHANGE
St Johns Church Centre, Belmont Terrace, Cymmer, PORTH CF39 9LB	CYMER	RJA	GLYNFACH	NO CHANGE
Cymmer Primary School, High Street, Cymmer, PORTH CF39 9EY		RJB	CYMMER	NO CHANGE
Waun Wen Community Centre, Rhiwgarn Road, Trebanog, PORTH CF39 9LX		RJC	TREBANOG	NO CHANGE
Waun Wen Community Centre, Rhiwgarn Road, Trebanog, PORTH CF39 9LX		RJD	RHIWGARN	NO CHANGE
One4All Advice Centre, Porth Plaza, Foundry Place, PORTH CF39 9PG		RJE	BRITANNIA	NO CHANGE
Rhondda Heritage Park Museum, Lewis Merthyr Colliery, Coed Cae Road, Trehafod CF37 2NP		RJF	TREHAFOD (UPPER)	NO CHANGE
Hafod Primary School, Wayne Street, Trehafod, PONTYPRIDD CF37 2NL		RJG	TREHAFOD (LOWER)	NO CHANGE
Trehafod Community Village Hall, Ivor Street, Trehafod, Pontypridd, CF37 2NF	*PONTYPRIDD UK CONSTITUENCY	PAA	TREHAFOD	NO CHANGE
MRS Training and Rescue, Appletree Road, TONYPANDY, CF40 1JJ	PORTH	RKA	DINAS	NO CHANGE
One4All Advice Centre, Porth Plaza, Foundry Place, PORTH CF39 9PG		RKB	PORTH (CENTRAL)	NO CHANGE
Porth Harlequins Rugby Club, Nythbran Terrace, Llwyncelyn, PORTH CF39 9TW		RKC	LLWYNCELYN	NO CHANGE
Oldway House, Porth Street, Porth, CF39 9ST		RKD	BIRCHGROVE	NO CHANGE
Porth Community School, Cemetery Road, PORTH, CF39 0BS		RKE	PORTH (UPPER)	NO CHANGE
Bethany Baptist Chapel, Ynyshir Road, Ynyshir, PORTH CF39 0EL	TYLORSTOWN AND YNYSHIR	RLA	YNYSHIR	NO CHANGE
Wattstown Community Centre, Victoria Terrace, Wattstown, PORTH CF39 0PE		RLB	WATTSTOWN	NO CHANGE
Pontygwaith Community Centre, Llewellyn Street, Pontygwaith, FERNDAL CF43 3LD		RMA	PONTYGWAITH	NO CHANGE
Tylorstown Welfare Hall, East Road, Tylorstown, Ferndale, CF43 3DA		RMB	TYLORSTOWN	NO CHANGE
Llanfair Church, Heol Y Waun, Penrhys, Ferndale CF43 3RH		RMC	PENRHYS	NO CHANGE
Morlais Hall, North Road, Ferndale, RHONDDA CF43 4PS	FERNDAL AND MAERDY	RNA	FERNDAL	NO CHANGE PROPOSED. COMMENT RECEIVED ABOUT LACK OF PARKING. NO ALTERNATIVE IN POLLING DISTRICT AREA.
Morlais Hall, North Road, Ferndale, RHONDDA CF43 4PS		RNC	BLAENLLECHAU	NO CHANGE
Darren Park Primary School, Frederick Street, FERNDAL, CF43 4LE		RNB	FERNDAL (UPPER)	NO CHANGE
Ferndale Community School - Youth Wing, Highfield, FERNDAL, CF43 4AR		ROA	HIGHFIELD	NO CHANGE
Ferndale Community School - Youth Wing, Highfield, FERNDAL, CF43 4AR		ROB	MAERDY (LOWER)	NO CHANGE
Seion Vestry, Maerdy Road, MAERDY, CF43 4AG		ROC	MAERDY (CENTRAL)	NO CHANGE
Seion Vestry, Maerdy Road, MAERDY, CF43 4AG		ROD	MAERDY (UPPER)	NO CHANGE

APPENDIX 1

Situation of Polling Stations MERTHYR TYDFIL AND ABERDARE UK PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	RCT Electoral Ward	Polling District	Polling District Name	Returning Officer Comments
Rhigos Community Centre, Heol Esgyn, Rhigos, ABERDARE CF44 9BJ	HIRWAUN, PENDERYN AND RHIGOS	CAA	RHIGOS	NO CHANGE
Penderyn Community Centre, Llwyn Onn, Penderyn, ABERDARE CF44 9UX		CAB	PENDERYN	NO CHANGE
Hirwaun Village Hall, High Street, Hirwaun, ABERDARE CF44 9SL		CBA	HIRWAUN	NO CHANGE
Hirwaun Village Hall, High Street, Hirwaun, ABERDARE CF44 9SL		CBB	HIRWAUN SOUTH	NO CHANGE
Penywaun Primary School, Awelfryn, Penywaun, ABERDARE CF44 9DR	PEN-Y-WAUN	CCA	PENYWAUN ESTATE	NO CHANGE
St Winifreds Church Hall, Heol Bryngwyn, Penywaun, ABERDARE CF44 9HB		CCB	RHYDYWAUN / TRENANT	NO CHANGE
Llwydcoed Community Centre, Merthyr Road, Llwydcoed, ABERDARE CF44 0YE	ABERDARE WEST AND LLWYDCOED	CDA	LLWYDCOED	NO CHANGE
St Fagans Community Hall, Windsor Street, Trecynon, ABERDARE CF44 8LL		CDB	TRECYNON	NO CHANGE
Cwmdare Free Mission, Cwmdare Road, Cwmdare, Aberdare, CF44 8TW		CDC	CWMDARE	NO CHANGE
Oasis Community Centre, Hirwaun Road, Trecynon, ABERDARE CF44 8ED		CDD	TRECYNON VILLAGE	NO CHANGE
Oasis Community Centre, Hirwaun Road, Trecynon, ABERDARE CF44 8ED		CDE	ROBERTSTOWN	NO CHANGE
St John The Baptist High School, Glan Road, Gadlys, ABERDARE CF44 8BW		CDF	LANDARE	NO CHANGE
Christchurch Church Hall, East Avenue, Gadlys, ABERDARE CF44 8AS	ABERDARE EAST	CEA	GADLYS	NO CHANGE
Christchurch Church Hall, East Avenue, Gadlys, ABERDARE CF44 8AS		CEB	MAESYDRE	CHANGE TO CYNON LINC, SEYMOUR STREET (WAS PREVIOUSLY USED AS POLLING STATION WHEN KNOWN AS ST MAIRS DAY CENTRE)
Caradog Primary School, Clifton Street, ABERDARE, CF44 7PB		CEC	FOUNDRY TOWN	NO CHANGE PROPOSED AS CURRENT POLLING STATION IS CENTRAL TO POLLING DISTRICT. COMMENTS RECEIVED TO MOVE POLLING STATION TO ST MARGARETS ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL.
Abernant Primary School, Abernant, ABERDARE, CF44 0SF		CED	ABERNANT	NO CHANGE
Cylch Meithrin Aberdar, Wind Street, Aberdare, CF44 7ES		CEE	ABERDARE TOWN	NO CHANGE
Saron Baptist Chapel, Davis Street, Aberaman, Aberdare, CF44 6PY	ABERAMAN	CFA	BLAENGWAWR	NO CHANGE
St Margarets Church, Cardiff Road, Aberaman, ABERDARE CF44 6RT		CFB	ABERAMAN	NO CHANGE
Gwawr Church Hall, Jubilee Road, Aberaman, ABERDARE CF44 6DD		CFC	GODREAMAN VILLAGE	NO CHANGE
Gwawr Church Hall, Jubilee Road, Aberaman, ABERDARE CF44 6DD		CGA	GODREAMAN	NO CHANGE
Hope Church Cwmaman, Fforchaman Road, ABERDARE, CF44 6NS		CGB	CWMAMAN	NO CHANGE
Cwmaman Primary School, Glanaman Road, Cwmaman, ABERDARE CF44 6LA		CGC	GLYNHAFOD	NO CHANGE
Abercwmbai Communities First Office, Rear Of Cap Coch Inn, 108 John Street, CF44 6BN		CGD	ABERCWMBOI	NO CHANGE
Cwmbach Community Primary School, Llangorse Road, Cwmbach, ABERDARE CF44 0HS	CWMBACH	CHA	CWMBACH UPPER	NO CHANGE
St Mary Magdalene Church Hall, Bridge Road, Cwmbach, ABERDARE CF44 0LS		CHB	CWMBACH CENTRAL	NO CHANGE
Cwmbach Church in Wales Primary School, Tirfounder Road, Cwmbach, ABERDARE CF44 0AT		CHC	CWMBACH LOWER	NO CHANGE

APPENDIX 1

Situation of Polling Stations PONTYPRIDD UK PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	RCT Electoral Ward	Polling District	Polling District Name	Returning Officer Comments
Mountain Ash Golf Club, The Avenue, Cefnpennar, MOUNTAIN ASH CF45 4DT	MOUNTAIN ASH	CIA	CEFNENNAR	NO CHANGE
Mountain Ash Ymca, Dyffryn Road, MOUNTAIN ASH, CF45 4DA		CIB	CAEGARW	NO CHANGE
Zion Chapel, Mary Street, Newton, MOUNTAIN ASH CF45 4HH		CIC	NEWTOWN	NO CHANGE
Mountain Ash Community Hub, Former Day Centre, Oxford Street, Mountain Ash, CF45 3HD		CJA	DARRANLAS	NO CHANGE
Fernhill Community Centre, Fernhill Estate, MOUNTAIN ASH, CF45 3EW		CJB	GLENBOI	NO CHANGE
Darrenlas Community Building, Aberdare Road, Mountain Ash, ABERDARE CF45 3PT		CJC	DARRANLAS UPPER	NO CHANGE
Darrenlas Primary School, Kingcraft Street, MOUNTAIN ASH, CF45 3LT		CJD	MOUNTAIN ASH LLANWONNO	NO CHANGE
Miskin Baptist Church, 201 Penrhiwceiber Road, Penrhiwceiber, MOUNTAIN ASH CF45 3UN	PENRHIW-CEIBR	CKA	MISKIN LOWER	NO CHANGE
Miskin Baptist Church, 201 Penrhiwceiber Road, Penrhiwceiber, MOUNTAIN ASH CF45 3UN		CKE	PENRHIWCEIBER NORTH	NO CHANGE
Bryngolwg Free Mission, Windsor Road, Miskin, MOUNTAIN ASH CF45 3NE		CKB	MISKIN UPPER	NO CHANGE
Penrhiwceiber Old Age Centre, Church Street, Penrhiwceiber, MOUNTAIN ASH CF45 3SP		CKC	PENRHIWCEIBER	NO CHANGE
Perthcelyn Communities For Work, Glamorgan Training Centre, Glamorgan Street, CF45 3RJ		CKD	PERTHCELYN	CHANGE TO PERTHCELYN COMMUNITY CENTRE, GLAMORGAN STREET
The Feel Good Factory, Abercynon Road, Ynysyboeth, MOUNTAIN ASH CF45 4XZ	ABERCYNON	CLA	PONTCYNON	NO CHANGE
Abercynon Community Centre, Station Road, ABERCYNON, CF45 4TA		CLB	ABERCYNON	NO CHANGE
St Donats Church, Cardiff Road, Abercynon, MOUNTAIN ASH CF45 4NY		CLC	CARNETOWN	NO CHANGE
YGG Abercynon - Welsh School, Park View Entrance, ABERCYNON, CF45 4TH		CLD	ABERTAF	NO CHANGE
Graig Yr Hesg Primary School (Infants School), Cefn Lane, Glyncoch, PONTYPRIDD CF37 3BP	YNYSYBWL	CMA	COED Y CWM	NO CHANGE PROPOSED. COMMENTS RECEIVED THAT POLLING STATION IS OUTSIDE OF ELECTORAL WARD AND A LONG DISTANCE TO TRAVEL. NO ALTERNATIVE IN POLLING DISTRICT AREA.
Zion English Baptist Chapel, Robert Street, Ynysybwl, CF37 3EB		CMB	YNYSYBWL	NO CHANGE
Ynysybwl Community Day Centre, Windsor Place, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd, CF37 3HR		CMC	OLD YNYSYBWL	NO CHANGE
Graig Yr Hesg Primary School (Infants School), Cefn Lane, Glyncoch, PONTYPRIDD CF37 3BP	GLYN-COCH	CNA	GLYNCOCH LOWER	NO CHANGE
Community Centre (Glyncoch), Porcher Avenue, Glyncoch, PONTYPRIDD CF37 3DA		CNB	GLYNCOCH HIGHER	NO CHANGE
Cilfynydd & Norton Bridge Community Centre, Cilfynydd Road, Cilfynydd, CF37 3NR	CILFYNYDD	COA	CILFYNYDD	NO CHANGE
Norton Bridge Methodist Church, Pontshonnorton Road, Pontypridd, CF37 4NE		COB	PONTSHONNORTON	NO CHANGE
Church Hall (Llanharan), Danygraig Road, Llanharan, CF72 9NX	BRYNNA AND LLANHARAN	OCA	LLANHARAN	NO CHANGE
Llanharan Rugby Club, Bridgend Road, Llanharan, Pontyclun, CF72 9RD		OCB	DOLAU	NO CHANGE
Ynysmaerdy Social Hall, Ynysmaerdy, Pont-Y-Clun, CF72 8LJ		OCC	YNYSMAERDY	NO CHANGE
Brynna Community Centre, Church Street, Brynna, Pontyclun, CF72 9QP		ODA	BRYNNA	NO CHANGE
Bryncae Community Centre, Powell Drive, Bryncae, Llanharan, Pontyclun, CF72 9UU		ODB	LLANILID	NO CHANGE
Llanharry Community Centre, Tylacoch, Llanharry, CF72 9LF	LLANHARRY	OEA	LLANHARRY	NO CHANGE
Llanharry Community Centre, Tylacoch, Llanharry, CF72 9LF		PKC	MASYFELIN / BRYNSADLER (A)	NO CHANGE
Hopkinstown O.A.P. Hall, Foundry Road, Hopkinstown, PONTYPRIDD CF37 2RA	GRAIG AND PONTYPRIDD WEST	PAB	HOPKINSTOWN	NO CHANGE
Pantygraigwen Community Centre, Pantygraigwen Road, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 2RR		PAC	PANTYGRAIGWEN	NO CHANGE
Tabor Hall, Vaughan Street, Pwllgwaun, PONTYPRIDD CF37 1HR		PAD	PWLLGWAUN	NO CHANGE
Pontypridd Ex-Servicemens Club - Duffys, Woodland Terrace, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 1DZ		PAE	MAESYCOED	NO CHANGE

APPENDIX 1

Graig Community Centre, Rickards Street, Graig, PONTYPRIDD CF37 1RD		PAF	GRAIG LOWER	NO CHANGE
Temple Chapel Hall, Llantrisant Road, Graig, PONTYPRIDD CF37 1LL		PAG	GRAIG HIGHER	NO CHANGE
Pontypridd Library, 1 Llys Cadwyn, Taff Street, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH	PONTYPRIDD TOWN	PBA	PONTYPRIDD CENTRAL	NO CHANGE
Glamorgan Mission For The Deaf, Lanpark Road, PONTYPRIDD, CF37 2DH		PBB	GRAIGWEN	NO CHANGE
Mayfield Road Church Hall, Mayfield Road, Whiterock, PONTYPRIDD CF37 2HA *ALTERNATIVE REQUIRED DUE TO CLOSURE*		PBC	WHITEROCK	SEEK POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE OR MERGE WITH STATION PBB
Situation of Polling Stations PONTYPRIDD UK PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY	RCT Electoral Ward	Polling District	Polling District Name	Returning Officer Comments
Coedpenmaen School, Coedpenmaen Close, Coedpenmaen, PONTYPRIDD CF37 4LE	TRALLWNG	PCA	COEDPENMAEN	NO CHANGE
Trallwng Community Centre, Ralph Street, Trallwng, PONTYPRIDD CF37 4RS		PCB	TRALLWNG	NO CHANGE
Ilan Community Centre, Glyntaff Estate, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd, CF37 5HL	UPPER RHYDFELEN AND GLYNTAF	PDA	ILAN	NO CHANGE
Rhydyfelin Children's Centre, Holly Street, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd, CF37 5DB		PDB	OLD PART PDB	NO CHANGE
Rhydyfelin Children's Centre, Holly Street, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd, CF37 5DB		PDC	DYNEA	NO CHANGE
Rhydyfelin Library, Poplar Road, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd	RHYDFELEN CENTRAL	PEA	PART OLD RHYDFELEN LOWER	NO CHANGE
Rhydyfelin Community Centre, Duffryn Road, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd, CF37 5RW		PEB	NEW AREA FROM PART OLD PDB	NO CHANGE
St Lukes Hall, Cardiff Road, Hawthorn, Pontypridd, CF37 5LG	HAWTHORN AND LOWER RHYDEFELN	PFA	NEW WAS PART PEA	NO CHANGE
St Lukes Hall, Cardiff Road, Hawthorn, Pontypridd, CF37 5LG		PFB	NANTYDALL	NO CHANGE
Bethel Chapel Hall, Cardiff Road, Hawthorn, PONTYPRIDD CF37 5AN		PFC	HAWTHORN / UPPER BOAT	NO CHANGE
Glyntaff Church Hall, Glyntaff Road, Glyntaff, PONTYPRIDD CF37 4AS	TREFOREST	PGA	GLYNTAFF	NO CHANGE PROPOSED. COMMENTS RECEIVED ABOUT ACCESS TO CHURCH HALL. NO ALTERNATIVE IN POLLING DISTRICT AREA
Boys Club, Queen Street, Queen Street, Treforest, PONTYPRIDD CF37 1RN		PGB	PARK	NO CHANGE
Boys Club, Queen Street, Queen Street, Treforest, PONTYPRIDD CF37 1RN		PGC	LLANTWIT ROAD	NO CHANGE
Taff Meadow Community Centre, (Old Reading Rooms), Broadway, PONTYPRIDD CF37 1DB		PGD	MARKET SQUARE	NO CHANGE
Taff Meadow Community Centre, (Old Reading Rooms), Broadway, PONTYPRIDD CF37 1DB		PGE	LEWISTOWN	NO CHANGE
Gwauncelyn School, Heol Deg, Tonteg, PONTYPRIDD CF38 1ET	TON-TEG	PLA	GWAUNCELYN	NO CHANGE
Tonteg Community Centre, Maesteg Grove, Tonteg, PONTYPRIDD CF38 1ND		PLB	TON-TEG	NO CHANGE
Carneige Parish Hall, Main Road, Church Village, PONTYPRIDD CF37 1PY	CHURCH VILLAGE	PMA	CHURCH VILLAGE (A)	NO CHANGE
Ty Illtyd Community Centre, St Illtyds Road, Church Village, CF38 1EB		PMB	CHURCH VILLAGE (B)	NO CHANGE
Llantwit Fardre Leisure Centre, Central Park, Church Village, CF38 1RJ		PMC	NEW AREA CHURCH VILLAGE	NO CHANGE
Neuadd Dowlais Community Centre, Crown Hill, LLANTWIT FARDRE, CF38 2NA	LLANTWIT FARDRE	PNA	LLANTWIT FARDRE	NO CHANGE PROPOSED. COMMENTS RECEIVED THAT COMMUNITY CENTRE IS A LONG DISTANCE TO TRAVEL FROM MEADOW FARM/WOODLANDS AREA. NO ALTERNATIVE IN POLLING DISTRICT AREA
Neuadd Dowlais Community Centre, Crown Hill, LLANTWIT FARDRE, CF38 2NA		PNB	CROWN HILL	NO CHANGE
Efail Isaf Village Hall, Heol-Y-Parc, Efail Isaf, PONTYPRIDD CF38 1AN		PNC	EFAIL ISAF	NO CHANGE

APPENDIX 1

Beddau and Tynant Community Library, Tynant Road, Beddau, PONTYPRIDD CF38 2DA	BEDDAU AND TYN-Y-NANT	POA	TYN-Y-NANT	NO CHANGE
Beddau and Tynant Community Library, Tynant Road, Beddau, PONTYPRIDD CF38 2DA		POB	GWAUNMEISGYN	NO CHANGE
Llys Y Cwm Hall, Gwaun Miskin Road, Beddau, PONTYPRIDD CF38 2AY		POC	BEDDAU / PENYCOEDCAE	NO CHANGE
Llys Y Cwm Hall, Gwaun Miskin Road, Beddau, PONTYPRIDD CF38 2AY		POD	YORKDALE	NO CHANGE
Llantrisant Working Mens Club, 19 Swan Street, Llantrisant, CF72 8ED	LLANTRISANT AND TALBOT GREEN	PPA	LLANTRISANT	NO CHANGE
Southgate Park Pavilion, Tir Meibion Lane, Southgate, Llantrisant CF72 8DJ		PPB	SOUTHGATE / CROSS INN	NO CHANGE
Talbot Green Community Centre., Cowbridge Road, TALBOT GREEN, CF72 8HS		PPC	TALBOT GREEN	NO CHANGE
Talbot Green Community Centre., Cowbridge Road, TALBOT GREEN, CF72 8HS		OCE	LLANHARAN (A)	NO CHANGE

APPENDIX 1

Situation of Polling Stations CARDIFF NORTH CONSTITUENCY	RCT Electoral Ward	Polling District	Polling District Name	Returning Officer Comments
Coleg Y Cymoedd, Rail Building, Ground Floor, Parc Nantgarw, Heol Y Coleg, Cardiff, CF15 7QY	TAFF'S WELL	PHA	NANTGARW	NO CHANGE
Tawelfryn Community Centre, Heol Y Coed, Tawelfryn, NANTGARW CF15 7UE		PHB	TAWELFRYN	NO CHANGE
The Taffs Well And Nantgarw Community Hub, Ffynnon Taf Primary School, Cardiff Road, Taffs Well, CF15 7PR		PHC	TAFFS WELL	NO CHANGE
Football Club Taffs Well, Rhiwr Ddar, Taffs Well, CARDIFF CF15 7HB		PHD	RHIWDDAR	NO CHANGE
Ty-Rhiw Community Centre, Ty-Rhiw, TAFFS WELL, CF15 7RS		PHE	TY-RHIW	NO CHANGE

APPENDIX 1

Situation of Polling Stations CARDIFF WEST CONSTITUENCY (UNLESS STATED)	RCT Electoral Ward	Polling District	Polling District Name	Returning Officer Comments
Bethel Baptist Church, Heol Miskin, PONTYCLUN, CF72 9AJ	PONTYCLUN CENTRAL	OCD	YNYSDDU	NO CHANGE
Bethel Baptist Church, Heol Miskin, PONTYCLUN, CF72 9AJ		PJB	CEFNYRHENDY PART OF OLD PIC	NO CHANGE
All Hallows Church Hall, School Road, Miskin, PONTYCLUN CF72 8PG		PJA	MISKIN PART OLD PIB	NO CHANGE
St Davids Church, Llantrisant Road, Groesfaen, Pontyclun, CF72 8NU	PONTYCLUN EAST	PIA	GROESFAEN	NO CHANGE
YGGG Llantrisant Community Room, Ffordd Cefn Yr Hendy, Miskin, Pontyclun, CF72 8TL		PIB	NEW PART OLD PIB	NO CHANGE
YGGG Llantrisant Community Room, Ffordd Cefn Yr Hendy, Miskin, Pontyclun, CF72 8TL		PIC	NEW AREA PART OF OLD PIC	NO CHANGE
Pont-Y-Clun Community Centre, Heol-Yr-Orsaf, Cowbridge Road, Pont-Y-Clun, CF72 9EE	PONTYCLUN WEST	PKA	MAESYFELIN / BRYNSADLER	NO CHANGE
Pont-Y-Clun Community Centre, Heol-Yr-Orsaf, Cowbridge Road, Pont-Y-Clun, CF72 9EE		PKB	HENSOL ROAD PART OLD PIB	NO CHANGE
Pont-Y-Clun Community Centre, Heol-Yr-Orsaf, Cowbridge Road, Pont-Y-Clun, CF72 9EE		OEC	TYLE-GARW	NO CHANGE
Community Centre Tylagarw, Tylagarw, Llanharry, Pontyclun, CF72 9EU	*PONTYPRIDD UK CONSTITUENCY	OEB	TYLE-GARW (A)	NO CHANGE

APPENDIX 2

Your full Name:	Organisation you are representing (if applicable):	Q2 Which Electoral Ward(s)/ Area(s) of Rhondda Cynon Taf are you contacting us about?	Q3 Do you consider your existing local polling station to be suitable	Please give reasons for your answer to Q3	Are there any other suitable premises/sites that could be used as a polling station	Please provide any alternative suggestion(s) and your reason(s) for the suggestion
CRM		Ynysybwll	Yes	Accessibility		
AJ		Blaenclydach	Yes	No real parking places just the roadside but the community centre is the best place to hold a polling station		
HW		Llantwit Fardre	Yes	I have a postal vote but sometimes forget to post it. It is convenient to drop it in to the Crown Hill polling station.		
LT		Trallwn		Postal voting.		
Anon		Penrhys	No	It is in a religious building that isn't my belief	Yes	Penrhys hotel
GB		Cwmparc	Yes	Parking outside the Church is good. It's central in the village.		
GT		Mountain Ash	Yes	Parking and Disabled Access		
TJ		PGB/C	Yes	parking might be limited but I walk Easily reached The latest communication regarding voting did not clearly identify that Photo ID will be required for some elections. The leaflet and documentation regarding the electoral roll had little information on how to obtain electoral id if voters were no digital access.		
NM	Llanharan OAP Association	Brynna, Llanharan	Yes			
NB		Mountain Ash	Yes			
RD		Rhigos	Yes	It's flat and no steps		
LC		Cynon - Foundry Town	No	It's not walking distance for many people due to the hill and parking isn't easy. There's another school much closer in Ty Fry which would suit residents of Heol-y-Mynydd, Ty Fry, Highland Place, top of Monk St etc much better.	Yes	The Catholic Primary School at the corner of Ty Fry/Heol-y-Mynydd
AL		Treorchy	Yes	Proximity and accessibility		
SB		Graig and Pontypridd West	Yes			
CB		Cynon YMCA	Yes	It's central and accessible		
GM		Penygraig	No	Too far to walk and no parking. If your disabled it's not good	No	
SJ		Tonyrefail East				
CH		Ynysybwll	Yes	I think it's a good place to have a polling station, but with it being in a school it must cause some disruption to the school itself on polling day? Perhaps using one of the Churches like Zion might be better? I know it's been used as a polling station for parish elections		
FC		Ton Pentre	Yes	Parking isn't easy but I don't drive there so I'm not affected by that. There's a disability toilet and step-free access.		
ST		Abercynon	Yes	Location and ease of access is ideal although i dont see the point in a public consultation with RCT as they ignore everything the constituents say		
MD		Treherbert ward, Blaenrhondda Bowls Pavilion polling station		It meets all the the criteria mentioned		
KM	Llantwit Fardre Community	Llantwit Fardre	No	Long distance for people to travel in the Meadow Farm and Woodlands areas	No	
DA		Aberdare East	Yes			
TB		Llantrisant	Yes	Easy to access - parking could be better		
CAE		Aberdare West and Llwydc	Yes	The polling station is easy to get to, either by walking, car or public transport. There is plenty of parking available and it is very accessible.		
JC		Llwydcoed	Yes	Llwydcoed polling station has plenty of parking, although it is a piece of rough ground so maybe those with disabilities may find this a little difficult to navigate.		
GS		Ystrad Rhondda	Yes	Easy convenient assessable venue for everyone		
GS		Y Beddau	Yes			
AT		As per the information on the list the closest station to me has closed awaiting sale. There are no nearby community buildings available.	No	Closed. Nowhere else suitable close by without having to travel.	No	
GO		cwmdare	Yes	not enough parking		
MV		Aberaman North	Yes	Quick walking distance		
HJ		Llanharry	Yes	Tyagarw Community Centre Adequate parking, disabled ramp, big enough		
JC		Trallwng	Yes	Coedpenmaen School, CF37 4LE. Within walking distance, no steps to climb.		
SW		Treforest	No	People find it difficult as it is a hilly position. If you have a car you have to park on the hill and walk to the church hall then you have to climb the hill back to the car there is not much parking there either can't we have st dyffrigs church hall on the flat With decent parking right outside it's difficult when you have walking disabilities The Hall is quite a walk to the voting area it's nice to go and vote much better than posting a vote	Yes	St Dyfrigs Church Hall
MB		RNA	Yes	Current polling station does not have adequate parking. Currently has postal vote for this reason but would prefer to go to the polling station if a suitable alternative was found.		
SD	Llwynypia Primary School	REC	No	I feel there is not enough usable space to accommodate the polling station and its equipment etc		

tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

17th JANUARY 2024

The Council's Draft Annual Self-Assessment 2022/23 incorporating the Council's Corporate Performance Report

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AUTHOR: Lesley Ann Lawson, Performance Manager

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for Council to consider the draft Annual Self-Assessment for 2022/23, taking into account the feedback from the Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting of [19 December 2023](#) and the Joint Consultative Committee on [20 December 2023](#).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Review the draft Self-Assessment at Appendix 1, and considers 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 \(Wales\) Act 2021 Part 6](#).
- 2.2 Notes the progress made in respect of the improvement themes identified in the 2021/22 Self-Assessment.
- 2.3 Considers the observations of the [Governance and Audit Committee on 19 December 2023](#) and the [Joint Consultative Committee on 20 December 2023](#).
- 2.4 Subject to consideration of recommendations 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, if deemed appropriate, approve the Annual Self-Assessment 2022/23 incorporating the Council's Corporate Performance Report, and its publication within four weeks of approval.

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, so that we continue to strive for excellence.
- 3.2 To evidence how the Council is meeting the 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 prepared an annual Corporate Performance Report in order to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. This Measure was disapplied in 2021. The 'freedom' from the Measure, 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 as far as possible.
- 4.2 The Council is now required to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and in respect of performance, meet the requirements of Part 6 Chapter 1 of the Act ['Performance and Governance'](#).
- 4.3 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'*.
- 4.4 This is the second year we have undertaken the statutory Self-Assessment which includes our Corporate Performance Report and which signposts to the new and existing information we have used to

keep our performance under review. Our first statutory Self-Assessment, which reflected work during 2021/22, provided our baseline as we emerged from the Covid pandemic and was considered by [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in December 2022. Our annual Self-Assessment for 2022/23 comprises information about:

- 1 **The progress we have made against the nine themes for improvement which were identified in the 2021/22 Self-Assessment.**
 - 2 **How we have delivered our Corporate Plan since its implementation in 2020 and as we prepare our new Corporate Plan from 2024.**
 - 3 **How we have delivered on our Corporate Plan for a single year in 2022/23** reporting progress and plans through the wide range of information already available to residents, communities and stakeholders about how we are delivering our Priorities i.e. our Well-being Objectives, through formal quarterly [Performance and Resources reports](#) to Cabinet and Council Committees and the Council's various Social Media channels.
 - 4 **Our assessment of our corporate functions.**
 - 5 **The Self Evaluation of our services.**
 - 6 **Our application of the Sustainable Development Principle** and information that shows how we are implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 4.5 All organisations, whatever their size, the product or service they offer, public or private sector, need to know themselves well. They should also 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.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 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.

- 4.8 The Council introduced its annual self-assessment processes in 2016 and has a good track record of open and honest self-assessment at corporate and service levels, and we continually seek to strengthen these arrangements. This is evidenced by the Audit Wales most recent [Assurance Risk Assessment Report](#), November 2022, reported to [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in December 2022, which among other things recognised *‘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.....’*
- 4.9 The self-assessments, at both service and corporate levels, encourage and enable self-awareness across the Council. They are also crucial to informing, supporting and challenging services and the corporate support in place, to continually improve and giving assurance that we are delivering our priorities.
- 4.10 These processes use different sources of evidence, give assurance, provide information about where we are doing well and how we can do better to improve outcomes for the customer/resident/service users etc.
- 4.11 Over the past few months, elected Members, together with officers from across the Council, have contributed to the corporate and service self-assessments and continued the robust challenge of performance in the many and varied reports to Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees.
- 4.12 There is no single formula or approach for self-assessment. The Council’s 2022/23 Self-Assessment builds on the ‘stock take’ of the service and corporate functions reported in the [2021/22 Self-Assessment](#) considered by Council in January 2023. The 2022/23 Self-Assessment focuses on our progress in responding to the Improvement Themes emerging from the ‘stock take’ in 2021/22 as well as consideration of the robustness of the management and monitoring arrangements in place that evidence that we are delivering our priorities and that 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 2022/23 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 At its meeting on 19 December 2023, [the Governance and Audit Committee](#) reviewed and challenged the draft Self-Assessment, and noted the significant volume of information taken account of as part of its compilation. The Committee did not propose any amendments to the 2022/23 Self-Assessment for full Council to consider. An extract from the draft minutes of the 19th December 2023 Governance and Audit Committee are included as Appendix 2.
- 5.3 Section 90 of the Act sets out duties to consult about the extent to which the Council is meeting the performance requirements set out in para 3.2 above. The statutory consultees include every trade union recognised by the Council.
- 5.4 To meet this requirement, the draft Self-Assessment was considered by the Joint Consultative Committee at its meeting on [20 December 2023](#) and did not propose any amendments to the 2022/23 Self-Assessment for full Council to consider. An extract from the draft minutes of the 20th December 2023 Joint Consultative Committee is included as Appendix 3.
- 5.5 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, who is seeking more detail, with access to the information they need.
- 5.6 The Council's Self-Assessment is integrated with our annual Corporate Performance Report in Appendix 1, and comprises six sections, as set out at paragraph 4.4 above, with an overview of each section set out below.
 - 5.6.1 **The progress we have made against the nine themes for improvement which were identified in the 2021/2022 Self-Assessment.**

The Council committed to tackling the nine clear themes which emerged as areas for improvement from the 2021/22 Self-Assessment. These areas for improvement are historically complex, connected and the 'wicked' issues that have been largely worsened by circumstances outside our control or influence and all appear in the Council's Strategic Risk Register. Our work to tackle these issues is monitored through the [Council's Strategic Risk Register](#) and embedded within the work plans either within the Council or with our partners. A brief update of the progress across the nine areas, can be found in Section 1 of the Self-Assessment.

In summary

1. Financial Planning and Resilience.
2. Workforce Planning.
3. Cost of Living Crisis.
4. Making RCT Resilient to the challenges of Climate Change.
5. Narrowing the Attainment gap for pupils living in poverty.
6. School Attendance.
7. Modernising and integrating health and social care services.
8. Continuing to regenerate the town centres and supporting local businesses.
9. Supporting those in housing need.

5.6.2 How we have delivered on our Corporate Plan since 2020 as we prepare our new Plan from 2024.

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](#)' which 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, i.e. People, Places and Prosperity;
- allocates resources to the priority areas; and
- puts in place plans to deliver the agreed priorities.

The Corporate Plan also serves as the Council's Well-being Plan for the purposes of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The Plan sets out how the Priorities contribute to the seven national Well-being Goals as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. 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.

Section 2 of the Self-Assessment contains our progress across the life of the Corporate Plan since 2020. This period coincided with unprecedented events; local events from Storms, Dennis, Ciara and Jorge and the local response to the global Covid 19 pandemic. Despite the significant challenges arising from the response and recovery to these events and latterly the support for people fleeing Ukraine and the Cost of Living Crisis, we have made good progress in delivering what we set out to achieve and have also invested over £450M to deliver improvements across our three priorities areas.

5.6.3 **How we have delivered the priorities of our Corporate Plan in 2022/23**

We manage the delivery of our Corporate Plan and its priorities through annual Priority Plans for each of the three Priorities: People, Places and Prosperity. Our Priority Plans are reported to Cabinet and relevant Scrutiny Committees and are available on the Council's Website. 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 for each of our priorities demonstrating the progress made and where we need to improve.

5.6.4 **Assessment of our corporate functions**

To provide a clearer focus for elected Members' consideration of Corporate functions, Section 4 of the Self-Assessment contains an update of those corporate/cross cutting areas of work that also comprise the 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. i.e.

1. Corporate planning
2. Financial planning
3. Performance Management
4. Risk management
5. Workforce planning
6. Assets
7. Procurement

Section 4 also contains hyperlinks to the summaries of the complete set of cross cutting areas of work. This year, we considered fourteen corporate/cross cutting areas which support the delivery of services and our Priorities. Where possible we 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. Corporate Safeguarding NEW

Improvement Actions arising from the assessment of these corporate areas are incorporated within the Delivery Plans of individual services or in discrete action plans.

5.6.5 The Self Evaluation (SSE) of our services

Service Self Evaluations (SSE) were completed by twenty-five areas of service in November 2022. In completing the SSEs, Service Managers sought to answer three questions:

- a) how are they performing?
- b) how do they know? and
- c) what can they do to improve?

The SSEs also continued to include the extent to which services implement key corporate and cross cutting areas work and elements of the Sustainable Development principle i.e. thinking about the long-term impact of decisions, engaging and working better with people, communities and partners and preventing problems from happening or getting worse.

The completed SSEs were reviewed by the respective Cabinet Member, signed off by the 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 2023/24;
- Set of performance measures and targets through which elected Members and/or officers can assess the performance of the service; and
- Set of strengths and key themes which further increase our levels of organisational self awareness and understanding.

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 Self-Assessment.

The key actions emerging from the SSEs informed Service Delivery Plans in 2023/24. 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, as set out in 5.6.3 above.

5.6.6 Well-being of Future Generations - Sustainable Development principle

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 its work would contribute to the seven national Well-being Goals. Section 5.6.2 above refers.

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.

Early feedback from Regulators in respect of our approach to implementing the Act was generally positive. With a recent strengthening of the national approach by Audit Wales to test how all Public Bodies are applying the Sustainable Development principle in all

its reviews, inevitably gaps in approaches, including the support provided by the Commissioner, were highlighted.

Our Assessment of progress in respect of the seven core activities within the Well-being of Future Generations Act has been set out in the Assessment of Corporate functions, see 5.6.4 above. This Assessment provides an appraisal of progress and plans to continue to strengthen our approach particularly in light of the new Well-being Commissioner's Strategy, '[Cymru Can](#)', containing five mission areas, which include increasing advice and assistance for public bodies.

Like all public bodies, we know we have more to do to embed the requirements of the Act and have well developed and constructive relationships with the Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner's support team. We welcome the increased advice and assistance described in 'Cymru Can'.

6. HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THINGS FURTHER?

- 6.1 The nine themes identified in 2021/22 remain relevant. In addition, we need to continue to strengthen our arrangements for service user engagement and participation, particularly the evaluation of outcomes. We also need to further strengthen and articulate our organisational culture and values on equality and diversity and, in doing so, support our on-going arrangements in setting out clear expectations for staff and services.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC 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. 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 in 2024.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no Welsh language implications aligned to this report. However, Welsh Language is integral to both the service and corporate sections contained in the Self-Assessment.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The report aims to ensure that the Council complies with its legal duties of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

12. LINKS TO 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 Rhondda Cynon Taf, and the seven 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 within all services across 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 limited by the lack of robust national data. Within 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
COUNCIL
17th JANUARY 2024
THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL SELF ASSESSMENT 2022/23
INCORPORATING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PERFORMANCE
REPORT
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Author: Lesley Lawson, Performance Manager

Background Papers

Governance and Audit Committee [19 December 2023](#)
Joint Consultative Committee [20 December 2023](#).

Officer to contact: Lesley Lawson, Performance Manager

tudalen wag



Annual Self-Assessment and annual Corporate Performance Report 2022/23

Introduction

This is the second of our new style annual Corporate Performance Report which also provides a summary of our 2022/23 Self-Assessment, and acts as a signpost to the new and existing information we have used to keep our performance under review.

2022/23 is the first year since 2019/20 when our plans did not need to include direct response to the Covid 19 pandemic, albeit our work to tackle its legacies will remain for years to come. This year, we have the benefit of lessons learned from our [first Assessment](#) considered by Governance and Audit Committee [in December 2022](#) and by Council in [January 2023](#). We have also seen and considered the shared knowledge emerging from other Welsh Councils and feedback from Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and the Council's Independent Regulators, Audit Wales. As a result of this developing context and additional information, among other things you will see more of a focus on the impact of our work and the Well-being of Future Generations Act in particular. You will also see a new [Safeguarding Section](#) within the assessment of our Corporate Functions and an update of the progress in the nine key themes we identified from our first Assessment.

However, one of the principles that remains in place within this Assessment is to make best use of the plethora of information already widely available in Council reports, policies, plans and strategies to reduce the reporting burdens as far as possible, so that the Assessment meets the needs of the Council and the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 including to report on performance and the extent to which the Council:

1. is exercising its functions effectively;
2. is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and
3. its governance is effective for securing the above.

If you have any comments or views about our Corporate Performance Report and the Self-Assessment it contains, or would like more information, please contact Lesley Lawson Performance Manager.

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 keep our performance under review is contained within the six areas described within this Self-Assessment i.e.

1. responding to the nine Improvement Themes emerging from the 2021/22 Assessment.
2. delivering the priorities across the life of our Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' since it was launched in 2020, which coincided with the start of an unprecedented global pandemic, when we continued to deliver our priorities, providing a solid foundation to build and accelerate progress following recovery.
3. our progress in delivering our priorities during 2022/23, using the wide range of information already available to residents, communities and our stakeholders through our formal quarterly Performance and Resources reports to Cabinet and Council Committees and the Council's various Social Media channels.
4. an assessment of corporate functions, including how we are meeting the Socioeconomic Duty.
5. the Self Evaluation of our twenty-five service areas.
6. our application of the Sustainable Development Principle and information that shows how we are implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The information considered within the six areas that comprise our annual 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, considered and 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 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 to 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, Governance and Audit Committees and Council. Our approach to responding to Regulators' reports is open and transparent and reports considered by Governance and Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committees can be found [here](#).

We continue to take a pragmatic approach to our Self-Assessment, whilst meeting the reporting requirements of the [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#) and at the same time take the opportunity to further strengthen how we meet existing reporting requirements to reduce reporting burdens and make best use of existing reporting streams and focus on improving services for the benefit our residents, communities and businesses.

Continued improvement is driven by strong and focused leadership from the Leader and Cabinet. We are currently engaging people and communities as we prepare our new Corporate Plan, that will set out our plans and ambitions beyond 2024, at the same time as Local Government is facing huge financial challenges.

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 November 2023. Of the staff that responded,

- 65% (*down from 75%*) agreed or strongly agreed that RCT is a strong Council that leads the way in many services.
- 27% (*up from 19%*) neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 7% (*up from 5%*) in total, either, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Whilst we are not complacent, these findings continue to provide some assurance that staff see strong leadership across its Managers and Members. This will be further tested as the Council tackles the financial challenges ahead and we will continue to develop and deliver this strong and visible leadership.

Themes for Improvement emerging from our 2021/22 Self-Assessment

Since 2016, the Council’s self-assessment arrangements have provided a solid foundation for identifying our strengths and areas for improvement across services and more widely from a corporate perspective. In 2021/22, nine clear themes were identified as those that the Council must tackle and emerged from the different elements of the Self-Assessment. All of these themes are identified as Strategic Risks within the [Strategic Risk Register](#), with controls and actions monitored by Cabinet. They are also included in our work plans within the Council and with our partners, where appropriate. These themes are historically complex, connected and the ‘wicked’ issues that have been largely worsened by circumstances outside our control or influence.

1. **Financial Planning and Resilience.**
2. **Workforce Planning.**
3. **Cost of Living Crisis.**
4. **Making RCT Resilient to the challenges of Climate Change.**
5. **Narrowing the Attainment gap for pupils living in poverty.**
6. **School Attendance.**
7. **Modernising and integrating health and social care services and transforming the Council’s residential services for children.**
8. **Continuing to regenerate the town centres and supporting local businesses.**
9. **Supporting those in housing need.**

See below a summary of progress against each theme.

Theme for Improvement	Update of Progress
<p>Financial Planning and Resilience</p> <p>managing our way through the current and future significant financial challenges, that include the on-going impacts from the pandemic and cost of living crisis. This will require the Council and its partners to prioritise services and make difficult decisions in respect of service delivery</p>	<p>We continue to operate within a challenging and changing environment, maintaining the focus on frontline service delivery in line with Corporate Priorities to help support the needs of residents and businesses.</p> <p>An evaluation of our progress is contained in the Financial Planning, Performance and Risk Management section of our assessment of corporate functions (See Section 4).</p> <p>The Council’s financial planning and management arrangements have consistently enabled: the setting of balanced budgets; services being delivered in line with the overall level of available resources; accurate forecasts of expenditure and income levels over the medium term to inform future service planning; and on-going significant investment in Corporate Plan priority areas.</p> <p>These arrangements have been key in supporting the Council’s on-going financial stability and resilience during an unprecedented period of rising demand for services and inflationary increases, both of which have resulted in significant cost pressures well above core funding levels. This position is forecasted to continue over the medium term.</p> <p>The following outcomes and results demonstrate the robustness and effectiveness of the arrangements in place:</p>

Theme for Improvement	Update of Progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to manage significant in-year cost pressures, over and above budgeted levels and primarily driven by UK wide economic conditions as the country recovers from the pandemic period and the on-going impacts from the cost of living crisis. For the 2022/23 financial year the Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managed in-year pressures of £21M via organisation-wide budget reduction measures and utilisation of earmarked reserves, with a total overspend at year-end of £0.052M (a 0.01% variance compared to a total Revenue Budget of £567M); and ○ General Reserve balances of £10.2M at 31st March 2023, this being in line with the minimum level required of £10M, as determined by the Council’s Section 151 Officer. • Unqualified audit opinion on the Council’s 2022/23 Statement of Accounts (i.e. clean bill of health). • Medium term financial planning that forecasted well in advance of the 2023/24 financial year the scale of the budget gap facing the Council i.e. £38M, the biggest budget gap it has ever faced. The arrangements provided the focus for a Council wide programme of work, over and above normal budget planning and management arrangements, to propose and deliver a range of budget reduction measures, some of which required consideration/approval by Cabinet following a period of public consultation. Importantly, the robustness of the approach enabled the majority of savings to be delivered without significantly impacting on frontline services. • Significant and sustained investment in Council assets and infrastructure, via the Capital Programme: £135M for 2022/23 and the 6th consecutive year that capital programme investment has been in excess of £100M per year, making visible improvements across the County Borough. <p>In September 2023, the Council refreshed and published an updated Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2023/24 through to 2026/27. The update forecasts a budget gap of £35M for 2024/25, rising to £85M through to 2026/27; this position has required the Council to once again embark on detailed reviews across all service areas, over and above normal arrangements, to identify budget reduction measures to close the gap, with the aim to propose budget savings that do not have a significant impact on the delivery of frontline services and ensure the Council continues to meet its statutory responsibilities. This work is currently on-going as part of preparations for 2024/25 budget setting, and budget reduction proposals and position statement of progress updates have been reported to Cabinet on 23rd October 2023 and 20th November 2023, with agreement provided for these to progress to the next stage where required, for example, proceed to public consultation.</p> <p><u>See also Strategic Risk 1</u></p>
Workforce Planning	Workforce planning is recognised as a high priority across all service areas. Community and Childrens services had a staff turnover of 15.94% in 2022/23

Theme for Improvement	Update of Progress
<p>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</p>	<p>compared to 12.70% in 2021/22. Whilst not all this turnover was directly attributable to social care, there is recognition of the challenges these services face particularly recruitment and retention. The services are responding positively. Childrens’ Services, with a new bespoke Childrens Services Workforce Plan and similar arrangements being developed in Adults Services.</p> <p>More widely, in January 2023, Cabinet approved the new Human Resources Strategy 2023-28 and the Council Workforce Plan 2023-28. The new Workforce Plan also addressed the findings and recommendation arising from the Audit Wales Springing Forward review of Council Workforce reported to Governance and Audit Committee in September 2022.</p> <p>An evaluation of our progress is contained in the Human Resources/Workforce Planning section of our assessment of corporate functions (See Section 4).</p> <p>See also Strategic Risk 18</p>
<p>Cost of Living Crisis</p> <p>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</p>	<p>The Council’s strong commitment and steps to tackle Poverty are woven throughout the current Corporate Plan – Making a Difference. This was referenced in the report of findings emerging from the Estyn Inspection, in March 2023 and which were most recently considered by the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee on 20 June 2023.</p> <p>We continue to develop our approach to supporting people and families living in poverty. A wide range of services and financial support have been provided to people and families in need. Whilst not exhaustive, the list below provides an overview of the ways in which the Council is supporting residents, both directly and through signposting and information to partner and community organisations. Further detail for which can be found in the Quarter 4 Performance Report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to information and advice through ‘Cost of Living’ web presence. 2. Support with Food Poverty: contained with a Food Resilience Report to Cabinet in June 2022 3. Support with Fuel Poverty: Winter Welcome Centres 4. Support for families and children through Resilient Families; Welsh Government free Child Care; Universal Free School Meals; Cost of Living Support and Period Dignity in Communities Grant <p>However, we recognise that residents who are most in need of our support may not be best placed to access information on the different forms of support available and we need to do more to ensure a ‘joined up’ approach. The Council has used Auditor General’s national report ‘Time for Change - Poverty in Wales’ published in November 2022, to help us review and challenge our approach. Our response to the national report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in September 2023 and sets out our local approach and planned areas for improvement. This includes strengthening</p>

Theme for Improvement	Update of Progress
	<p>our strategic approaches, which will be progressed in line with the development of the new Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The response also sets out our approach to the consideration of a Child Poverty Strategy following a Notice of Motion from Council in March 2023.</p> <p>See also Strategic Risk 13</p>
<p>Making RCT Resilient to the challenges of Climate Change</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022 – 2025 was agreed by Cabinet in June 2022 and mirrors the Priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan as we seek to embed our response to climate change into all services.</p> <p>In March 2023, the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee also approved a Decarbonisation Strategy and action plan that provides a clear pathway to enable RCT to become a carbon neutral Council.</p> <p>Progress delivering our strategy and working towards our targets to be a carbon neutral Council and County Borough is monitored through the Council's Quarterly Performance Reports to Cabinet, updates to the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee and project specific reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>An update of our progress in 2022/23 can be found in Section 7 of the Q4 Performance report. Detailed plans to continue delivery in 2023/24 are in place.</p> <p>See also Strategic Risk 24</p> <p>Further, the recommendations emerging from the Council's response to extreme weather events agreed in December 2020 have now been completed and/or built into ongoing service delivery and priority planning as appropriate. The 2022/23 progress update can be found in the Section 6 of the Q4 Performance Report to Cabinet. The detailed 2022/23 update is also available here.</p> <p>See also Strategic Risk 26</p>
<p>Narrowing the Attainment gap for pupils living in poverty</p> <p>Improving pupils' achievement and narrowing the attainment gap, which</p>	<p>Equity in Education is central to the Education Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025, which sets out the Vision for Education in RCT.</p> <p>We continue to work with Central South Consortium to review the progress of all schools, providing support and challenge. We also recognise that the necessary conditions need to be in place to enable learning and provide support for pupil's participation and engagement in school and holistic support for families, see cost of living crisis above. Details of our progress are set out in the Prosperity Priority of the Q4 Performance Report.</p>

Theme for Improvement	Update of Progress
<p>has widened during the course of the pandemic</p>	<p>The Covid 19 pandemic and changes to national data have made it difficult to provide a full evaluation of pupil outcomes at a local authority level. For 2021/22 there are no publicly available performance measures at school, local authority or regional consortia levels that can be included in this report. This has been the case for the previous two years. However, school level data forms a key focus of discussions with school leaders to enable appropriate support and challenge.</p> <p>The January 2023 Estyn Inspection of Education Services report stated ‘that the local authority ‘places high priority on supporting it’s most vulnerable children and young people to improve their outcomes, wellbeing and life chances and provides helpful support for schools to improve these pupils’ attendance and behaviour’. It also stated ‘school organisation proposals take good account of the needs of the school’s community and promote equity of provision for pupils’. However, the report also noted attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has remained low and recommended continued focus to improve attendance, particularly for vulnerable pupils (see below).</p> <p>See also Strategic Risk 28</p>
<p>School Attendance</p> <p>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</p>	<p>School attendance continues to be a strong area of focus in the Prosperity Priority of the Council’s Corporate Plan as part of the commitment to ensure we have good schools so all children can access a great Education, and a detailed update of progress can be viewed in our Q4 Performance report</p> <p>Attendance data showed improvements in Autumn term 2022/23 and more detailed analysis is provided in the report to Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee in March 2023.</p> <p>Whilst the January 2023 Estyn Inspection of Education Services recommended working closely with schools, Pupil Referral Units and the regional Consortium to build on the Council’s work to improve school attendance and reduce exclusions, the report also recognised the range of useful approaches already in place for enhancing wellbeing and supporting vulnerable pupils.</p> <p>See also Strategic Risk 28</p>
<p>Modernising and integrating health and social care services and transforming the Council’s residential services for children.</p> <p>To ensure that vulnerable people who require care receive it</p>	<p>Modernising and integrating health and social care services is a strong area of focus within the People Priority of the Council’s Corporate Plan. A detailed update of progress can be viewed in our Q4 Performance report and in the Council’s Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23 considered by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in September 2023.</p> <p>We are progressing the Council’s review on the future shape of residential care for older people, to ensure we create the right model of service delivery to respond to increasing demand and changing needs in the long term. In February 2023, Cabinet agreed proposals to modernise local residential care</p>

Theme for Improvement	Update of Progress
<p>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</p>	<p>services including a major £60 million capital investment in four state-of-the-art care accommodation in Treorchy, Ferndale, Mountain Ash and Church Village, as well as retaining five Council care homes.</p> <p>Transforming the Council’s residential services for children is also a priority and a Residential Children’s Services Strategy and action plan for the next 5 years was agreed by Cabinet in February 2023. The central purpose of the strategy is 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. This aligns with the Welsh Government’s intention to legislate to remove profit from care.</p> <p>See also Strategic Risk 2</p>
<p>Continuing to regenerate the town centres and supporting local businesses.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Investing in our town centres, bringing jobs and homes into our town centres to create vibrant, thriving places people wish to live, work and socialise is a commitment within the Prosperity Priority of the Council’s Corporate Plan, and a detailed update of progress can be viewed in our Q4 Performance report.</p> <p>We have made significant investment across our town centres, working collaboratively with public and private sector partners to deliver a range of projects to regenerate key sites. This work is, and will be, guided by our strategies for individual town centre which have been developed with involvement from local people and businesses. This work also closely links to the preparation of the revised Local Development Plan which is currently underway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancy rates for retail premises remain low in Treorchy (1.67%) and Pontypridd (10.71%). • Vacancy rates are currently higher in Porth (18.85%) and Aberdare (15.91%) although it is envisaged that delivery of their town centre strategies will have a positive impact over time. • The latest available data (2021), shows higher business birth rates in Rhondda Cynon Taf (18.2) compared to Wales (13.2) and the UK as a whole (12.4), demonstrating the favourable conditions for business development, although business death rates are also marginally higher than national averages (12.0 in RCT, 11.5 in Wales, 11.1 UK). <p>See also Strategic Risk 11</p>

Theme for Improvement	Update of Progress
<p>Supporting those in housing need</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Supporting those in housing need is a strong area of focus in the Prosperity Priority of the Council's Corporate Plan, as part of the commitment to '<i>Increase the number of quality homes available and affordable to provide greater housing choice for residents</i>' and a detailed update of progress can be viewed in our Q4 Performance Report.</p> <p>The Local Housing Market Assessment 2022 was approved by Cabinet in October 2022 and findings have informed the new Local Housing Strategy which will be considered for approval in 2024 to align with the Council's new Corporate Plan.</p> <p>However, due to wider economic and housing market conditions, homeless prevention options currently remain restricted, and the number of households threatened with homelessness has nearly doubled since 2021/22. This means that although we have successfully prevented homelessness for 73% more households than last year, there was a decrease in the percentage of homelessness presentations successfully prevented from becoming homeless to 62% from 69% in 2021/22.</p> <p>See also Strategic Risk 27</p>

Progress on our Corporate Plan 2020-24

The Council launched its second Corporate Plan, '[Making a Difference](#)' in March 2020. 'Making a Difference' built on the solid foundation of the first Corporate Plan, '[The Way Ahead](#)'. 'Making A Difference' set out how we would achieve our Vision for Rhondda Cynon Taf.....

To be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous.

'Making A Difference' set out three priorities for the Council; PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY, our ambitious targets for improvement and our approach to delivering them. Our plan set out how we would do this by

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

The three priorities also serve as our Well-being Objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Following the launch of 'Making A Difference', the Council was faced with responding to and recovering from a global pandemic. Despite the challenges faced during and since that time, the decisions that the Council has made, the resources that have been put in place, the risks that have been managed and the training and development opportunities that have been provided to staff have all been directed to making a difference to the lives of the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf and invested over £450M across the priority areas.

The Council's priorities are well embedded into other Council's strategies and planning arrangements, including [Work Force](#) and [Financial planning](#) and [Risk Management](#) Strategy, with each of the priorities contributing to achieving the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of RCT, and of Wales.

Our progress in what we set out to achieve in our priorities since the implementation of the plan has been set out in regular reports for Councillors in Cabinet, Sub Committees and Scrutiny Committees to challenge and check, and are publicly available for residents to see for themselves. Our progress over the 2022/23 financial year is also set out in this Assessment at [Section 3](#). Despite the unprecedented challenges experienced by us all since we introduced in our Plan, looking back at our progress since 2020 we are able to evidence that we have delivered most of what we set out to achieve.

PEOPLE

We planned to support our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life and we

- have agreed a long term modernisation programme for our residential homes that focuses on preventative services, well-being and future needs and increases choice for people requiring accommodation with care and offers viable alternatives for those able to remain independent within their communities.
- have residents settled into their new homes in our third new extra care facility in Cwrt yr Orsaf, Pontypridd and construction of a fourth facility in Porth has started.

- have also opened new supported living accommodation schemes in Mountain Ash and Llanhari to provide a safe, secure and high-quality environment for adults with learning disabilities and autism to live, and there are more adults choosing their own care providers and
- are supporting the development of small new enterprises via our Community Catalyst pilot to increase the number and range of homecare and support options for local people.

We planned to encourage all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing and despite the impact of Covid 19 and the closure of our leisure centres for prolonged periods, confidence has recovered, and we

- are seeing membership and visitor numbers to our leisure centres exceed pre-pandemic levels.
- invested in a new gym, Llys Cadwyn, in Pontypridd as well as refurbishing Hawthorn swimming pool, improving the fitness suite in Hawthorn Leisure Centre and reopening Lido Ponty following the damage caused by Storm Dennis in February 2020.
- now have fourteen 3G facilities across the County Borough, achieving our aim for residents to have access to such a facility within a 3-mile radius of wherever they live.
- supported residents during the cost of living crisis by providing advice and assistance, access to grants including the Local Cost of Living Support Discretionary scheme and Winter Welcome Centres.

We planned to integrate health and social care and provide support for those with mental health problems and complex needs and we

- have continued to work closely with Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB to introduce a new hospital discharge approach since January 2023 called 'Discharge to Recover then Assess'. The new approach aims to improve the flow of patients through hospitals, supporting people to be discharged from hospital as soon as they are well enough and continuing their care, recovery, and assessment for any long term needs in either their own home or a community setting (the right place)
- are working with our partners in Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB to explore options to integrate health and social care more widely including a joint Community Mental Health Service.

Whilst we have not made the progress that we would have hoped for, we have developed an Integrated Community Services model which, if implemented, will bring together health and social care with the aim to meet current and future long term need and demand pressures.

We planned to improve services for children and young people and ensure the needs of children are considered in everything we do and we

- are delivering our [Children Looked After Prevention Strategy](#) agreed in 2022.
- have seen a long term trend of reduced numbers of children on the Child Protection Register since 2019 and fewer children taken into the care of the Council.

For those children that cannot remain with their families we have:

- Put in place a [Residential Children's Services Strategy](#) so that we can provide care closer to home.
- are changing the way that we deliver early years services, focusing on need rather than geographical location. This has seen greater numbers of children identified as requiring extra support.

PLACES

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

- implemented the Council's [Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT' \(2022-2025\)](#) starting to embed Climate actions into our Corporate Planning arrangements
- implemented an [Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-2030](#) and action plan, reporting activity updates on our [EV Charging Webpage](#).
- implemented our Council specific [Decarbonisation Strategy](#) and action plan that will evidence our journey to being Carbon neutral by 2030 and met the new Welsh Government carbon reporting requirements adding to the trend data of our carbon emissions for the past three consecutive years
- implemented the [ULEV Fleet Transition Plan](#) and continue to trial alternative electric vehicles.
- put in place a [Commissioning, Socially Responsible Procurement and Contract Management Strategy](#) which includes Council policies to [reduce the use of single use plastic](#) items and projects to support our suppliers to evidence and reduce their carbon emissions.
- engaged with residents to understand the reasons why some people don't recycle food waste, and have involved residents in decisions to make changes to our black bag collections to 3-weekly which will be implemented in 2023/24 and have been included in a revised [Waste Management Strategy](#).
- continued to undertake enforcement action relating to dog fouling and fly-tipping offences and prosecuted those committing the offences supported by a team of [Community Wardens](#).
- relocated '[The Shed' Llantrisant](#) to a more accessible location and opened a [new 'Shed'](#) reuse shop in Aberdare.
- implemented a revised '[Green Waste' collection service](#) using reusable green waste sacks.

We planned to keep the County Borough moving, including improvements to roads and pavements and public transport, whilst also improving air quality and we have:

- Progressed and delivered major road schemes including the [A4119 Coed Ely Dualling Scheme](#), major bridge works and repairs including [St Alban's Bridge](#) in Blaenrhondda and the [Ynysangharad Footbridge \(M&S Bridge\)](#) repair in Pontypridd as part of our highways investment programme.
- Progressed extensive flood mitigation repairs and schemes and made plans for the [19, Section 19 flood areas](#). An [update on the work undertaken](#) on flood alleviation and structure repairs was published on the anniversary of Storm Dennis in February 2022, and 19 Section 19 reports relating to main flood areas in RCT have been published on our [webpages](#).
- In March 2023, funded a trial [free bus travel](#) initiative throughout the County Borough to all RCT residents in support of carbon reduction and provide a boost to bus travel.
- Progressed active travel routes between Treorchy to Treherbert; through Cwmbach, as part of the Cynon Trail; improvements on the Trallwn section of the Taff Trail; and the Abercynon section of the Cynon Trail.

We planned to ensure the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and where residents feel safe and we have

- Established the RCT [Sustainable Food Places](#) - '[RCT Food](#)' partnership and arranged grant funded events and activities in the community to support sustainable food and growing.
- Continued our proactive work to ensure that people are protected against rogue traders and Scams. We have also used our enforcement powers to prosecute those offending e.g. [Operation CeCe](#).
- Engaged residents, reviewed and renewed the three-year Public Spaces Protection Order on intoxicating substances, which was agreed by [Cabinet in September 2021](#).
- Continued our harm reduction services and raising awareness of harm associated with substance misuse through our provider [Barod](#), and increasing our outreach service to support individuals requiring our help including homeless people.
- Progressed a new joint Oasis Centre and Domestic Abuse Service '[RCTDAS](#)' which will open in 2023/24, and increased our Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) support to focus on [Housing First](#) clients.

We planned to get the best out of our parks by looking after and investing in our greenspaces and have:

- Progressed our [Playground Investment Programme](#)
- Opened the [Gravity Family Bike Park](#) at Dare Valley Country Park.
- Progressed grant funding to improve [Ynysangharad War Memorial Park](#) and undertook repairs needed following Storm Dennis.
- Retained our Keep Wales Tidy [Green Flag Awards](#) at Dare Valley Country Park, Aberdare; Taff's Well Park; and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd.
- Developed a new [Biodiversity web page](#) to actively promote awareness of our wildflower grass management and initiatives, and engaged with residents on [biodiversity issues](#) e.g. [Let's Talk Wildflowers](#).
- Participated in the [Queen's Green Canopy Project](#) planting trees to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2020.
- Developed the [RCT Tree and Woodland Strategy](#), following [engagement](#) with residents that recognises the important carbon storing role that trees, vegetation and soils have in the 'carbon cycle'.
- Submitted our [Section 6 Biodiversity Duty – 3 Year Report to Welsh Government 2020-2022](#) fulfilling the statutory requirements of the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#).
- Progressed activity to support the 2024 National Eisteddfod for Wales, with the [2024 Officials](#) announced in December 22 with the official [launch](#) held in Treorchy in March 23.

PROSPERITY

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

- Set out ambitious plans to transform our town centres through the Mountain Ash Town Centre Framework, Porth Town Centre Strategy, Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan and the [development of an Aberdare Town Centre Strategy](#). Our plans have driven a range of property and site redevelopment projects including the award winning Llys Cadwyn development in Pontypridd, the redevelopment of Rhos (Guto) square, Oxford buildings and the former [Town hall in Mountain Ash](#) and the [Porth Transport Hub](#). Ongoing projects include redevelopment of [Pontypridd Southern Gateway](#) and supporting the [redevelopment of the 'Muni'](#).
- Completed the delivery of [free public access to wi-fi](#) to all seven Town Centres.
- Supported local businesses through the Covid 19 pandemic and beyond with a variety of grant support including Covid recovery grants, flood resilience grants, major projects investment fund, enterprise investment fund and town centre maintenance grants, providing a comprehensive package of support to help businesses survive, adapt and diversify.
- Continued to review grant support to ensure it remained fit for purpose, with a [new package of grants agreed in March 23](#) to support setting up and growing sustainable local businesses, regeneration of rundown and underused sites and carbon reduction and energy efficiency measures.
- We also completed active travel studies in our Town Centres which are progressing to the design and development of new active travel routes in Aberdare and Pontypridd.
- Improved the accessibility of Council tenders to smaller businesses by breaking down some of our larger contracts into smaller lots.

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

- worked collaboratively across the Cardiff City Region, leading the delivery of the £15M [Transforming Towns](#) grant to deliver major schemes in our town centres (see above) and delivered the ongoing [A4119 Coed Ely dualling scheme](#).
- Constructed 20 [modern business units in Robertstown](#).
- Implemented a new [Tourism strategy](#), developed Dare Valley and Ynysangharad War Memorial park as part of the [Valleys Regional park](#), supported the opening of 'Zip World' and Gravity Bike Park and are hosting the Eisteddfod in RCT in 2024.
- Progressed [housing viability gap funding](#) to remediate contaminated land across brownfield sites at Cwm Coking works, Aberdare hospital and Heol y Wenallt sites.
- Began developing a new [Local Development Plan for RCT](#), with significant work already undertaken including widespread engagement.

We planned to ensure we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education and we

- Developed and commenced delivery of our Education Strategic Plan for 2022-25 and agreed a new 10 Year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for 2022-32.
- Continued to deliver our ambitious Sustainable Communities for Learning programme and Capital Improvements across our schools, including:
 - Completion of new school building for Hirwaun primary school.
 - Completion of a 4 classroom extension and new outdoor play area at [Ffynnon Taf primary school](#), with heating provided through Taffs Well Thermal Spring.
 - Improved access to Welsh medium education through completion of new facilities and increasing capacity at YGG Aberdar and YG Rhydywaun.
 - Commenced projects in greater Pontypridd – the construction of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Awel Taf, a new Welsh Medium primary school in Rhydfelin, Ysgol Bro Taf, the new 3-16 school in Pontypridd and Ysgol Afon Wen, the new 3-16 school in Hawthorn.
 - Investment underway in [new buildings for three primary schools](#) in Pontyclun, Penygawsi and Llanilltud Faerdref through the Mutual Investment model
 - improved sports and sixth form facilities being delivered at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive
 - Obtaining planning approval and begun work on a new Welsh medium Primary school for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn.
 - [Secured Welsh government funding](#) for an exemplar Net Zero school at Glyncoch.
- Established an All Schools Review process, bringing together local authority and Central South Consortium staff to discuss strengths and areas for development for our schools and ensure the right support is in place.
- [Progressed the implementation](#) of the new [ALN legislation](#) to better support pupils with additional learning needs, with RCT schools positively rating their readiness to introduce the new Act.
- Introduced family engagement officers to our schools to support pupils and families to overcome barriers to learning and established [Step 4 provision](#) to better support pupils with significant Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
- [Piloted a virtual school model](#) to promote the educational outcomes of Children Looked After and ensure support is effectively co-ordinated.
- Commenced roll out of the Universal Free school meals offer and worked with the Child poverty action group on poverty proofing the school day, with Llwydcoed Primary school invited to share a [good practice case study](#) of their work.
- The Covid 19 pandemic had a significant impact on pupils' attendance and engagement, particularly for those living in poverty. We continue to focus on this area through delivery of our new [Attendance Strategy](#).
- Our strong support for our schools during the pandemic and positive support for attendance and wellbeing was recognised during the positive Local Authority [Estyn inspection](#) in January 2023.

We planned to increase the number of quality homes available and affordable to provide greater housing choice for residents and we

- Worked in partnership with social landlords to increase the supply of energy efficient, low carbon homes including working with Cynon Taf Community Housing group to gain planning consent for 15 low carbon social rented homes on the site of the former Porth Infants school.
- Supported residents to make their homes more energy efficient through administering grants for fitting insulation, efficient boilers and other energy saving measures.
- Completed the [Local Housing Market Assessment](#) to fully understand current and future housing needs in the area which will be used to shape our new local Housing Strategy, which will be produced in 2023/24.
- Reviewed the progress of the Empty Homes Strategy 2018-22, which reduced the number of empty homes in the area by over 600, and began delivery of our new [Empty Homes Strategy](#), which will continue to focus on bringing long term empty homes back into use.
- Put in place the [Rapid Rehousing Plan](#) for rehousing people who have experienced homelessness, where possible reducing or removing the need for temporary accommodation.
- Worked collaboratively with partners to deliver the [Social Lettings Agency](#), which increases housing options and provides affordable accommodation for tenants who may have difficulty renting through the private sector.

We planned to help people into work and better paid employment and we

- Established a 'Chromebook' loan scheme to enable people without their own devices to carry out online job searches and training and attend online interviews.
- Continued to recruit and train graduates and apprentices for roles across the Council, providing a wide range of careers opportunities and ensuring we have people with the right skills to deliver services in the future. To date over 220 young people have benefitted from these opportunities and the majority have found permanent job within the Council.
- Provided a range of support helping 1,793 people of all ages into work, including people with work limiting health conditions and disabilities.
- Supported the national 'Kickstart scheme', administering 313 six month paid work placements across a range of employers for young people at risk of long term unemployment. RCT also hosted 21 placements within the council, with 10 people securing ongoing employment with the Council and 5 at other organisation following their placements.
- Worked with partners to provide opportunities for young people with additional barriers to work, including providing Gateway to employment placements for young people with learning disabilities and establishing the [Care2Customer service](#) scheme in partnership with Treorchy Business Improvement District, to provide work experience for Care experienced young people and encourage them to consider work in the hospitality industry
- Supported pupils in our schools to engage with careers through working closely with our career leader network to develop the Gatsby benchmarks for good careers guidance in all 20 of our secondary/through schools, piloting the Inspire me series of inspirational talks, activities and work experience with people from the local community and supporting vulnerable learners without future plans in place through the 'Green light' project, with 97% of attendees securing employment or college placements.
- Supported a range of community learning opportunities to help people develop new skills and support their wellbeing.

We know there is still more to do especially as we continue to support our residents and communities. We need to recognise and continue to respond to the significant and wide ranging legacy created by Covid and

experienced by people of all ages and backgrounds across Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly those people already experiencing disadvantage before the unprecedented pandemic.

There is no single report that can provide a complete, timely and comprehensive picture of all the work undertaken across the Council that contributes to delivering our priorities. However, the information contained within the quarterly Performance reports provide a helpful overview from which the reader can seek further detailed information.

It is also impossible for any of our reports to show information about all the many different services we deliver to, or organise for, our residents, communities and businesses, but there is a wide range of information available about all our services on the [Council's website](#).

We are starting to prepare a new Corporate Plan that will take the Council beyond 2024. To do this we will build on what we have achieved so far to make sure every town and community in the County Borough is a great place to live, work and visit. We will be looking at how we can meet the challenges facing RCT both now and in the future, and talking to people and communities about what matters most to them.

Contributing to the seven national Well-being Goals.

Prosperous ✓	Resilient ✓	Healthier ✓	More Equal ✓	Cohesive Communities ✓	Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language ✓	Globally Responsible ✓
------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	------------------------	----------------------------------	--	----------------------------------

How we delivered our Priorities during 2022/23

The detailed plans to deliver our three priorities PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY are agreed by Councillors annually and subsequently monitored and scrutinised by Cabinet, various Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees as part of the quarterly Performance and Resources Reports. For context, the quarterly Performance reports to Cabinet, currently comprise:

- 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.
- A summary of key Actions arising from the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee.

**At its meeting June 2023, [Cabinet](#) agreed that building on the positive progress, the ongoing work programme across all areas of the Council to manage and mitigate flood risk in 2023/24 will be included within the action planning for the Council’s priorities. Further specific reports, as deemed appropriate, will continue to be reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees in accordance with the agreed work programmes.*

In respect of delivering our Corporate Plan and in particular the priorities it sets out, [the quarterly Performance reports](#) to Cabinet 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 Priority Action Plans. The 2022/23 end of year report was considered by [Cabinet on 17 July 2023](#).

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. The following sub sections summarises the progress described in the end of year report.

PEOPLE are independent, healthy and successful -General Statement of Progress

We made positive progress in supporting people to be independent, healthy and successful in our work as a Council and with public sector bodies, third sector and community partners. See below for a summary of our achievements and where we didn’t make as much progress as we planned.

We said we would open new Extra Care schemes for people that need additional support to remain living independently and among other things we have

- Progressed the building of Porth Extra Care and continued to progress our plans for three facilities in Mountain Ash, Treorchy and Ferndale.
- Opened a supported Living Scheme in Llanhari, progressed the construction of similar scheme in Treorchy in partnership with Cynon Taf Housing progressed our plans for two further schemes in Tonypany and Gelli.
- Agreed a £60 million investment to modernise local residential care services.

We said we would provide enablement services that help people regain or increase their independence and among other things we have

- Created additional residential care 'step up step down' beds in our care homes.
- Introduced the 'Discharge to Recover then Assess' model, continued to invest in our award winning Stay Well@Home Service and with new investment to increase the capacity of our Hospital Social Work Team, we have positively avoided in-patient admission or supported the safe discharge of, on average, 48 people per week.
- Increased capacity in Commission Care & Repair so we can complete minor adaptations and small/medium DFGs more quickly.

We said we would use technology to enhance independence and assist with care and among other things we have

- worked with partners to pilot '[Just checking](#)' and '[Just roaming](#)' projects across our Supported Living Service, explore the opportunities available for adults with learning disabilities and autism to live independently and safely within their supported living homes.

We said we would offer support to Carers and this year among other things we have

- worked with Carers to develop a specification for a new Carer's Sitting service.

We said we would provide support and equipment that allows people to stay more independent at home and among other things we have

- put in place new arrangements for how Direct Payments are managed.
- [launched](#) a Community Catalyst Project to support people and local partners to develop small enterprises and ventures that can provide real choice and increase the number and range of homecare and support options for local people.

We said we would commission a range of community based provision to enable people to remain actively engaged within their communities and among other things we have

- Worked with older people and people with disabilities through our [My Day, My Way](#) engagement project to consider a co-produced solution for day services that better meets their needs and supports them to achieve their goals.

We didn't make as much progress as we planned on our

- Adults Services Digital Strategy. However, we have continued to maximise use of technology in and develop digital projects to enhance people's independence and assist with care and support delivery, alongside work to develop an Adult Services Digital Strategy and work plan, which will be finalised next year.
- Plans to work with Domiciliary Care providers to review and redesign home care.
- Plans to develop proposals for redesign of day services for older people and people with disabilities following the [My Day, My Way](#) engagement above.

Our work within the **PEOPLE** priority is overseen by Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and, where appropriate the [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board](#), [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board](#) and [Cwm Taf Public Services Board](#) (from May 2023, Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB). Some of the services delivering this Priority have also been inspected by independent Auditors i.e. Audit Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales. You can find out more about their findings on our [website](#).

You can also find out more about our services in the [Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23](#)

Some ways our **PEOPLE** priority [contribute](#) to the 7 National Well-being Goals

PLACES where people are proud to live, work and play General Statement of Progress

We made positive progress in making changes to increase recycling, using enforcement powers to keep our streets clean, our residents safe and improving our roads and flood resilience. We have also used information from resident engagement including [Let's Talk RCT](#) to inform our decisions, and have provided [support information and financial packages](#) to help residents with the 'Cost of Living' crisis. We know that there is still more work to do and a summary of our achievements this year is shown below.

We said we would continue to promote good recycling practices and have:

- Promoted educational campaigns including competitions at [Easter](#) and [Christmas](#); encouraged increased recycling during [Jubilee celebrations](#);
- Opened a [new 'Shed'](#) reuse shop in Aberdare so that we now have a reuse shop in the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas;
- Reopened the [Education Centre at Bryn Pica](#); and
- Recycled 64.97% - 74,825 tonnes of waste.

We said we would increase our allotment provision to support residents in 'Growing their Own' and have made available accessible allotment plots in [Abercynon](#). We have also improved the availability of information for residents about Allotments through a new [Allotment Webpage](#).

We engaged with residents about a proposed revised waste collection service through [Let's Talk Recycling and Three-Weekly Collections](#), using this information to inform changes to the waste collection service. Feedback was considered by Cabinet and as part of the revised [Waste Management Strategy](#).

We said we would tackle dog fouling, fly-tipping and littering occurrences and have used our enforcement powers to prosecute people committing these day to day offences. We have also strengthened enforcement resources to help combat environmental crime in RCT. 92.87% (3,087) of reported fly-tips were removed within 5 working days.

We said we would progress our work to tackle Climate Change and our work includes:

- Implementing the Council's Tackling Climate Change Strategy – '[Think Climate RCT](#)'.
- Sustainable Transport - Looking at ways to transition our vehicle fleet to ULEV and implementing a [Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles \(ULEV\) Transition Plan](#).
- Implementing our [Electric Vehicle Charging Implementation Plan](#), to support our [EV Charging Strategy](#) for [EV charging facilities](#) across the County Borough as a Council and in partnership with the Cardiff Capital Regional Transport Authority.
- Taking steps to create renewable energy at the [Coed Ely Solar Farm](#) and at [Dare Valley Country Park](#) and [Treforest Weir](#) through [hydroelectric generation](#).
- Focussing on sustainable procurement through our new Commissioning [Socially Responsible Procurement and Contract Management Strategy](#), implementing policies that reduce our use of single use plastic items and working with our suppliers to evidence and reduce their carbon emissions.
- Continuing to widen, **involve** and engage residents, businesses and stakeholders on climate and environmental matters through a [Climate Change Engagement Plan](#), and
- Implementing the [Corporate Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan](#) that aims to support the delivery of our carbon reduction targets by 2030.

We said we would continue to improve the condition of our roads and pavements and investing in our bridges, retaining walls and sustainable flood drainage systems and among other things we

- Completed bridge repairs at [Nant Cwm Parc, Treorchy](#), Commercial Street Footbridge, Aberdare, the [Brook Street Footbridge](#) Ystrad and the [Gelli Isaf Tramroad Bridge, Trecynon](#). We have also progressed

[Berw Road \(White\) Bridge](#), Pontypridd, the [Castle Inn Footbridge](#), Treforest and the [Iron Tram Bridge](#) near Robertstown.

- Commenced work on the [A4119 Coed Ely Dualling Scheme](#).
- Completed/progressed repairs, resurfacing and drainage works on 17 adopted roads (15 completed, 2 ongoing) across RCT.

We said we would put in place Flood Alleviation measures to mitigate flood risk and this has included:

- Undertaking improvement work at [Glenboi Pumping Station](#), Mountain Ash, and completing Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS) at [Treorchy](#), [Abercwmboi](#), [Ynysir](#), Maes y Ffynon /Cardiff Rd, Aberdare, [Rhydyfelin](#), [Pentre](#), [Treherbert](#) and Cwmaman, and also undertaken embankment repairs at [Glyn-coch](#).
- Completing the actions in response to the recommendations contained in the review of the [Council's response to Storm Dennis](#), and embedded the continuing work within the new Flood Risk Management arrangements.
- Publishing all 19 [Section 19 Flood Investigation Reports](#) following the flood events in RCT, as required by the [Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#).
- Reviewing the Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan, as considered by [Cabinet in November 22](#), an integral part of which is [engaging with residents](#).

We said we would work with Welsh Government and the Regional Transport Authority to continue to improve access to public transport, and among other things we

- Implemented an SPF funded [free bus travel](#) trial, to all RCT residents throughout the County Borough to support carbon reduction and provide a boost to bus travel. An average increase in passenger of 35% on the previous month numbers was recorded during March 2023.
- Progressed active travel routes between Treorchy to Treherbert; through Cwmbach, as part of the Cynon Trail; and improvements on the Trallwn section of the Taff Trail; and the Abercynon section of the Cynon Trail.
- Continued work on the Maes Y Bryn Safe Routes in Communities scheme to provide a safer pedestrian environment, encouraging more parents and pupils to walk to and from school, and reduce vehicle emissions in the area. We also completed pedestrian crossings in [Llantwit Fadre](#) and [Groesfaen](#).

We said we would increase community involvement in the development of our services and among other things we

- Provided pathways of support to residents to manage the impacts of the 'Cost of Living' crisis through a dedicated [webpage](#) with relevant information.
- Supported 'Winter Welcome Centres' across RCT to support people in food poverty.
- Established an RCT Community Grant Scheme to deliver £4.3M [SPF funding](#) for community projects. The scheme focused on supporting communities to reduce the cost of living, including energy efficiency; combat fuel poverty and to reduce carbon emissions.
- Continued to develop RCT as a Sustainable Food Place – [RCT Food](#).

We said we would work with South Wales Police and the CSP to prevent and deter ASB and substance misuse and among other things we

- Appointed [Community Wardens](#) to provide a high-profile reassuring presence in our town centres, and used our enforcement powers to issue an [Anti-Social Behaviour Civil Injunction \(ASBI\)](#) to reinforce messages on zero tolerance and the consequences that could result from reoccurring ASB offences.
- Introduced [Safe Spaces](#) for adults in Pontypridd, Aberdare and Treorchy Libraries for people who are feeling lost, scared or in need of help whilst out in the community.
- Improved our substance misuse service, with increased resource, improved booking arrangements and additional training courses.

- Progressed a new joint Oasis Centre and Domestic Abuse Service '[RCTDAS](#)' which will open in 2023/24.

We said we would deliver a multi-agency response to all forms of violence and the criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults and among other things we

- Piloted a 'Young Friends' against scams (YFAS) awareness raising event with 33 children aged 8-12 years at Ysgol Nantgwyn which was [positively received](#).
- Continued to protect our residents from illegal trading and prosecuted rogue traders. This includes prosecuting cases relating to the sale of [illegal tobacco products](#), and counterfeit goods at [Merthyr Tydfil](#) and [Mountain Ash](#); issuing a [Store Closure Order](#) for the sale of counterfeit tobacco products and disposable vapes to children in Aberdare and the revocation of a [taxi licence](#) following the driver's misconduct.

We said we would invest in our parks and infrastructure and among other things we

- Progressed our [Playground Investment Programme](#) with improvements to 13 play grounds during 2022/23.
- Installed new biodiversity signage celebrating biodiversity and increasing awareness of the types of biodiversity in the area at Dare Valley Country Park, and a new '[Tracks and Trails](#)' project.
- Celebrated retaining [Green Flag Awards](#) at Dare Valley Country Park, Aberdare; Taffs Well Park; and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd, in recognition of their visitor facilities, high environmental standards, and commitment to delivering great quality green spaces.
- Developed our [RCT Tree and Woodland Strategy](#), following [engagement](#) with residents. The Strategy recognises the important carbon storing role that trees, vegetation and soils have in the 'carbon cycle'.
- Submitted our [Section 6 Biodiversity Duty – 3 Year Report to Welsh Government 2020-2022](#)' fulfilling the statutory requirements of the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#).
- Continued to supported preparations for the 2024 National Eisteddfod for Wales, with the [2024 Officials](#) announced in December 22 and the official [launch](#) held in Treorchy in March 23.

We didn't make as much progress as we planned in:

- Working with the Probation Service to enable people on probation to contribute to community clean-up operations as part of their community service.
- Some Highways and Flood projects owing to site issues. Work is continuing in 2023/24 e.g. Llanharan Railway Bridge Replacement and completing the outline business case for the Treorchy Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Our work within the **PLACES** priority is overseen by Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and, where appropriate the [Cardiff Capital Region City Deal](#), [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board](#), and [Cwm Taf Public Services Board](#) (from May 2023, Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB).

Some ways our **PLACES** priority [contribute](#) to the 7 National Well-being Goals.

PROSPERITY creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper

We made positive progress in supporting local businesses, regenerating our town centres, supporting young people to get a great education, helping people to access housing and supporting people into work. Below is a summary of what we have delivered and where there is still more to do.

We said we would support new and existing businesses in our town centres and we

- Provided grants to 84 local businesses to help them establish, expand or diversify, supporting the creation or safeguarding of 10 jobs and property improvements at 15 premises.
- Put together a new package of financial support for the future to support setting up and growing sustainable local businesses, regeneration of run down or underused sites and carbon reduction and energy efficiency measures.

We said we would invest in our town centres, creating vibrant, thriving places people wish to live, work and socialise and we

- Progressed the [Porth Town Centre Regeneration strategy](#) through development of the [Transport Hub](#)
- Approved the [Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan](#) and progressed work on the [Southern Gateway Project](#). Work with partners also progressed on the [redevelopment of the Muni arts centre](#)
- [Involved](#) local people and businesses in the development of a [draft regeneration strategy for Aberdare](#)
- Supported Rhondda Housing Association to deliver [13 affordable apartments in the town centre](#).
- Gained recognition for our positive collaborations with local businesses, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Town Councils and other stakeholders at the [Let's Celebrate Towns Awards](#), with Mountain Ash receiving the [Rising Star Wales award](#) and Pontypridd the [Wales Champion Town Award](#).

We said we would deliver major regeneration and transport schemes to create better places to live and work and we

- Worked collaboratively across the Cardiff City Region, continuing to lead the delivery of the £15M [Transforming Towns](#) grant to deliver major schemes in our town centres (see above) and continued to deliver the ongoing [A4119 Coed Ely dualling scheme](#).
- Progressed [housing viability gap funding](#) to remediate contaminated land across brownfield sites at Cwm Coking works, Aberdare hospital and Heol y Wenallt sites.
- Continued preparation of our revised Local Development Plan, which will contain strategic level policies on land use and protection, including a [call for candidate sites](#) to identify suitable locations for future development including housebuilding

We said we would ensure we have good schools so all children can access a great Education and we

- Established an All Schools Review process, bringing together local authority and Central South Consortium staff to discuss strengths and areas for development for our schools, and ensure the right support is in place
- Evaluated the [impact of Family engagement officers](#) in schools to support pupils and families to overcome barriers to learning, and extended this support to 13 additional schools.
- Launched a new [Attendance Strategy](#) and restructured our services to focus support on the most disadvantaged pupils, with an emphasis on early intervention to prevent persistent absence becoming entrenched.
- [Piloted a virtual school approach](#) to ensure effectively co-ordinated support for educational outcomes of Children Looked After.

We said we would improve outcomes for young people with special educational needs and disabilities and we

- [Progressed the implementation](#) of the new [ALN legislation](#) to better support pupils with additional learning needs. Following a self evaluation, RCT schools positively rated their readiness to introduce the new Act.
- Expanded [Step 4 provision](#) to better support pupils with significant Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

We said we would invest in new and replacement 21st Century schools whilst also meeting the demand for Welsh language provision and we

- Completed a 4 classroom extension and new outdoor play area at [Ffynnon Taf primary school](#), with heating provided through Taffs Well Thermal Spring.
- Improved access to Welsh medium education through completion of new facilities and increasing capacity at YGG Aberdar and YG Rhydywaun.
- Commenced projects in greater Pontypridd – the construction of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Awel Taf, a new Welsh Medium primary school in Rhydfelin, Ysgol Bro Taf, the new 3-16 school in Pontypridd and Ysgol Afon Wen, the new 3-16 school in Hawthorn.
- Invested in [new buildings for three primary schools](#) in Pontyclun, Penygawsi and Llanilltud Faerdref through the Mutual Investment model, with works commencing onsite.
- Commenced delivery of new sports and sixth form facilities at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive.
- Obtained planning approval and begun work on a new Welsh medium Primary school for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn.
- [Secured Welsh government funding](#) for an exemplar ‘Net Zero’ primary school at Glyncoch.

We said we would increase the number of quality homes available and affordable to provide greater housing choice for residents and we

- Completed the [Local Housing Market Assessment](#) to fully understand current and future housing needs in the area which will be used to shape our new local Housing Strategy, which will be produced in 2023/24.
- Began delivery of our new [Empty Homes Strategy](#), and brought 225 empty properties back into use
- Supported the installation of 1,349 energy efficiency measures in both social and private housing through a range of grants
- Acted as lead authority for the National Empty Homes Grant scheme, which launched in January 23, with 143 applications made in RCT.
- Supported the delivery of 29 new housing schemes through the Social Housing Grant, including 22 using new build modern methods of construction.
- Put in place the [Rapid Rehousing Plan](#) for rehousing people who have experienced homelessness, where possible reducing or removing the need for temporary accommodation.

We said we would work with partners to provide employment support and we

- Supported 976 people of all ages into work through our employment support programmes, with 641 gaining vocational qualifications.
- Delivered essential skills courses, family learning engagement programmes and informal learning opportunities to support people to develop their skills, confidence and wellbeing, with 1,675 people completing accredited adult education courses, and a further 148 finishing other courses.

We said we would offer specific support to help people with barriers to work find employment, including opportunities within the Council and we

- Employed 20 new graduates and 45 new apprentices across a variety of Council services.
- Delivered the 'Ambassador' programme to raise the profile of social care careers with schools.
- Supported 156 people with disabilities or work limiting health conditions into employment on the Communities for work plus programme.
- Supported young people leaving care to develop their skills and employability through the 'Step in the Right Direction' traineeship, 'Care2work' and the '[Care2Customer](#)' service scheme.
- Worked with partners to increase referrals onto our employment support programmes, and provided support to specific groups including Ukrainian refugees and overseas students.

We didn't make as much progress as we planned on

- Completing the new RCT Local Housing Strategy, which will now be presented for approval in early 2024 as this will follow on from the new Corporate Plan.
- Delivering new road schemes, as Welsh Government roads review did not approve projects in Cynon Gateway North and Llanharan bypass.
- Increasing provision at Porth Park and Ride, as a bid for grant funding was unsuccessful.
- Increasing attendance levels in our schools, which are still too low particularly for secondary pupils and those eligible for free school meals, although Estyn recognised the positive work already in place to support attendance and wellbeing.

Our work within the **PROSPERITY** priority is overseen by Cabinet, relevant Scrutiny Committees and, where appropriate the [Cardiff Capital Region City Deal](#), [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board](#), [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board](#) and [Cwm Taf Public Services Board](#) (from May 2023, Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB). Some of the services delivering this Priority have also been inspected by independent Auditors i.e. Audit Wales and Estyn.

You can find out more about their findings on our [website](#).

Some ways our **PROSPERITY** priority [contribute](#) to the 7 National Well-being Goals.

Our Assessment of Corporate Functions

Our assessment of our corporate functions considers the work of the ‘corporate centre’ of the Council. The ‘corporate centre’ comprises the fourteen corporate or cross cutting areas of work that underpin everything we do, see below. These areas of work support the strategic direction setting of the Council, the delivery of the Council’s services and priorities and enables the Council to meet a number of statutory requirements. The performance of each of these fourteen areas is assessed as part of the Council’s Performance Management arrangements and, as with the service and priority reporting each function is monitored and scrutinised as part of the Terms of Reference of relevant committees.

This year, for the first time we have also included Corporate Safeguarding as corporate function. The Council is clear that Safeguarding is everyone’s business whether they work for or on behalf of the Council. The Corporate Safeguarding arrangements, including the Council’s Safeguarding Policy are continually reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and to strengthen the approach to ‘Keeping People Safe’, especially our children, young people and adults at risk and also to reflect the new and emerging issues to which people are exposed.

The Council has a strong ethos of self awareness with a culture of constructive challenge and ambition. The Council and its services and corporate centre continually strive to improve and make the best and most efficient use of resources. We know from this work that the performance of our Corporate Centre is generally strong. This is also evidenced in [independent regulatory reports](#). However, we also know we have more to do, for example, responding to the financial pressures we face, making better and more efficient use of information and data evidencing the extent to which the services we deliver as a Council and in partnership with others are making a difference to the lives of the people that live and work in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The corporate/cross cutting areas of work also comprise 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. For this reason, a brief summary of our work in respect of these core activities in the context of the core guidance is set out below.

Corporate planning

Our corporate planning arrangements are the mechanism for setting our Well-being Objectives. The priorities contained within our current plan [Making A Difference](#) have served as our Well-being Objectives and have set the strategic direction for all the Council’s strategies/policies and budget setting etc. This approach is being further strengthened as we develop our new Corporate Plan for 2024 and develop the integration with the Well-being Objectives with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board. *Further information can be found in Strategic Planning and Approach.*

Financial planning

The Council has good track record of funding the Council’s priorities. One example of this clear allocation of investment can be found in a report to [Cabinet in September 2022](#), detailing funding further investment in the Council’s priorities, over and above the capital investment programme. This approach is also embedded within our quarterly performance reports to Cabinet, [Quarter 4 for illustrative purposes](#), and which sets out the progress in our investment priorities for PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY.

In its most recent Assurance and Risk Assessment, as reported to [Governance and Audit Committee in December 2022](#), our independent Regulator, Audit Wales indicates that ‘*the Council is now facing*

significant financial pressures, but remains well-placed to respond to these'. In this regard, the Council faced a budget gap of £38M for the 2023/24 financial year, the biggest funding shortfall it has ever faced. Through a prioritised and focussed programme of work involving all service areas, budget reduction measures were identified and implemented, enabling the Council to deliver a balanced budget for the current year.

The short term and reducing budget allocation to Local Government provide a significant challenge to long term planning but the Council is committed to using the Sustainable Development principle, particularly in respect of the prominence of taking preventative action across our services and maximising the value from our work with partners.

Performance Management

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out how the Council's priorities/Well-being objectives are contributing to the seven national Well-being Goals. The Performance Management arrangements also embed the delivery of the Sustainable Development principles into the self evaluation, planning, in year and end of year performance and strategic risk reporting processes. We need to make more and better use of range of organisational data, information and digital capacity to strengthen decision making. We also know we need to continue our work to strengthen the implementation of the Sustainable Development principles so that they are consistent across all the Council's services and integrate with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Plan following its adoption in May 2023. *Further information can be found in [Section 6 – Sustainable Development and Well-being Goals](#).*

Risk management

The Council identifies the long term risks that will affect both the delivery of our services and the residents and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf as well as those that are shorter term. Our approach is set out in our Risk Management Strategy. The key risks to delivering our Priorities/Well-being Objectives are contained within the Council's Strategic Risk Register with associated risk scores, controls and actions. The progress in implementing controls and actions that will manage these risks are reported as part of our in/end of year performance reports and the [Annual Governance Statement](#) as part of our [Statement of Accounts](#). Our 2022/23 end of year Strategic Risk update can be found [here](#) for illustrative purposes. *Further information can be found in [Finance, Performance and Risk Management](#).*

Workforce planning

The Council's workforce planning arrangements help to maintain a well supported and trained workforce with the right skills to deliver the Council's current Priorities/Well-being Objectives and ensure that we have the staff resources, skills and capacity to continue to maximise opportunities and overcome future challenges. The Council's current Workforce Plan 2023-28 was approved by [Cabinet in January 2023](#). Whilst we can demonstrate positive progress, we need to embed the Sustainable Development principles contained in the Workforce Plan across the Council. This will be strengthened as staff and their managers consider what training and development they need to enable them to deliver the Council's Priorities/Well-being Objectives as part of their annual individual performance reviews which have been reinstated from April 2023. *Further information can be found in [Human Resources/Workforce Planning](#).*

Assets

The Council's current [Corporate Asset Management Plan](#) 2018-23 is currently being reviewed. In the meantime, we are continuing to make better use of our physical assets to meet the needs of a changing organisation as we respond to the needs of our residents and communities. This includes putting in place a new Office Accommodation strategy to transform our workspaces and support the regeneration

of our Town Centres. We are also continuing our work to decarbonise our energy use, estate and fleet through our new [Decarbonisation Plan](#) approved by the [Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee](#) in December 2022. As we deliver these changes, we know we need to continue to put the Sustainable Development principle at the centre of our future Asset Management plans. More widely we are also developing the community use of our schools and continuing to make land and buildings available and sustainable for community use through Community Asset Transfers. *Further information can be found in [Asset Management](#).*

Procurement

The Council is strengthening its approach to Sustainable Procurement through its [Commissioning, Socially Responsible Procurement and Contract Management Strategy 2021-24](#). We are also working to maximise our approach to Social Value in our contracts, agreed in 2022, so that, whilst achieving value for money there are also Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Well-being benefits to the communities we serve. This work is in its early stages and is being closely monitored to ensure the new arrangements are fit for purpose. The Environmental benefits of our contracts are also being addressed more widely through the steps to contribute to the reduction of the Council's carbon footprint through the goods and services we procure. *Further information can be found in [Procurement and Commissioning](#).*

A summary of each of the cross cutting areas of work can be found in the hyperlinked documents below.

Corporate/Cross Cutting functions

1. [Strategic planning and Approach](#)
2. [Governance and Scrutiny](#)
3. [Finance Performance and Risk Management](#)
4. [Human Resources/Workforce Planning](#)
5. [Asset Management](#)
6. [ICT and Digital](#)
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. [Corporate Safeguarding - NEW](#)

Core Activities (WFG)

1. Corporate planning
2. Financial planning
3. Performance Management
4. Risk management
5. Workforce planning
6. Assets
7. Procurement

The performance of each of these fourteen areas continues to be assessed and scrutinised to ensure that they are supporting the delivery of the Council's services and priorities and enabling the Council to meet relevant statutory requirements. Themes emerging from the Service Self Evaluations in 2022 have also been considered in the context of the assessment of the fourteen individual corporate functions and included within the Corporate and Cross Cutting elements of this assessment.

The Self Evaluation of our services

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

The SSE asks services to be clear about

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

- helps elected Members to support, challenge and scrutinise performance, progress and planning.
- assists services in providing evidence for audit or inspection and deliver the requirements of relevant legislation.
- helps services make better decisions, manage risks and provide feedback in respect of the need for and scope of corporate support.
- demonstrates value for money, potential for service change, spend or efficiencies and identify the impact of new or amended service provision.
- enables corporate services to identify and prioritise service support needs.
- provides 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](#), [Equalities](#), [Socio-economic Duty](#) and [Biodiversity Duty](#) comprising our [three yearly report to Welsh Government](#) and the [accompanying action plan](#).

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 the SSE 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 [SSE model, guidance](#) and the [judgement criteria](#) applied in Autumn 2022 is available.

[Twenty-five SSEs](#) were completed within services in late 2022. Each completed Evaluation was reviewed by the respective Cabinet Member, signed off by the Group Director and was also subject to challenge by the Chief Executive in meetings with Service Heads between November 2022 and January 2023. This year, the challenge meetings were held in the midst of preparations for potential for the biggest cuts in Local Government for over a decade. Despite the challenges and uncertainties, the SSE process continued to be conducted in the spirit of openness and transparency which was reinforced by the new Chief Executive in his Challenge and Support sessions.

These Challenge and Support sessions continue to be seen as an integral and valuable part of the Performance Management Framework and a positive opportunity to challenge performance, explore service issues and opportunities and gather intelligence on cross cutting issues for the Council.

Strengths and key themes emerging from the SSEs were considered by Senior Leadership Team on 29 March 2023. Many of these thirteen themes also feature in the *nine areas emerging from the wider Self-Assessment

conducted in 2021/22, considered in [Section 1](#). Where relevant, these themes have also been used to challenge and inform other areas within this Self-Assessment for example:

1. ***Workforce** – a strong and consistent theme emerging affecting almost every service area. Challenges with recruitment and retention of staff and to a lesser extent succession planning were very evident. *See also HR/Work Planning in Corporate Functions section.*
2. **Demand & Complexity** – Many service areas are experiencing significant increases in demand and complexity of need. Capacity to respond or change services is not always proportionate to need.
3. **Post Pandemic Recovery** – still some way to go with recovery from the pandemic both in terms of service usage returning to pre-pandemic levels and impact on communities.
4. **Efficient Use of Assets** – need to further develop our medium-term strategic plans for the more efficient use of our assets – buildings, fleet, ICT. *See also Asset Management and ICT and Digital in Corporate Functions section.*
5. ***Investment Priorities** – the Council’s capital investment programmes are making a significant difference and need to continue to ensure longer term impact. *See also Finance, Risk and Performance in Corporate Functions section.*
6. **Digital** – consistent and high expectations around ICT and desire to explore opportunities to modernise through digital technology. *See also ICT and Digital section in Corporate Functions section.*
7. **Performance management** – need to make better use of existing data as actionable intelligence and continue to strengthen how we measure impact and outcome. *See also Finance, Risk and Performance in Corporate Functions section,*
8. **Working Practices** – recognising working practices and arrangements across the Council have changed significantly following the pandemic.
9. **Business Support** – growing recognition of value of business support and administrative roles.
10. **Equality & Inclusion** – need to strengthen and articulate our organisational culture and values on equality and diversity and set out clear expectations for staff and services. *See also Equality Diversity and Inclusion section in Corporate Functions section.*
11. **Partnerships** – we are involved in many varied and complex local, regional and national partnership arrangements, supporting, hosting and leading many of them. Also growing expectation that duties and grant funding are discharged through these arrangements. *See also Partnership Section in Corporate Functions section.*
12. ***Accommodation for Vulnerable People & Housing Market Pressures** – meeting the needs of vulnerable adults, children and responding to local housing market pressures.
13. **Communication & Participation** – There is evidence of service user engagement and consultation across the Council but there remains a need to strengthen *meaningful* participation of residents in decision making and service development/redesign. *See also Involvement, Engagement and Customer Feedback Section in Corporate functions section.*

Once the SSE challenges were completed, all Evaluations were made available on the Council’s Intranet site for internal reference and use. The themes emerging, including those above are used to inform service development, corporate and other processes and potential changes to the SSE arrangements in 2023.

At a service level, the information contained within the SSEs, and the service priorities emerging, informed the Delivery Plan for each service for 2023/24. 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.

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

[The Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) requires the Council and all public bodies, to set well-being objectives that maximise their contribution to achieving the seven national well-being goals. In doing so, the Council is expected to take all reasonable steps to meet those well-being objectives. The Council's current Well-being objectives are the three priorities set out in the [Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#).

The Well-being of Future Generations Act also requires that we apply the Sustainable Development meaning *that we must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs in order to improve the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of Wales*.

To demonstrate that we are applying the Sustainable Development (SD) principle, Public Bodies must apply 5 Ways of Working and contribute to seven national Well-being goals. The Act also indicates [seven core activities](#) that are most likely to secure organisational change, which are considered in [Section 4](#) of this Assessment. 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 seven national goals, together with the five Ways of Working, have been incorporated into performance management arrangements including the detailed action plans that continue to deliver the Council's three priorities. Progress has been summarised in our previous annual [Corporate Performance Reports](#) (CPRs), our longstanding [quarterly Performance Reports](#) and our 2022/23 Assessment of progress described in [Section 3](#).

Despite the interruption to our progress in implementing the SD principle as a result of a focus on response and recovery to the pandemic, 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 that deliver our Corporate Plan. A selection of our contributions to the goals within the Corporate Plan have been summarised for illustrative purposes in Appendix A. However, we know we have more to do to reinforce this approach across the Council's business.

The application of the Sustainable Development (SD) principle is now routinely fed back as part of local audit findings in all Audit Wales reports to Local Authorities as part of the regulatory requirements of the Act. This audit requirement in respect of the [SD principle](#), among other things means considering how we apply the five ways of working i.e. Involving; Collaborating; Integrating; Thinking Long Term and Preventing things from happening or getting worse. This audit requirement in respect of the Act does not apply to Care Inspectorate Wales or ESTYN inspections.

Audit Wales reports are considered by Overview and Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees as a matter of course. The most recent local examples were considered by the [Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2022](#) in respect of Asset Management and Workforce which both contained recommendations in respect of fully embracing the Sustainable Development principle i.e. meeting today's needs without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, by applying five ways of working.

In April 2023, we were pleased to engage with the new Future Generations Commissioner as part of his early conversations with all 48 Public Bodies to see how his office can better support the Public Bodies to implement the various and numerous requirements of the Act. The outcome and response to these conversations has just emerged through his new approach set out in the new strategy '[Cymru Can](#)' which includes increased advice

and assistance to public bodies. In the meantime, we are continuing to take our experience, knowledge and learning from relevant networks to strengthen our approaches and embed these approaches in aspects of our work. Examples can be seen throughout this Self-Assessment and in particular, the delivery of the Council's Priorities. We continue our work to embed our implementation of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) and the Sustainable development in our new Corporate Planning arrangements which will be in place from 2024.

DRAFT

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"> • Supporting Children and Young People by giving them a great start in life through our Resilient Families programme. • Redeveloping vacant properties in line with regeneration strategies to bring prominent town centre buildings back into use and improve our housing offer e.g. The Big Shed development in Tonypanydy. • Commissioning Community Catalyst to support people and local partners to develop small enterprises that can provide real choice and increase the number and range of homecare and support options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping people and traffic moving on well-maintained roads and pavements including the work we do to keep our roads open in the winter months. • Providing new business facilities that will support the long term economic future of the region. • Progressing schemes that will benefit communities now and in the future, including the A4119 duelling and active travel scheme from Coed Ely Roundabout to Llantrisant Business Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting businesses to adapt and diversify. • Developing placemaking plans in Pontypridd, Porth and Tonypanydy and supporting a range of redevelopment to revitalise our town centres. • Building new homes and working with developers to facilitate building homes on brownfield sites where appropriate. • Supporting people to develop new skills. • Providing schools where children can achieve the best they can.
Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing site disturbance and material waste with shorter construction schedules by using modular construction methods in the construction of our Extra Care facilities. • Promoting reusable and sustainable period products via booklets and workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing, valuing and celebrating our Green Spaces. • Launching our new Biodiversity web page. • Involving and engaging residents in our Let's Talk Wildflowers and new Draft 'Action for Nature' recovery action plan conversations • Increasing flood alleviation measures including work at Aberdare and Ynyshir. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting biodiversity by protecting existing habitats where possible and creating new areas for wildlife on our school sites. • Integrating biodiversity into planning and Local Development Plan arrangements.

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"> • Helping people to stay as well as they can by encouraging increased activity in a setting that is right for the individual e.g. at home, in our leisure centres, in our outdoor green spaces and in community facilities in schools. • Providing reablement support and Assistive Technologies to ensure our older, vulnerable or those who have a disability can remain independent within their communities. • Integrating health and social care services to ensure people do not spend longer in hospital than they need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing and maintaining Green Flag standards in our parks 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. • Continuing to tackle environmental crime and holding those who commit the offences accountable • Engaging with residents on Active Travel routes including schemes between Pontygwaith and Maerdy, links with Treforest Industrial Estate and the Church Village Community Route. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the number of family engagement officers in schools following a successful pilot, providing support to children and families for wellbeing and engagement in education. • Providing enhanced counselling support to young people, including those most impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic. • Finding ways to protect air quality and promote health through active travel and local amenities when planning new developments, including completing studies into active travel in Pontypridd, Porth and Aberdare town centres.
More Equal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up a Sustainable Food Network as part of our Sustainable Food Places project to tackle food poverty in our communities. • Providing sanitary products to our communities via the WG Period Dignity in Communities Grant. • Developing a revised Housing Options model for care-leavers to whom the Council owes a corporate parenting duty in order that they can leave care placements in a safe, planned way which avoids homelessness wherever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of Hate Crime. • Ensuring domestic abuse support is available to all in need including specialist IDVA support for children and young people, an IDVA in Health and another with Housing First. • Providing support to those in need of help with substance misuse through increased outreach work undertaken by Barod and promoting the support we provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing alternative learning, career planning and work experience for those young people who struggle to engage in classroom-based learning. • Providing sanitary products to help tackle period poverty for girls and women in our communities. • loaning devices and mifi to children, young people and job seekers to help them continue education and training online.

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"> • Helping people to stay in their own homes for longer and enabling them to contribute to communities and strengthen social relationships. • Supporting and promoting volunteering opportunities within our communities via our Community Hubs • Supporting communities to be well connected through our Neighbourhood Networks. 	<p>Keeping people safe and helping them to feel safe by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responding to community requests for action • tackling anti- social behaviour • Protecting those vulnerable to doorstep crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving housing for all our residents and creating pleasant neighbourhoods in which communities can thrive.
Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing opportunities for people to learn and use Welsh within their communities. • Engaging with communities on the implementation of the NLHF project ‘Altered Images’ which sees community groups and individuals participate in heritage themed activities and courses. • Providing opportunities for care experienced young people and their carers to attend theatre productions, wellbeing initiatives and experiences with nature. • Providing a varied Adult Education programme, 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, involving and preparing for Rhondda Cynon Taf to host the National Eisteddfod for Wales in 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating the culture and history of the area in our theatres and parks and developing the Valleys Regional Park • Supporting the redevelopment of the YMCA building and the Muni Arts Centre in Pontypridd to develop a cultural hub • Promoting RCT as a visitor destination, including the Eisteddfod

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
Globally Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating fully in the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to encourage recycling and reuse and implementing a new Green Waste Collection Service Progressing our plans to tackle and reduce the impact of Climate Change through Council services and the County Borough and to meet of 2030 targets, including the publication of the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-2030 and Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT' (2022-2025) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Fair Trade Initiatives Developing renewable energy projects like Taffs Well Thermal Spring Working with Rhondda Housing Association to develop a zero-carbon home using local timber as part of the Skyline Project

DRAFT

tudalen wag

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 19th DECEMBER 2023

(EXTRACT OF DRAFT MINUTES – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE)

Meeting ID	50004679
Committee	Governance and Audit Committee
Date	19/12/2023
Attendees	<p>Christopher Jones (Chair / Lay Member)</p> <p>Councillor Mustapha Maohoub (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Geraint Hopkins</p> <p>Councillor Sharon Rees</p> <p>Councillor Barry Stephens</p> <p>Mr M Jehu (Lay Member)</p> <p>Mr J. Roszkowski (Lay Member)</p> <p>Mr P. Mee, Chief Executive</p> <p>Mr B. Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director, Finance, Digital and Frontline Services</p> <p>Ms S. Davies, Service Director of Financial Services</p> <p>Mr A. Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services</p> <p>Mr P. Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services</p> <p>Mr I. Traylor, Service Director Pensions, Procurement & Transactional Services</p> <p>Mr M. Davies, Operational Manager - Revenues and Corporate Fraud</p> <p>Mr T. Jones, Service Director – ICT & Digital Services</p> <p>Ms E. Williams, Service Lead Enterprise Architecture</p> <p>Ms L. Lawson, Performance Manager</p> <p>Mr A. Wathan, Head of Regional Audit Service</p> <p>Ms L. Cumpston, Group Audit Manager</p>

Item ID	28646
Item Title	DECLARATION OF INTEREST
Summary	In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

Item ID	28647
Item Title	MINUTES
Summary	It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee meeting held on 12 th October 2023 as an accurate record.

Extract from the minutes

Item ID	28650
Item Title	DRAFT ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT 2022/23 (INCORPORATING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT)
Summary	<p>The Council's Performance Manager presented the report, which provided the Committee with the opportunity to consider the Council's Self-Assessment for 2022/23 in advance of consideration by Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which requires the Self-Assessment to be considered by Governance and Audit Committee in advance of consideration by Council.</p> <p>The Performance Manager stated that the Council has a strong track record of self-awareness and self-reflection processes and a culture of continuous improvement, irrespective of the various statutory requirements in place at any time. It was explained that there was no nationally prescribed model of annual self-assessment and therefore, the aim when undertaking the self-assessment was to continue to do so with minimal additional process or burden on the organisation and its managers. The intention was to make maximum use of the huge volume of information already in place across the Council, including reports, policies, strategies, plans and stakeholder feedback, which Elected Members would have had the opportunity to review and challenge, as part of the Council's existing governance arrangements.</p> <p>It was explained that the 2022/23 Self-Assessment focused on the Council's progress in responding to the Improvement Themes emerging from the stock take in 2021/22 as well as consideration of the robustness of the management and monitoring arrangements in place as evidence the Council is delivering its priorities and be assured that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is exercising its functions effectively; • it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and • its governance is effective for securing the above. <p>The officer drew Members' attention to section 5.3 of the report and explained that the Council's Self-Assessment had been integrated with the annual Corporate Performance Report and comprised of the following six sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The progress we have made against the nine themes for improvement which were identified in the 2021/2022 Self-Assessment; 2. How we have delivered on our Corporate Plan since 2020 as we prepare our new Plan from 2024; 3. How we have delivered the priorities of our Corporate Plan in 2022/23; 4. Assessment of our corporate functions; 5. The Self Evaluation (SSE) of our services; and 6. Well-being of Future Generations - Sustainable Development principle. <p>The Chief Executive thanked the Performance Manager for informing Members of the robust processes in place to comprise the self-assessment and took the opportunity to provide observations. The Chief Executive noted that the self-assessment was representative of a huge amount of data and</p>

evidence from across the Local Authority, which had been hyperlinked throughout the document. The document sought to demonstrate the range and diversity of the Council's functions and the scale of the services delivered, along with the progress on delivering the commitments throughout the year.

The Chief Executive referenced the nine themes identified in the Council's previous self-assessment and acknowledged the good progress made against those themes. Examples provided were in respect of the effective response to the significant and unprecedented financial challenges faced during the year; the progress made in delivering the ambitions of the Council's climate change strategy; and the ongoing capital investment in town centres. The Chief Executive was satisfied with the progress made across the nine themes but given the longevity of some, it was recognised that they would remain a priority going forward.

The Chief Executive was also satisfied that good progress had been made during the year following the challenge sessions held with the designated Directors.

The Chief Executive concluded that the document demonstrated the Council was well-run but not complacent, and is prepared to challenge and change the way of working when necessary. The Chief Executive was of the view that the Council had used its resources effectively and that within the Council, robust governance and performance management arrangements were in place.

One Member questioned if there were processes in place to acknowledge and learn from practices put in place during the previous self-assessment that did not work. The Chief Executive advised that the self-assessment informs delivery plans and priorities, which are monitored and reported quarterly to Members. Where there are exceptions or problems, it was noted that they were addressed and actioned accordingly. More generally, it was explained that progress against the nine themes previously identified were monitored and due to their medium to long term nature, are also included within this year's self-assessment. The Service Director - Finance and Improvement Services added that the quarterly Performance Report information provided to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes evaluative activity as part of the three Corporate Plan priority action plans of People, Places and Prosperity to help assess the impact of the Council's work.

In relation to the Council's financial position and a key consideration of the self-assessment, which is whether the Council is using its resources effectively, one Member questioned how the Council is responding to the current financial pressure and how resilient it is. The Service Director - Finance and Improvement Services advised that an organisational-wide and on-going approach is in place to review the utilisation of resources, led by the Senior Leadership Team, with the process taking into account the level of services provided and impacts. It was noted that the process forward

projects likely resource levels and costs into the medium term to inform service planning and delivery. Members were informed the arrangements have played a key part in ensuring the Council has consistently set and delivered balanced budgets over a number of years, with the Council also using reserves appropriately and sustainably as part of the arrangements. The Service Director added that the approach had also enabled the Council to identify and deliver significant budget savings on an on-going basis, and noted that the budget gap successfully addressed for the current financial year was £38Million. In terms of the Council's reserves, the Service Director assured the Committee that they were reviewed on a regular basis, with updates reported at least twice a year to Full Council to enable elected Members to scrutinise in detail and consider options to re-prioritise reserves to support additional investment into Corporate Plan priority areas.

In relation to workforce planning, one Member was disappointed to note the staff turnover in Community and Children Services, which had increased by 3%. It was noted that a Workforce Strategy was in place within Children's Services, and the Member was interested in the breakdown between the two services (i.e. Adult and Children's Services) and whether this was an area of ongoing review. The Chief Executive agreed that workforce planning was a key priority for the Council and explained that such challenges were faced across a wide range of service areas. In terms of the Workforce Strategy within Children's Services, the Chief Executive noted that it was successful in some respects as it modernised the approach to recruitment, sped up process and improved marketing significantly, which had a positive impact in gaining interest in the posts. However, it was acknowledged that the Strategy had not, to date, been able to fully address the fundamental challenge of recruiting and retaining professional social workers in intensive intervention services. The Chief Executive explained the factors which were attributed to the challenge of recruitment and retention and stated that the environment was highly competitive across Wales with only approximately 60% of the posts filled. Members were informed that there were not enough individuals choosing to go into the profession and, therefore, work was being undertaken to provide incentives and to support more student placements to close the gap. The Chief Executive also spoke of the management of caseloads for staff within the profession and acknowledged that the nature of the work was incredibly challenging.

Referring to the modernisation and integration of Social Care, one Member referred to the unintended consequences of the not-for-profit model introduced by Welsh Government. As Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, the Member advised that a letter had been written from the Committee, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member, to the relevant Minister but a response had yet to be received. The Planning and Development Committee had identified that private providers were purchasing, what were deemed as inappropriate dwellings to transform into private residential care homes. The Chief Executive was in support of Welsh Government's view that the private businesses should not be profiting from the care of vulnerable children and young people but acknowledged that there were inadvertent consequences in terms of destabilising the

marketplace. It was explained that it had become increasingly challenging to meet the placement sufficiency duties for children looked after and how to transition safely to a not-for-profit model. In response, to the situation, the Council had almost doubled its in house residential capacity during the last 18 months but it was recognised that pressures remain, given the increase in demand and complexity of needs. The Chief Executive acknowledged the concerns of the Planning and Development Committee that some of the dwellings were inappropriate, but added that as part of the planning process, the homes would need to be regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales.

A Lay Member took the opportunity to thank the Chief Executive and the team for the robust self-assessment and commented that the document was pragmatic, realistic and aspirational. The Member advised that from his experience, the community and partners were complimentary of the Council's governance arrangements.

One Member praised the report for its detail but felt that it was late in the year to be considering the 2022/2023 self-assessment, to which officers acknowledged and advised that arrangements are being made for it to be brought forward earlier next year.

The Member noted that within the document, it had been identified to strengthen arrangements for service user engagement and equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Member sought clarity on how this would be progressed. The Chief Executive noted that the two points were additional priorities arising from the self-assessment during the year. The Chief Executive advised that there was already good practice in terms of effective engagement across the Council, such as the co-production exercise with service users and families to remodel learning disability services, engagement with developing town centre regeneration strategies with the business community and the adoption of the Council's Participation Strategy. However, the Chief Executive acknowledged that there was more work to be undertaken to strengthen the arrangements. In relation to equality and diversity, the Chief Executive fed back that good progress had been made, which was reflected in the annual equality report. However, it was noted that staff have encountered behaviours that do not adhere to the Council's expectations and thus, focussed work had been undertaken with the Senior Leadership Team to develop the organisational culture and values further to make expectations more clear to staff along with the Council's on-going commitment to this area. Members were assured that the work would feature in the Council's new Strategic Equality Plan and the new Corporate Plan in the New Year.

The Chair thanked officers and Members for the contributions and the Governance and Audit Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To review the draft Self-Assessment at Appendix 1 of the report and considers 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. To note the progress made in respect of the improvement themes identified in 2021/22 Self-Assessment;
3. To provide observations or recommendations, as deemed appropriate, to the Chief Executive for the Committee's feedback to be included in the report to Council in January 2024; and
4. To note that following approval of the Self-Assessment by Council, the document will be published within four weeks of it being finalised.

(Note: County Borough Councillor G. Hopkins left the meeting during discussions.)

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

(EXTRACT OF DRAFT MINUTES – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE)

County Borough Councillors - Joint Consultative Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor A. Morgan Councillor M. Webber (Chair)
Councillor A. Crimmings Councillor G. Caple

Trade Union Members in Attendance

Mr P. Crews (Unison)
Mr C. Jones (GMB)
Ms L. Davies (Unite)
Mr A. McCarthy (Unite)

Officers in attendance

Mr P. Mee – Chief Executive
Mr C. Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr R. Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr P. Griffiths, Service Director - Finance & Improvement Services
Ms L. Lawson - Performance Manager

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the 7th February 2023 were an accurate reflection of the meeting, subject to the addition that Mr G. Morgans attended the meeting on behalf of Mr C. Jones (GMB).

Extract from the minutes

4 THE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT 2022/23 INCORPORATING THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Performance Manager and Chief Executive provided the Joint Consultative Committee with the Council's Self-Assessment for 2022/23, in advance of consideration by Council, in accordance with the requirements of the Local

Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which sets out duties to consult on the extent to which the Council is meeting its performance requirements. The statutory consultees include every trade union recognised by the Council.

For background, Members were advised of the previous assessment for 2021/22 and the Performance Manager continued by noting that the nine themes identified in 2021/22 remain relevant. In addition, two further themes had been highlighted and it was added that the Council needed to continue to strengthen its arrangements for service user engagement and participation, particularly the evaluation of outcomes. Following on, it was noted that the Council also needed to further strengthen and articulate its organisational culture and values on equality and diversity and, in doing so, support its on-going arrangements in setting out clear expectations for staff and services.

It was explained that the Council's Self-Assessment is integrated with its annual Corporate Performance Report, which was contained within Appendix 1 of the report, and comprises six sections, as set out at paragraph 4.5. The process and approach to compile the Self-Assessment was also advised upon.

Before handing over to the Chief Executive the Performance Manager concluded that through the arrangements in place the Council could evidence that it meets the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act.

The Chief Executive reinforced the regular reporting mechanisms taken forward to Members in respect of the Council's strategies and policy developments which forms part of the self-assessment. The Chief Executive added that the self-assessment reflected the diverse range of functions and services provided by the Council and scale of services delivered upon.

The Chief Executive took the opportunity to reflect on the previous nine themes identified in last year's self-assessment including financial resilience, work force pressure and climate change strategy and commented on the good progress against such themes, although reiterated that they still remained relevant due to their medium to long term nature. The Chief Executive referenced the corporate functions within the self-assessment, and how the Council have applied the sustainable development principles and confirmed that he was satisfied that the assessment outlined how the Council were discharging its functions effectively for its residents and service users.

The Chair thanked officers for the detailed reports and the comprehensive information contained within, and commented on the financial pressures experienced by the Council.

Mr P Crews, (Unison) referenced the Local Government Settlement and how this would affect any strategies and priorities identified. The Chief Executive provided feedback on the importance of funding to deliver and inform the Council's priorities going forward.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- I. To review the draft Self-Assessment at Appendix 1 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](#).

- II. To offer any observations to the Chief Executive prior to consideration by Council in January 2024.

tudalen wag



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023 - 2024

COUNCIL

17 JANUARY 2024

NOTICES OF MOTION

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Council is asked to consider the Notices of Motion (NOM) as set out below for which the necessary notice has been provided and make an appropriate recommendation in accordance with Rule 10.1 of the Constitution.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the Notices of Motion as outlined in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 and make an appropriate recommendation; and
- 2.2 Request that the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication makes the necessary arrangements to record the NOM and provide any updates through the publication of 'information reports' on the Council agenda, as formerly agreed.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

3.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution.

4. NOTICES OF MOTION

4.1 To consider the under-mentioned Notices of Motion which have been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.1 and received by the Proper Officer, standing in the names of County Borough Councillors:

4.2 A. J. Dennis, C. Preedy, L. Addiscott, M. D. Ashford, J. Barton, D. R. Bevan, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, G. Caple, J. Cook, A. Crimmings, S. J. Davies, R. Davis, V. Dunn, E. L. Dunning, J. Edwards, J. A. Elliott, L. Ellis, S.

Emanuel, R. Evans, A. S. Fox, B. Harris, S. Hickman, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, W. Hughes, G. Jones, G. O. Jones, R. R. Lewis, W. Lewis, C. Leyshon, M. Maohoub, C. Middle, A. Morgan, N. H. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, D. Parkin, S. Powderhill, S. Rees, A. Roberts, J. Smith, G. Stacey, L. A. Tomkinson, W. Treeby, J. Turner, G. L. Warren, K. Webb, M. Webber, D. Williams, G. E. Williams, R. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo.

A few months ago, it was announced that TATA Steel – a major employer in South Wales (in particular), and the U.K. Westminster Government had agreed a package of support to “secure the future of Welsh steel.”

Despite the overall package amounting to a headline-grabbing £1.25bn, the reality is that the package and transition ambitions have fallen well short and the announcement amounts to little more than a sticking plaster for the continued production of steel in Wales.

The investment only supports the transition from blast furnaces to Electric Arc Furnaces, which will mean that the site at nearby Port Talbot will no longer have the ability to produce primary steel as the quality and grade of production will not be up to the necessary standard due to the fact that Electric Arc Furnaces recycle scrap steel.

This short-sighted investment plan should instead have focussed and made provisions for a transition to the Direct Reduced Iron (DRI) method of production. DRI can be supported by the use of Natural Gas before opening up the possibility of Hydrogen-powered steel production, which is a more sustainable method of steel production and considerably more ambitious in terms of decarbonisation.

In addition, and most importantly, the investment package is also estimated to lead to 3,000 job losses, with the majority of those coming from the Port Talbot plant. There are RCT residents working at the steel works in Port Talbot and it is likely that a significant proportion of that number will be affected – either directly or indirectly.

Since the announcement, it has emerged that neither the Trade Unions nor the Welsh Government formed any part of these discussions, yet they are the very organisations who will have to pick up the pieces and provide support to those affected when these anticipated job losses occur.

This Council therefore notes:

- That the “investment package” for TATA Steel falls well short of what is required and does little to secure the future of the industry in Wales.
- That the U.K. Government’s bilateral dealings with TATA have no regard for the significant workforce impact that will form part of the expected job losses.
- That the transition to solely Electric Arc Furnace production will be a short-sighted move for British steel production capacity and is a considerable missed opportunity in terms of decarbonising a vital part of the British (and Welsh) economy.

This Council resolves to:

- Request that the Council Leader writes to the Members of Parliament and Members of the Senedd that represent the communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf and ask that they jointly support the representations made by this Council to the relevant U.K. Government Minister(s) to express this Council's view that the investment package announced falls woefully short.
- Notes the findings of the “Wrong Deal for Steel” and supports the steps laid out by Industrial Communities Alliance.

4.3 S. Emanuel, S. Rees, L. Addiscott, M. D. Ashford, J. Barton, D. R. Bevan, J. Bonetto, S. Bradwick, J. Brencher, G. Caple, J. Cook, A. Crimmings, R. Davis, S. J. Davies, A. J. Dennis, V. Dunn, E. L. Dunning, J. Edwards, J. A. Elliott, L. Ellis, R. Evans, A. S. Fox, B. Harris, S. Hickman, G. Holmes, G. Hopkins, W. Hughes, G. Jones, G. O. Jones, R. R. Lewis, W. Lewis, C. Leyshon, M. Maohoub, C. Middle, A. Morgan, N. H. Morgan, S. Morgans, M. A. Norris, D. Owen-Jones, D. Parkin, S. Powderhill, C. Preedy, A. Roberts, J. Smith, G. Stacey, L. A. Tomkinson, W. Treeby, J. Turner, G. L. Warren, K. Webb, M. Webber, D. Williams, G. E. Williams, R. Williams, T. Williams, R. Yeo.

This Council condemns the utterly inadequate settlement for Wales announced by the UK Tory government in the Autumn Statement.

This settlement provides only £305 million extra for the Welsh Government over a two year period – and this means that the Welsh Government have around £160 million next year to meet all of the pressures in the NHS, local government and all of the other services it provides for the people of Wales.

To put this into perspective, RCT Council spends more than £258m on education alone. Pressures in just this Council are estimated at £35m and across local government in Wales at £432m, even after council tax rises.

The fact remains that this settlement will go nowhere near meeting the inflationary pressures faced by services in Wales. It is a raw deal for the people of Wales and shows how little the U.K. Tory Government cares about the people of Wales.

This Council therefore calls on the U.K. Tory Government to invest in public services - including health, education, and local government services, and to provide a fair settlement to the Welsh Government in order to ensure that services in Wales can be properly funded.

To this end, this Council resolves to request that the Leader of the Council writes to call upon Tory Government Ministers to announce additional investment in the Budget in March.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

6.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Constitution

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report and no Equality Impact Assessment is deemed necessary for the purposes of this report as it relates to a procedural matter under the Council's Constitution.

7.2 The procedural rules regarding a Notice of Motion are contained within Council's Constitution which sets out the framework for the decision-making roles and responsibilities.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 This report presents for Members' consideration the Notices of Motion submitted to Council for the period January 2024 for which the necessary notice has been given.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

COUNCIL

17 JANUARY 2024

NOTICES OF MOTION

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION**

