



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**A hybrid meeting of the CABINET will be held on
Monday, 18th September, 2023 at 10.00 am**

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

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 12pm on the Friday, 15 September 2023. Councillors and Members of the public should stipulate if this address will be in the medium of English or Welsh.

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

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

Note:

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

2. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the Cabinet Committee on the 17th July 2023 as an accurate record.

(Pages 7 - 16)

3. LEADER'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION

To note for information, an update to the [Leader's Scheme of Delegation](#).

4. PRE-SCRUTINY: LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY REVIEW

To receive the report of the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication which provides the feedback and comments of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee following its pre scrutiny of the Local Toilet Strategy Review at its meeting on the [10th July 2023](#).

(Pages 17 - 104)

5. PROPOSED EXTENSION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC'S DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS

To receive the joint report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services and the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services, which seeks to inform Members of the outcomes of the public consultation exercise initiated by Cabinet in relation to the dog control public spaces protection orders and seeks authority to extend the two Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to dog controls in Rhondda Cynon Taf (the 'Dog Control PSPOs'), subject to any amendments Members may wish to consider in response to the consultation.

(Pages 105 - 188)

6. LOCAL COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEME 2023

To receive the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services, which provides details of a further Local Cost of Living Support Scheme (2023).

(Pages 189 - 194)

7. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023-24 TO 2026-27

To receive the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services, which provides Members with an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2023/24 to 2026/27, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2024/25 during the autumn.

(Pages 195 - 250)

8. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN - INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

To receive the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services, which sets out the position regarding the opportunity for Cabinet to propose to Council to further invest in the Council's priority areas, aligned to the Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024.

(Pages 251 - 258)

9. COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT - 30TH JUNE 2023 (QUARTER 1)

To receive the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services, which provides Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first three months of this financial year (to the 30th June 2023).

(Pages 259 - 290)

10. STATUTORY SCHOOL ORGANISATION - PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

To receive the report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, which seeks formal approval to begin the relevant and required statutory school organisation consultation to close Rhigos Primary School in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018); and to extend the catchment area of Hirwaun Primary School to incorporate the current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School.

(Pages 291 - 338)

11. CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

To receive the report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, which is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

(Pages 339 - 460)

12. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

"That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act".

13. ACQUISITION OF LAND TO THE EAST OF CENARTH DRIVE CWMBACH, ABERDARE

To receive the joint report of the Director of Corporate Estates and Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation, which seeks authority to acquire the Freehold interest of land to the east of Cenarth Drive Cwmbach, Aberdare comprising land immediately adjacent. The land is also known as Tunnel Tip, Cwmbach.

(Pages 461 - 470)

Circulation:-

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

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

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

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CABINET**

Minutes of the Hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 17 July 2023 at 1.00 pm.

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

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

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

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

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
Mr B Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr R Waters, Director – Frontline Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Mr A Stone, Head of Flood Risk Management and Strategic Projects
Ms A Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Mr G Roberts, Integrated Transport Manager

25 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of interest were made:

The Leader, County Borough Councillor A Morgan OBE declared a personal interest in respect of item 9 of the agenda (Cardiff Capital Region Housing Viability Fund). "I Chair the Housing Investment Fund in the City deal."

The Service Director of Transportation, Enforcement and Strategic Investment declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of Item 10 of the agenda (Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Council Officer Directorship). "My post is referenced within the report."

The Director of Frontline Services declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of Item 10 of the agenda (Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Council Officer Directorship). "I am a Director of Amgen."

The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services declared a personal and pecuniary interest in respect of Item 10 of the agenda (Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Council Officer Directorship). “I am a Director of Amgen.”

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure declared a personal interest in respect of Item 10 of the agenda (Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Council Officer Directorship). “I attend meetings on behalf of the Local Authority”; and a personal interest in respect of Item 5 – of the agenda (SACRE). “I am a Member of the SACRE Group”.

26 Minutes

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2023 as an accurate record.

27 Cabinet Work Programme

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided the Cabinet with an update on the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the 2023-2024 Municipal Year.

Members were reminded that the Cabinet work programme was considered by the Overview & Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee at its meeting on 24th May 2023 to inform the work programmes of the individual Scrutiny Committees. If approved by Cabinet, the Service Director advised that the updated Cabinet Work Programme would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of its quarterly update.

The Deputy Leader noted the amendments cited in the revised programme and was content that Scrutiny Chairs are cited upon such changes and flexibility which is required within their own work programmes to accommodate.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the Work Programme for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

28 Pre-Scrutiny: Estyn's Report on Education Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided the Cabinet with the feedback and comments of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee following its pre-scrutiny of Estyn's report on Education Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, at its meeting on the 20th June 2023.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services then provided the Cabinet with an overview of Estyn's processes and procedures for inspecting a local authority, as well as the strengths and areas for development for the Education Directorate as a result of its most recent inspection by Estyn.

The Leader thanked the officers for the update and was encouraged to note that the areas of improvement raised by Estyn, were areas already identified by the Local Authority.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language endorsed the Leader's comments and was pleased to note the positive findings of Estyn's report. The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to thank the Estyn inspection team for a fair and accurate report; all those who took part in the inspection process and also extended his thanks to the Director and staff for their continued hard work.

The Deputy Leader reiterated the above-mentioned comments and took the opportunity to extend her gratitude to the Director and the team.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the comments and observations of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee; and
2. To endorse Estyn's report on Education Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, as attached to the report as Appendix B.

29 Standard Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services provided the Cabinet with information on the Council's statutory duties to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and the constitution of Rhondda Cynon Taf SACRE; and informed Members that the Annual Report of the RCT SACRE for the academic year 2021-2022 was available.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language was happy to support the recommendations contained within the report and commented that it was a reflection of the broad remit of the group and the duties of the Local Authority. The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to thank all Members of the SACRE Group for its work during the previous academic year.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure, as a Member of the SACRE Group, informed Members that the Group work well together to achieve its goals and that its current aim was to enhance its engagement with young people.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the Annual Report 2021-2022.

30 Council Performance Report - 31st March 2023 (Quarter 4)

The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services provided the Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, for the financial year ended 31st March 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services acknowledged that the ongoing cost-of-living crisis had made for a difficult year for both the community and the Council. Despite this, the Cabinet Member was pleased to note the £135M in Capital Investment and the positive progress made against the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. The Cabinet Member was also pleased with the work of the Council's Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee to deliver the Council's Climate Change Strategy and the ongoing work to manage and mitigate risks of extreme weather events. The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to thank the Service Director and the team for ensuring robust financial arrangements are in place to ensure continuous service delivery for the residents of RCT.

The Deputy Leader was in support of the recommendations contained within the report and noted that the devastating effects of the pandemic and Storm Dennis was still suffered within the County Borough. Despite the financial pressures, the Deputy Leader recognised the strong investment and collaborative work and took the opportunity to thank the Service Director.

The Leader extended his thanks to the finance team and spoke of the fine financial management of grant funding. The Leader explained that, as a whole, the Council was successful in securing both capital and revenue grants but spoke of the work behind the scenes to deliver projects in compliance with audit and procurement rules.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the context of the Council's Services continuing to manage the on-going effects of communities recovering from the pandemic and the United Kingdom wide cost-of-living crisis, both of which are contributing to increases in demand for many services and significant inflationary cost pressures.

Revenue

2. To note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 31st March 2023 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary).

Capital

3. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 31st March 2023 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
4. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31st March 2023 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

5. To note the year-end position regarding progress made against agreed Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).
6. To note the progress update to enhance the Council's short term and long-term response to extreme weather events (Section 6 of the Executive Summary).
7. To note the progress update in respect of the Council's response to tackling Climate Change (Section 7 of the Executive Summary).

31 Report to commence formal statutory consultation of the authority's review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan

The Service Director of Transportation, Enforcement and Strategic Investment provided the Cabinet with an update on progress of the Authority's review of the revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) and Action Plan (formerly known as a Flood Risk Management Plan), as required under Section 10 of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010.

The Leader thanked the officer for the comprehensive report. The Leader advised that since 2020, the Council had been successful in securing funding to improve flood resilience and that the Strategy would ensure funding is prioritised going forward.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care took the opportunity to thank officers for their continuous hard work and spoke of his own experiences during Storm Dennis in 2020. The Cabinet Member spoke of the heart-breaking scenes at Trehafod and Britannia; and of the resilience of those communities affected.

The Cabinet Member spoke of residents' fears of extreme weather events in the future and was pleased to note that the Council was putting measures in place to mitigate the risks.

The Deputy Leader echoed previous comments about mitigating the risk, where possible and spoke of a successful flood alleviation scheme in her ward which had given the community a degree of comfort. The Deputy added that it was important for communities to recognise where responsibilities lie in terms of the Council and National Resources Wales and its prevention measures.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To commence formal statutory consultation on the Draft LFRMS and Action Plan and accompanying Environmental assessments (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)), as per the programme of work which was agreed by Cabinet on 15th May 2023.

32 Renovation and Redevelopment of the Rock Grounds Buildings, Aberdare

The Director of Prosperity and Development provided the Cabinet with details of a proposal to repurpose the Rock Grounds Buildings in Aberdare into a quality hotel facility with restaurant, bar and spa; and sought approval to commence formal procurement of a development partner to deliver such a scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity voiced his support in respect of the ambitious proposal. The Cabinet Member spoke of the recent Tourism report, which had highlighted a shortage of tourist accommodation in RCT, particularly the upper valley; and of the recent Aberdare Town Centre Strategy, which highlighted the need to increase tourist accommodation to benefit the region, as a whole. The Cabinet Member felt that the proposal before Members, would build upon those needs, whilst bringing a historic building back into use for tourism and for the local population.

The Leader was in support of the proposals and commented that it would be pleasing to see investment into the building. The Leader referred to the unique venture, Lanelay Hall, within the South of the Borough, as an example of successful tourist accommodation.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the strategic framework provided by the Aberdare Regeneration Strategy, the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy and the Council's Tourism Strategy as a basis for redeveloping the Rock Grounds Buildings in Aberdare Town Centre;
2. To consider the draft proposals for the repurposing and refurbishment of the Rock Grounds Buildings, Aberdare into a quality hotel facility with restaurant, bar and spa;
3. To progress to a formal procurement stage to secure a development partner to deliver a hotel on the site subject to future update reports on progress; and
4. To receive a further report following the completion of the procurement stage and identifying any changes to the current ideas for the site following further feasibility work with the agreed development partner.

33 **Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Housing Viability Fund**

The Director of Prosperity and Development presented the report, which sought Cabinet approval to progress the CCR Housing Viability Gap Fund on Cwm Coking Works to a stage to enable the draw-down of £8 million of available funding.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity felt that the proposal before Members was a great opportunity for the Council to open a site, which was previously considered unviable as a commercial offering. The Cabinet Member commented that it would remediate a difficult site but would also help towards the Council's house building targets with a potential of over 600 new homes being constructed.

The Leader emphasised that without the capital investment, the site would not be developed and that it had been subject to an appraisal process as part of the CCR Housing Viability Fund.

The Deputy Leader referred to concerns expressed in respect of biodiversity at the site and questioned if consideration would be given during the process. The Director assured Members that biodiversity would be a key consideration going forward in terms of the remediation of the site and any future housing development.

With the agreement of the Chair, County Borough Councillor R Yeo addressed the Cabinet on this item.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve and authorise the Agreement between the developer and RCT to enable the draw-down of £8 million of funding from the CCR Housing Investment Fund.

34 **Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited - Council Officer Directorship**

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services sought Members approval in respect of a change to one of the appointed Council officer directors of Amgen Rhondda Limited and Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited (the 'Companies') as a result of the forthcoming retirement of Mr. Roger Waters, Director of Frontline Services and deletion of that post from the Council's management structure.

Cabinet Members were in support of the recommendation contained within the report and took the opportunity to thank the Director of Frontline Services for his excellent work and wish him well in his future endeavours.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. That the appointed Council officer director of Amgen Rhondda Limited and Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited, which was previously aligned to the post holder of Director of Frontline Services, be realigned to the post holder of Director – Highways, Streetcare & Transportation Services with effect from 1st September 2023.

N.B- Having previously declared a personal and pecuniary interest (Minute No.

25) in respect of this item, the following officers left the meeting, whilst the item was discussed and voted upon:

- The Service Director of Transportation, Enforcement and Strategic Investment;
- The Director of Frontline Services; and
- The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services.

35 URGENT ITEM - SUBSIDISED BUS TRAVEL SCHEMES ACROSS RHONDDA CYNON TAF DURING THE 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Chairman of the meeting, was of the opinion that the report of the Director of Frontline Services be considered, in accordance with the provision of section 100(b)4(B) of the Local Government Act 1972, as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstance i.e. To enable the immediate implementation of the proposed scheme on the 24th July.

The Director of Frontline Services presented the report, which sought Cabinet's approval to introduce a £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 24th July 2023 – 3rd September 2023 (inclusive), for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary. This would apply to all operators currently operating a scheduled service. Subject to the continuation of Welsh Government Bus Funding beyond 24th July 2023. The report sought approval to delegate authority to the Director of Frontline Services to introduce a £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 1st December 2023 – 31st December 2023 (inclusive), for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary – subject to the outcomes of the School Summer Holidays scheme and available funding, and in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure. Subject to the continuation of Welsh Government Bus Funding beyond 24th July 2023; and approval to introduce a 1 year 7-day bus travel pilot scheme for all school and college students that are in receipt of a public bus season ticket to attend school or college between 4th September 2023 and the end of the respective academic year 2023/24.

The Leader was in support of the recommendations contained within the report and took the opportunity to thank officers for the work undertaken to bring forward the positive report. The Leader advised that the scheme would save residents £1.1M and spoke of the previous scheme agreed by Cabinet for March 2023, which increased patronage by 7% the following month. The Leader advised that there had been some anti-social behaviour during the last bus travel scheme and hoped that the £1 maximum single bus fare fee would alleviate that, as well as making the money go further.

The Leader reminded Members that he had asked officers at a recent Council meeting to consider potential support packages for residents during the cost-of-living crisis and felt that the scheme before Members would be an additional benefit, which could save some families hundreds of pounds for the remainder of the year.

The Cabinet Member for Environment & Leisure endorsed the Leader's comments and spoke of the success of the previous initiative. The Cabinet Member hoped that the scheme would help families have a more financially viable summer by allowing them to travel across RCT and visit its attractions at an affordable cost; and take some pressure off residents during the Christmas

period.

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication informed Members that the permission of the Presiding Officer would be sought to exempt the matter from call-in, to enable the immediate implementation of the proposed scheme on the 24th July.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the report and approve the proposals to:
 - (ii) Introduce a £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 24th July 2023 – 3rd September 2023 (inclusive), for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary. Subject to the continuation of Welsh Government Bus Funding beyond 24th July 2023.
 - (iii) Delegate authority to the Director of Frontline Services to introduce a £1 maximum single bus fare for travel between 1st December 2023 – 31st December 2023 (inclusive), for all journeys that start and terminate within the Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) county boundary – subject to the outcomes of the School Summer Holidays scheme and available funding, and in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure. Subject to the continuation of Welsh Government Bus Funding beyond 24th July 2023.
 - (i) Introduce a 1 year 7-day bus travel pilot scheme for all post-16 school and college students that will be in receipt of a public bus season ticket to attend school or college between 4th September 2023 and the end of the respective academic year 2023/24.
2. To review the outcomes of the bus travel schemes during the 2023/24 financial year and seek to develop further bus travel initiatives during the 2024/25 financial year, subject to funding.

This meeting closed at 2.10 pm

**Councillor A Morgan OBE
Chair.**

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



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

PRE-SCRUTINY – LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY REVIEW

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the feedback and comments of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee following its pre scrutiny of the Local Toilet Strategy Review at its meeting on the [10th July 2023](#).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the comments and observations of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee as advised within section 5 of the report; and
- 2.2 Subject to any further comment by Cabinet Members, approve the reviewed Local Toilet Strategy 2023 – 2028 as attached to the report as Appendix A.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need for Members to be aware of the comments and observations of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee prior to their consideration of the Local Toilet Strategy Review.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires local authorities to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for its area. The Act received Royal Assent in July 2017 and brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically Local Toilet Strategies.
- 4.2 The local authority has responsibility to:
- assess the community's need for toilets, including changing facilities for babies and changing places facilities for people with disabilities;
 - provide details of how to meet the identified need;
 - produce a Local Toilets Strategy; and
 - review the strategy, update and publicise revisions.

- 4.3 Local authorities had to prepare and publish their initial strategies by 31 May 2019, taking a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. Upon review of this strategy, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is required to publish a statement of progress. The first Local Toilets Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf was published in 2019.
- 4.4 The provision of local toilets for public use is not a statutory requirement of local authorities in Wales. At a challenging time for local authorities, this strategy aims to mitigate potential impacts by making toilets in more Council facilities available for public use and to work with the private sector to help promote their facilities.
- 4.5 The strategy aims to review the quality and quantity of local toilets throughout the county borough, and to provide or facilitate the provision of clean, safe, accessible and sustainable toilets for residents and visitors to the area at locations where the need for such facilities has been identified.
- 4.6 The following have been considered in reviewing the initial strategy, with any relevant updates and changes made to the revised strategy for 2023-2028:
- identifying the current level of provision of public toilets;
 - analysing the findings of the completed assessment of need activities for toilets available for use by the public in their area;
 - consideration to the requirements of the general population;
 - identifying the needs for particular user groups;
 - identifying any gaps in current provision;
 - supporting Welsh Government initiatives to improve information available on toilet facilities;
 - providing information setting out the steps which the local authority proposes to take to meet this need, and any other information which the council considers appropriate.

5. PRE-SCRUTINY OF THE LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY REVIEW.

- 5.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee met on the 10th July 2023, to consider the Local Toilet Strategy Review.
- 5.2 At the meeting Members discussed the provision available and acknowledged the position in comparison to other Local Authorities where budget constraints have resulted in the withdrawal of facilities.
- 5.3 Members discussed the facilities available in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the importance of residents and visitors being able to easily identify where public toilets are located and the opening hours. Members discussed the benefits of mapping facilities, clear signage and having a dedicated app which would display up to date information.
- 5.4 Some Members expressed concern regarding the night-time provision of public toilets and discussed the impact this has on town centres in particular. Members also acknowledged the balance between the need to provide facilities with also monitoring and deterring anti-social behaviour.

- 5.5 Members discussed the impact that reduced hours or closure of facilities could have on other Council departments such as Environmental Cleansing, noting that public toilets are an important facility to maintain and keep available.
- 5.6 Members also discussed the benefits that engaging with and encouraging private sector business to make their facilities accessible would bring. Members felt this aspect would be beneficial in ensuring that residents and visitors were able to easily access facilities when needed but noted the increased costs to businesses as being a barrier. Members felt incentivising businesses would encourage more willingness from businesses to work with the Council on this matter but again acknowledged the financial constraints being faced. Members with experience of supporting community projects also discussed the options to utilise community grants for volunteer organisations to provide public toilets.
- 5.7 Members engaged in further discussion around engaging with the Council's Town Centre's department to discuss ways to encourage businesses to make facilities available as a way of ensuring Town Centres are welcoming spaces encouraging residents to visit, noting that it is important to have facilities available to help town centres thrive.
- 5.8 In conclusion, Committee acknowledged the challenge to provide facilities at a time when budgets are challenged and were pleased that in comparison to other Local Authorities there is still a provision in RCT. However, Members felt that there would be room for improvement if work is done to identify any grants or external funding options available to support the programme.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the strategy, which is advised upon in Appendix A.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The involvement of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in the pre-scrutiny exercise will contribute to the quality and robustness of Cabinet decision-making.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 Any financial implications aligned to the strategy are identified within Appendix A

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph Part 4 of the Constitution (Overview & Scrutiny Procedure)

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness.

10.2 The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in this area will strengthen accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th September 2023

PRE-SCRUTINY – LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY REVIEW

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND
COMMUNICATION**

Background Papers

[Minutes to Meeting on 10th July](#)

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

REVIEW OF THE LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY 2019-2023

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Author: Caroline O'Neill, Head of Arts, Culture and Library Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to provide Cabinet with an update on the review of the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Toilets Strategy from 2019-2023 to 2023-2028.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the information provided in the report; and
- 2.2 Approves the reviewed Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2028 .

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the revised Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2028 and to seek approval for publishing.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires local authorities to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for its area. The Act received Royal Assent in July 2017 and brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically Local Toilet Strategies.
- 4.2 The local authority has responsibility to:
- assess the community's need for toilets, including changing facilities for babies and changing places facilities for people with disabilities;
 - provide details of how to meet the identified need;

- produce a Local Toilets Strategy; and
 - review the strategy, update and publicise revisions.
- 4.3 Local authorities had to prepare and publish their initial strategies by 31 May 2019, taking a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. Upon review of this strategy, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is required to publish a statement of progress. The first Local Toilets Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf was published in 2019.
- 4.4 The provision of local toilets for public use is not a statutory requirement of local authorities in Wales. At a challenging time for local authorities, this strategy aims to mitigate potential impacts by making toilets in more Council facilities available for public use and to work with the private sector to help promote their facilities.
- 4.5 The strategy aims to review the quality and quantity of local toilets throughout the county borough, and to provide or facilitate the provision of clean, safe, accessible and sustainable toilets for residents and visitors to the area at locations where the need for such facilities has been identified.
- 4.6 The following have been considered in reviewing the initial strategy, with any relevant updates and changes made to the revised strategy for 2023-2028:
- identifying the current level of provision of public toilets;
 - analysing the findings of the completed assessment of need activities for toilets available for use by the public in their area;
 - consideration to the requirements of the general population;
 - identifying the needs for particular user groups;
 - identifying any gaps in current provision;
 - supporting Welsh Government initiatives to improve information available on toilet facilities;
 - providing information setting out the steps which the local authority proposes to take to meet this need, and any other information which the council considers appropriate.

5. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 5.1 The Council has continued the level of investment to maintain the current provision. The Council does not charge for use of its public toilets. A list of public conveniences provided by the Council is [here](#).
- 5.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has continued to invest in facilities since the 2019 Local Toilets Strategy with an extensive enhancement and refurbishments programme, totalling in excess of circa £315,000.
- 5.3 In addition to the enhancements to Council owned and managed facilities, three further developments have taken place working with key community partners.

- 5.4 A number of changing places are available across the borough. Changing places are facilities for individuals with a range of disabilities and limited mobility who are unable to access standard disabled toilets. These facilities feature specialist equipment including hoists and changing benches to enable these individuals to access public toilets in their communities. For full details of available facilities please see: changing-places.org/find.
- 5.5 Mapping locations has commenced and is an important part of the strategy ensuring that people who need to use toilet facilities can easily access information about the location, opening times, accessibility, and type of facilities available.

6. OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN

6.1 Two objectives have been developed with supporting actions:

6.1.1 To enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities by:

- Promoting equal opportunities to provide appropriate, accessible and effective facilities to all sections of the community, including changing facilities for babies and changing places for disabled persons. Looking for opportunities to include these provisions in any new (Council owned) developments where possible and publicising more widely the already available facilities.
- Exploring the option of displaying the toilet logo sticker at the entrances of appropriate publicly accessible Council buildings, community venues and private businesses that agree to participate.
- Working with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and health care providers to encourage them to make facilities available to the public, to participate in the mapping scheme, and to display the toilet logo sticker in appropriate premises.
- Improving awareness and information available on toilet provision in the borough by updating information on the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council website and regularly update the “Lle” open access data repository with Welsh Government.
- Exploring the provision of improved physical signage to existing facilities, in particular to consider new accessible signage to tackle discrimination.
- Reviewing cleansing operations and standards periodically to ensure effective provision within allocated resources.
- Reviewing opening hours of existing facilities with a view to exploring alternative opening hours where practicable.

- Working with the Police, members of the public, community groups and other interested parties, to ensure that facilities are as safe as possible.

6.1.2 Promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities by:

- Exploring all available options, including working with the private sector, community and voluntary groups and Town and Community Councils, to make more local toilets and changing facilities available where they are most needed. Working with our local Neighbourhood Network partners and consider any opportunities for community asset transfers where available.
- Working with partners to improve toilet provision close to key night-time gathering points, including taxi ranks, car parks, railway stations, bus stations and stops.
- Ensuring that the Events Safety Advisory Group continues to provide advice and guidance on appropriate and accessible temporary toilet facilities to be provided at organised events to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- Considering dementia-friendly improvements such as increasing colour contrast in Council owned toilet facilities.
- Considering ratio of male to female facilities, whereby 1:2 is the ideal ratio as outlined by WG.
- Considering toilet provision for the LGBTQI+ community.
- In line with the Council's Tourism Strategy, considering the required toilet facilities to serve the needs of visitors.
- Considering allowing members of the public free access to additional toilet facilities in publicly accessible Council buildings and promote this using the toilet logo stickers.
- Promoting all available facilities using the toilet logo sticker with associated public awareness raising campaign, so community members recognise the logo and have an understanding that premises that display it allow the public access to their toilet facilities.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

7.1 In reviewing the Local Toilets Strategy 2019-2023, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to ensure that:

- The Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties;
- Due regard has been taken of the likely impact of the decision in terms of equality and discrimination.

- 7.2 It is considered that the impact on service users, employees and the wider community is expected to be positive, as the strategy's objectives are to:
- Enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities;
 - Promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities.
- 7.3 The strategy outlines how the Council has maintained and invested in its local toilet facilities, including increasing the number of changing facility places.
- 7.4 It refers to exploring improved signage; improving information available; considering the need of the LGBTQI+ community; considering dementia-friendly improvements; and working with partners to improve access across the county borough generally as well as at organised events.
- 7.5 There is no adverse impact on any protected characteristic from the adoption of the revised strategy.
- 7.6 Subject to Cabinet approval, the EIA will be published on the Council's website.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In reviewing the Local Toilets Strategy 2019-2023, a Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) has been undertaken to ensure:
- The Council considers the principles and requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015;
 - Compliance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- 8.2 It is considered that the impact on service users, employees and the wider community is expected to be positive with the proposals outlined in the strategy:
- Bilingual signage denoting local toilet facilities across the borough;
 - Bilingual information and advice in relation to local toilet facilities available on the Council website;
 - Bilingual information and advice in relation to all-Wales local toilet facilities available on the WG website 'Lle'.

- 8.3 There is no adverse impact on the Welsh language from the adoption of the revised strategy.

- 8.4 Subject to Cabinet approval, the WLIS will be published on the Council's website.

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 The revised strategy was presented to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 10th July 2023 whereby the Committee resolved to acknowledge the information provided in the report and for the comments to be fed back to Cabinet.

- 9.2 In preparation of the 2019 Local Toilet Strategy, for a four-week period starting in October 2018, an Assessment of Need public consultation was conducted across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This involved engaging with communities and a wide range of interested parties to consider the requirements of the general population, to consider the needs for particular user groups, to review existing toilet facilities, and to identify any gaps in current provision.
- 9.3 The engagement was conducted via a range of approaches including feedback from the public, social media, online content and emails, surveys and questionnaires, attendance at community venues.
- 9.4 Respondents were asked a wide variety of questions relating to areas most visited within Rhondda Cynon Taf; times of visiting; details of toilet and changing facility provision; attractions and parks most visited; followed by a series of statements relating to facilities which respondents were asked to agree or disagree with.
- 9.5 Furthermore, a 12-week period of public consultation starting in February 2019 was conducted across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This involved engaging with communities and a wide range of interested parties to consult on the draft Local Toilets Strategy, which had been produced following the Assessment of Need public consultation.
- 9.6 The 12-week public consultation asked a number of questions, including if respondents felt that the strategy provides clear information to help understand why the actions proposed in the strategy are necessary; if they agree with the actions under Objective 1: to enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities; and if they agree with the actions under Objective 2: to promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities and to provide further information if they felt that there was anything missing from the proposed objectives and supporting actions.
- 9.7 During the 12-week public consultation, feedback on the draft strategy was provided by the Community Liaison Committee and the Authority's Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
- 9.8 As part of the review of the RCTCBC Local Toilets Strategy, local community consultation took place during the period July 2022 – October 2022. 130 people participated who agreed that the key points to come from the original public needs assessment remain valid. These key points are outlined below:
- Facilities in the towns and villages visited most often as primarily inadequate, as opposed to the other options available, during early morning, between 9am and 6pm, during evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays.
 - Toilet provision was adequate during the day but inadequate early morning and evenings at the attractions and parks visited most frequently. Both changing facilities for young children and people with

disabilities were deemed to be inadequate during the day with none available early morning and evenings.

- Concerns about feeling unsafe using public toilets in relation to facilities being used for anti-social behaviour and drug activity.
- Lack of changing facilities for individuals with disabilities was highlighted with specific mention in relation to both children and adults.
- Too few public toilet facilities available and that the location of facilities is not convenient.
- Indication that there is not enough information on where facilities are located.
- Lack of facilities deterring visitors to certain locations.
- Indication that facilities are not open at the times that they are needed.
- A feeling that toilets should be free to use.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

10.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

11.2 The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires local authorities to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for its area. The Act received Royal Assent in July 2017 and brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically Local Toilet Strategies.

12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

12.1 The Council's Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" sets out a clear vision to make Rhondda Cynon Taf 'the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous'. The Council is committed to delivering three main priorities under this plan, as follows: ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful; creating places where people are proud to live, work and play; and enabling prosperity by creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial, and to fulfil their potential and prosper. The Local Toilets Strategy can contribute to these, supporting a number of the objectives within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 to make the vision a reality.

12.2 The draft Cwm Taf Morgannwg Wellbeing Plan 2023-2028: 'A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg', contains two objectives: Healthy Local

Neighbourhoods – where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported, and valued; and, Sustainable and resilient local neighbourhoods – where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities, valuing, managing and enjoying our green and blue spaces responsibly.

- 12.3 These plans set the strategic direction at a regional and local level. The Local Toilets Strategy cuts across a number of these objectives and aims to support them. Publicly accessible toilets are needed by every one of us at some point where we live, work or visit and so the provision touches on all areas of the Council in some way.
- 12.4 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. Due regard has been made to the above five ways of working when revising this strategy.

13. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 13.1 The Local Toilets Strategy is a strategic document that is relevant to the whole of the County Borough to ensure toilet facilities can be provided and accessed by the local population.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 The provision of local toilets for public use is not a statutory requirement of local authorities in Wales. At a challenging time for local authorities, this strategy aims to mitigate potential impacts by making toilets in more Council facilities available for public use and to work with the private sector to help promote their facilities.
- 13.2 Two objectives have been developed with supporting actions:
- To enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities;
 - Promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities.
- 13.3 The strategy outlines how the Council has maintained and invested in its local toilet facilities, including increasing the number of changing facility places. It refers to exploring improved signage; improving information available; considering the need of the LGBTQI+ community; considering dementia-friendly improvements; and working with partners to improve access across the county borough generally as well as at organised events.
- 13.4 Cabinet is recommended to note the information provided in this report and approve the revised Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2025.

Other Information: *Relevant Scrutiny Committee:*
Community Services Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

A LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY REVIEW

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR BOB
HARRIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING**

Background Papers

10th July 2023 – Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Officer to contact:

Caroline O'Neill, Head of Arts, Culture and Library Services

WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

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

Stage 1 – Information Gathering	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name:	Review of Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2028
Department	Arts, Culture and Library Services (and Community Development)
Director	Louise Davies
Officer Completing the WLIA	Caroline O'Neill
Email	caroline.a.oneill@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	07786 523614
Brief Description	<p>This strategy contributes towards achieving accessible and clean toilets wherever people live, work or visit. Need for provision may increase in time as developments take place, population needs change, and through welcoming visitors to the area. This is an opportune time to set a strategy for promoting access to toilet facilities where they are needed.</p> <p>Further information is available here: Local Toilets Strategy Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (rctcbc.gov.uk) Recent Community Services Scrutiny Committee report is here: Agenda for Community Services Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 10th July, 2023, 5.00 pm - Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (modern.gov.co.uk)</p>

	<p>The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 received Royal Assent in July 2017 and brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically Local Toilet Strategies.</p> <p>The aim of Part 8 is to ensure each local authority in Wales assesses the needs of its community in relation to toilets, and then takes a strategic and transparent approach to best meet that need. The intended effect is to improve the planning of provision so that any such decisions are taken within the overall context of meeting the communities' identified needs. A strategic approach will also help to mitigate any negative impacts of changes to provision.</p> <p>The local authority has responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the community's need for toilets, including changing facilities for babies and changing places facilities for people with disabilities; • provide details of how to meet the identified need; • produce a Local Toilets Strategy; and • review the strategy, update and publicise revisions. <p>Local authorities had to prepare and publish their initial strategies by 31 May 2019. The duty to prepare a Local Toilets Strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. The local authority must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. Upon review of this strategy, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is required to publish a statement of progress.</p>
Date	14/08/2023
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Service users, Employees, Wider Community

What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	The aim of this strategy is to meet the legislative requirements set out within Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, ensuring each local authority in Wales assesses the needs of its community in relation to toilets, and then takes a strategic and transparent approach to best meet that need, with consideration to the Welsh language.
Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.	Any individual who uses local public toilet facilities could be affected by this strategy.
Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned	The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. There was, however, a small increase in RCT – the percentage of the population of the county borough who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%. Numerically, RCT saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough, from 27,779 speakers to 28,556 speakers. RCT was also one of only four LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tudful. All of these are neighbouring county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase in demand for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed, data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider what impact it may have on the services we provide.
Other relevant data or research	None
Further Welsh Language Considerations	<p>The Council believes that the Local Toilet Strategy does not necessitate the need for a FULL Welsh Language Impact Assessment, based on the subject matter.</p> <p>However, the Council will still be bound by the relevant Standards imposed on it and contained within the 2015 Regulations. This will include, although not exhaustive, ensuring any signs, notices and material for public view, as well as any engagement and consultations are available in Welsh and/or bilingual.</p> <p>Furthermore, as the Local Toilet Strategy embeds and is further reviewed, we will continue to work with the Welsh language Third Sector (e.g. Y Muni in Pontypridd), Welsh language groups and organisations to</p>

include them in the Strategy and offer them an opportunity to contribute to the provision. This in turn could increase foot fall for those organisations and further promote opportunities for engagement (for Welsh and Non-Welsh speakers alike) to engage with the language. This aspect would aid in those areas that are hosting elements of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Eisteddfod in 2024. We will also work with the Town Centre Strategy Teams, Regeneration and businesses to look at Welsh language opportunities with regards to toilet provision.

Lastly, we will also continue to work with promoters and organisers to ensure adequate toilet provision is made available at specific Welsh language events (i.e. Eisteddfod, Parti Ponty), or with local partners where visitors and attendees may continue to use Welsh outside of the events area.

We will continue to use the WG website 'Lle' to refer to toilet facilities and also this Strategy to promote the Welsh language (through using a Welsh word as a branding/naming opportunity).

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

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

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

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

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	The strategy refers to the use of Welsh Government stipulated bilingual signage to be used to identify public toilet facilities; a Welsh Government established bilingual open access data repository for identifying locations of facilities via the website, 'Lle'; and a bilingual list of local toilet facilities within RCTCBC available via the website too.	N/A	As the Strategy further embeds and is further reviewed, associated Welsh Language Groups will be given an opportunity to contribute to the provisions made. This will ensure the Strategy continues to promote the Welsh Language when opportunities arise e.g the Eisteddfod in 2024.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	Neutral	N/A	N/A	N/A
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	Positive	The strategy refers to the use of Welsh Government stipulated bilingual signage to be used to identify public toilet facilities; a Welsh Government established bilingual open access data repository for identifying locations of facilities via the website, 'Lle'; and a bilingual list of local toilet facilities within RCTCBC available via the website too.		We will continue to work with promoters and organisers to ensure adequate toilet provision is made available at specific Welsh language events (i.e. Eisteddfod, Parti Ponty), or with local partners where visitors and attendees may continue to use Welsh outside of the events area.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards e.g increasing or reducing the Council’s ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	The strategy refers to the use of Welsh Government stipulated bilingual signage to be used to identify public toilet facilities; a Welsh Government established bilingual open access data repository for identifying locations of facilities via the website, ‘Lle’; and a bilingual list of local toilet facilities within RCTCBC available via the website too.	The Strategy published in 2019 noted bilingual signage and information available publicly via the Council’s website and ‘Lle’.	Compliance in this area will be high through close working with Welsh Language Services to ensure signage is translated correctly and that any communications/website content is translated accurately.
<p>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language</p>	Positive	The strategy refers to the use of Welsh Government stipulated bilingual signage to be used to identify public toilet facilities; a Welsh Government established bilingual open access data repository for identifying	The Strategy published in 2019 noted bilingual signage and information available publicly via the Council’s website and ‘Lle’.	Compliance in this area will be high through close working with Welsh Language Services to ensure signage is translated correctly and that any

		locations of facilities via the website, 'Lle'; and a bilingual list of local toilet facilities within RCTCBC available via the website too.		communications/website content is translated accurately.
Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal				
Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.				
Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?				
What are you going to do?		When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?	
Continue to review the Strategy in line with our Welsh Language Standards and work with Welsh Language Groups/promoters so that any opportunity to promote the Welsh Language in regard to the Strategy is taken advantage of.		Throughout the span of this strategy's lifecycle	Service Manager – Community Development	
If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.				
What was identified?		Why is it not possible?		
N/A		N/A		

Stage 4 – Review

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

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your impact assessment to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

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

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<p>The Council believes that the Local Toilets Strategy does not necessitate the need for a FULL Welsh Language Impact Assessment, based on the subject matter.</p> <p>However, the Council will still be bound by the relevant Standards imposed on it and contained within the 2015 Regulations. This will include, although not exhaustive, ensuring any signs, notices and material for public view, as well as any engagement and consultations are available in Welsh and/or bilingual.</p> <p>Furthermore, as the Local Toilet Strategy embeds and is further reviewed, we will continue to work with the Welsh language Third Sector (e.g. Y Muni in Pontypridd), Welsh language groups and organisations to include them in the Strategy and offer them an opportunity to contribute to the provision. This in turn could increase foot fall for those</p>	16/08/2023	N/A

<p>organisations and further promote opportunities for engagement (for Welsh and Non-Welsh speakers alike) to engage with the language. This aspect would aide in those areas that are hosting elements of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Eisteddfod in 2024. We will also work with the Town Centre Strategy Teams, Regeneration and businesses to look at Welsh language opportunities with regards to toilet provision.</p> <p>Lastly, we will also continue to work with promoters and organisers to ensure adequate toilet provision is made available at specific Welsh language events (i.e. Eisteddfod, Parti Ponty), or with local partners where visitors and attendees may continue to use Welsh outside of the events area.</p> <p>We will continue to use the WG name 'Lle' to refer to toilet facilities and also this Strategy to promote the Welsh language (e.g. through considering using a Welsh word as a branding/naming opportunity).</p>		
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
N/A		
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
N/A		

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Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

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

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will prepare an interim progress report setting out the steps taken in line with the strategy every two years, commencing from the date of the last published strategy. The interim progress report will be published within six months of the end date of the two year period. Following the publication of this Revised Local Toilets Strategy in May 2023, progress will be considered, and a report prepared and published before the end of November 2025.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council may review its strategy at any time following which it must publish a statement of the steps which it has taken in accordance with the strategy. Following a review, if it is decided to revise the strategy it will publish the revised strategy and then prepare an interim progress report covering the two-year period commencing from the date of publication.

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Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal


Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

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

There would be a positive outcome as the proposals outlined in the strategy:
 Bilingual signage denoting local toilet facilities across the borough.
 Bilingual information and advice in relation to local toilet facilities available on the Council website.



Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Caroline O'Neill	Service Director Name:	
Position	Head of Arts, Culture and Libraries	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined.
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature		Service Director Signature	
Date	17.08.2023	Date	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Syd Dennis

Service Director: Louise Davies

Service Area: Arts, Culture and Libraries (and Community Development)

Date: 10/08/2023

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

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

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

Review of RCTCBC Local Toilets Strategy 2023- 2028

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

This strategy contributes towards achieving accessible and clean toilets wherever people live, work or visit. Need for provision may increase in time as developments take place, population needs change, and through welcoming visitors to the area. This is an opportune time to set a strategy for promoting access to toilet facilities where they are needed.

Further information is available here:

Local Toilets Strategy | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (rctcbc.gov.uk)

Recent Community Services Scrutiny Committee report is here: Agenda for Community Services Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 10th July, 2023, 5.00 pm - Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (moderngov.co.uk)

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

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 received Royal Assent in July 2017 and brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically Local Toilet Strategies.

The aim of Part 8 is to ensure each local authority in Wales assesses the needs of its community in relation to toilets, and then takes a strategic and transparent approach to best meet that need. The intended effect is to improve the planning of provision so that any such decisions are taken within the

overall context of meeting the communities' identified needs. A strategic approach will also help to mitigate any negative impacts of changes to provision.

The local authority has responsibility to:

- • assess the community's need for toilets, including changing facilities for babies and changing places facilities for people with disabilities;
- • provide details of how to meet the identified need;
- • produce a Local Toilets Strategy; and
- • review the strategy, update and publicise revisions.

Local authorities had to prepare and publish their initial strategies by 31 May 2019. The duty to prepare a Local Toilets Strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. The local authority must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. Upon review of this strategy, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is required to publish a statement of progress.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

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

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

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

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

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Positive	The Council has continued the level of investment to maintain the current provision. The Council does not charge for use of its public toilets. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has continued to invest in facilities since the 2019 Local Toilets Strategy with an extensive enhancement and refurbishments programme The Strategy's two objectives are: To enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities; Promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities.	RCT Community Insights Report Cwm Taf Ageing Well in Wales Plan Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan 2023-2028. Cwm Taf Joint Commissioning Statement for Older People's Services 2015/25 - among the themes identified are accessing accessible information and advice and

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>OLDER PEOPLE</p> <p>19.2% (45,995) of residents in RCT are aged 65+.</p> <p>Research shows that loneliness has a similar effect on people's mortality as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and it is linked to poor mental health, and depression as well as health service use. Having access to local toilet facilities that meet users needs reduces loneliness and social isolation.</p> <p>Age Friendly Communities are ones, which meet the needs of everyone irrespective of their age. In respect of older people such communities should encourage and enable them to engage with their surroundings and continue to engage socially within those communities as this will</p>	<p>addressing social isolation and loneliness, both of which are supported by the actions identified in the Strategy.</p> <p>Age Friendly Wales Strategy</p> <p>RCT Corporate Plan - Making a Difference 2020-24</p> <p>Consultation responses</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>help to maintain their health, well-being and independence.</p> <p>The Local Toilets Strategy will contribute to the above by providing access to free, accessible and local toilet facilities.</p>	
<p>Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The Council has a legal duty to anticipate the needs of disabled customers and to take reasonable steps to remove or reduce barriers that prevent disabled people from accessing services and should take positive steps to ensure that disabled people can access services including making reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>People with disabilities often face the challenge of being medicalised and this has increased significantly since Covid as governments developed the Shielded Patients Lists, now replaced with the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable List which has inadvertently reinforced a medical</p>	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan identifies the need to better understand communities and the barriers that exist for them especially young people, disabled people and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.</p> <p>UK Research on the impact of Mental Illness (2011) indicated that it has a significant impact on life expectancy and that people who suffered from enduring and severe mental illness die on average 10 years earlier than the general population. In addition it</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>view of disability. A medical model defines disabled people by their medical conditions and has been criticised for primarily focusing on what people cannot do because of their differences, rather than what they can do if barriers in society were removed.</p> <p>This Strategy outlines the Council's investment in fully accessible disabled toilets and changing place facilities.</p> <p>Library services as outlined in this Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to ensure accessibility for all residents removing the barriers wherever possible that prevent them from engaging with our services.</p> <p>People's health and wellbeing are determined by a range of factors. This strategy outlines the maintenance and investment in local toilets to offer access to facilities and information.</p>	<p>should be noted that people who live in deprived communities have the poorest mental health and wellbeing and this reflects the situation in RCT.</p> <p>A number of recent Welsh Government Reports highlight the impact of Covid 19 on people with disabilities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Locked out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19' (July 2021) - 'Potential impact of COVID-19 on disabled people' - 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the impact on disabled people in Wales' <p>These reports draw attention to the impact of Covid on the employment of disabled people and the need to</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>REDUCING BARRIERS</p> <p>Accessible disabled toilet facilities and changing place facilities have been been and continue to be invested in.</p> <p>ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locations of Council owned toilets have been reviewed and are detailed in Appendix 2 and included on the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council website. The Council will improve awareness and information available on toilet provision in the area by ensuring the information on the Council's website is up to date and will regularly update the "Lle" open access data repository with Welsh Government. The Council will consider displaying the toilet logo sticker at entrances to publicly accessible Council buildings 	<p>address the huge gap between the employment of people who are disabled in comparison to the able-bodied. Of the 1,392,000 people currently in employment in Wales, 14.5% are disabled according to the Equality Act 2010 definition.</p> <p>Chwarae Teg's report - 'Society is the disability' highlights the intersectionality between gender and disability noting that 'barriers disabled men and women face impact them differently, and there are some barriers that are unique to disabled women.'</p> <p>Consultation responses</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>and any community venue or private businesses that agree. Work with our local Neighbourhood Networks and Town Centre partners encouraging those partners who already allow access to display the toilet logo sticker and encourage others to do the same.</p> <p>We will encourage health provider premises to also participate and display the toilet logo stickers.</p> <p>INTERSECTIONALITY</p> <p>It is recognised that some people have more than one protected characteristic and that there is an intersectionality between these that affect people's personal experiences. In such cases it is not possible to generalise the impact. However, we are committed to ensure that local toilet facilities meet the needs of people who have a range of protected characteristics and this will be achieved by working with partners who have specialist knowledge and</p>	

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>services so that the offer locally effect the needs of residents however complex they are.</p> <p>OLDER/DISABLED</p> <p>Around 42,000 people in Wales, most of whom are over 65, suffer from dementia. The Strategy will consider dementia-friendly improvements such as increasing colour contrast in Council owned toilet facilities.</p>	
<p>Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission reported in 2017 that transgender people were more likely to live in poverty and more likely to suffer with serious mental health issues than the general population.</p> <p>This Strategy and Action Plan will have a positive effect on people with this protected characteristic:</p>	<p>Strategic Equality Plan and Public Sector Equality Duty</p> <p>Consultation responses</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		- considering toilet provision for the LGBTQI+ community - Considering the ratio of male to female facilities, whereby 1:2 is the ideal ratio as outlined by WG.	
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>	Positive	The focus on maintenance and investment in facilities and promotion, means that people who are married or in civil partnerships will have access to free local toilet provision.	Strategic Equality Plan and Public Sector Equality Duty Consultation responses
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>	Positive	The Strategy outlines the provision of free local toilet facilities as well as baby changing rooms to ensure that expectant mothers, mothers and their babies are able to visit and engage in social activity.	Strategic Equality Plan and Public Sector Equality Duty Consultation responses
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Positive	In encouraging people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds to participate in the cultural life of the community, thereby meeting the standard outlined in Article 27 of the Declaration of Human Rights: ‘Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the	Strategic Equality Plan and Public Sector Equality Duty. WG's Race Equality Action Plan outlines the challenges faced by people of a Black and Minority Ethnic

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		community'; the focus on maintenance and investment in facilities and promotion, means that all ethnic and racial groups will have access to free local toilet provision.	<p>background in Wales and identifies actions against key priorities that will address this.</p> <p>In its response to WG's 'An anti-racist Wales' the Runnymede Trust has highlighted that 'racial inequalities persist in almost every arena of British society from birth to death.' Therefore listening to people and understanding their specific experiences and needs will help to ensure that we can provide an inclusive environment with access to services required by this diverse group.</p> <p>Consultation responses</p>
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>	Positive	The focus on maintenance and investment in facilities and promotion, means that people with different religions and philosophical beliefs, including those with no beliefs, will	Strategic Equality Plan and Public Sector Equality Duty RCT Community Insights indicates the religion/beliefs of residents as follows:

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		have access to free local toilet provision.	Buddhist 520 Hindu 400 Jewish 85 Muslim 1,060 Sikh 185 Other religions 870 Christian 118,390 Consultation responses
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Positive	Consideration will be given to the ratio of male and female facilities, whereby 1:2 is the ideal ratio as outlined by WG.	Strategic Equality Plan Public Sector Equality Duty Consultation responses
Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>	Positive	Consideration will also be given to facilities for the LGBTQI+ community	LGBTQ in Britain (2018) - Stonewall's report based on YouGov research with 5000 lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) people across England, Scotland and Wales about their life in Britain today

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Positive	<p>Personnel who leave the Armed Forces and their families can face a plethora of challenges including housing, healthcare, employment, social isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>The focus on maintenance and investment in facilities and promotion, means that the Armed Forces community will have free access to local toilet provision.</p>	<p>WG Veterans Action Plan</p> <p>'Giving and Receiving Supporting and investing in our Armed Forces Community in Wales.'</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan Public Sector Duty</p> <p>Consultation responses</p>
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Positive	<p>The focus on maintenance and investment in facilities and promotion, means that the Carers will have free access to local toilet provision for themselves and those that they care for.</p>	<p>State of Caring Report 2021 (Wales):</p> <p>36% of carers in Wales said they were struggling to make ends meet;</p> <p>A further 23% are or have been in debt as a result of caring; and</p>

			<p>8% cannot afford utility bills such as electricity, gas, water or telephone bills</p> <p>In response to this survey 36% of carers in Wales indicated that their financial situation had worsened as a result of Covid.</p> <p>40% of carers in Wales indicated that they did not know what services were available in their area.</p> <p>36% of carers in Wales are deemed to be 'chronically lonely' i.e. often or always lonely.</p> <p>Consultation responses</p>
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If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

The Local Toilets Strategy 2023 - 2028 is designed to meet the needs of all residents and ensure that toilet facilities provided meet the needs of residents and visitors across the county borough. The provision of toilets has implications for public and individual health, transportation, crime prevention, urban design, economic and cultural development and social equality and accessibility. It is an important factor in delivering a 'people friendly' environment for everyone who visits shops, leisure and entertainment venues,

sports facilities, parks and green spaces, and everyone who travels around and to our borough. Toilets can make an impact on the comfort of individuals and families who visit our public spaces and their perception of the area as a desirable place to visit.

This strategy contributes towards achieving accessible and clean toilets wherever people live, work or visit. Need for provision may increase in time as developments take place, population needs change, and through welcoming visitors to the area. This is an opportune time to set a strategy for promoting access to toilet facilities where they are needed.

In preparing the initial Local Toilets Strategy, due regard was made to demographic and health data from the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough area, detailed in Appendix 1 in the draft Strategy..

Engagement with other local authority services, community groups and the public was undertaken to understand what is currently available and how any gaps can be mitigated.

A public consultation was undertaken for four weeks between 17 October and 14 November 2018, to assess the needs of residents, and people working or visiting the county borough. Engagement mechanisms included:

- • Online via the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council website and social media;
- • Email alerts and correspondence;
- • Face to face discussions at various community venues;
- • Paper questionnaires requested by groups and residents.

A range of organisations were engaged with by sending the questionnaires directly to them for response, including Rhondda Cynon Taf Access Group, RNIB, Wales Council for the Deaf, Cwm Taf Community Health Council, 50+ Forums and Rhondda Cynon Taf Older Persons Advisory Group, RCT Citizens Panel, RCTCBC Tourism Service, Third Sector Organisations, Carers Support Project, Town Centre Chambers of Trade and business forums etc.

On behalf of all Welsh local authorities, Caerphilly County Borough Council contacted all of the national retailers who operate across the country, as part of a collaborative exercise across Wales to establish whether these businesses would be prepared to be part of the strategy by allowing their toilet facilities to be used by non-customers, signposted via national websites and phone apps and agreeing to display a sticker showing the national toilet logo. The results were disappointing as no businesses that were contacted volunteered to offer their toilet facilities to the public and to be mapped. Council intends to revisit this exercise at a local community level at the next review date in 2025.

A statutory 12-weeks public consultation was undertaken between 4 February and 29 April 2019 on the initial draft Local Toilets Strategy. Engagement mechanisms and organisations engaged with were replicated as per the Assessment of Need public consultation. Engagement also took place with the Community Liaison Committee and a draft strategy was scrutinised by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

A total of 60 respondents completed the questionnaire and the responses received were considered when producing the Local Toilets Strategy.

As part of the review of the original 2019 Local Toilets Strategy a further period of local community consultation was undertaken from July 2022 – October 2022. This is detailed in a later section of this revised strategy.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision? Yes No

Name: Caroline O'Neill

Position: Head of Arts, Culture and Library Services

Date: 10/08/2023

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance](#).

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

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Low Income/<u>Income Poverty</u> <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i></p>	Positive	<p>CHILDREN IN LOW INCOME HOMES</p> <p>22% of children aged 0-19 years in RCT are in relative low income poverty.</p> <p>Having access to free and accessible information and toilet facilities that meet their needs will have a positive impact on these children and their families, ensuring that they are not disadvantaged compared to those from wealthier socio-economic backgrounds.</p> <p>LONE PARENTS</p> <p>Lone parent households are the ones most often affected by low income poverty.</p> <p>Having access to free and accessible information and toilet facilities that meet their needs will have a positive impact on these children and their</p>	<p>Community Insight RCT 2022 - data on levels of poverty.</p> <p>Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Poverty in Wales Report indicates that of the 600,000 children and working age adults living in poverty in Wales over 6 out of 10 are in a working household where at least 1 person is working full-time. Half of the working families in Wales are reliant on Universal Credit and this does not lift them out of poverty.</p> <p>N</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>families, ensuring that they are not disadvantaged compared to those from wealthier socio-economic backgrounds.</p> <p>PENSIONERS</p> <p>Pensioners are another group that can be affected by low income poverty.</p> <p>Access to information and advice on facilities will be provided through mapping locations and updating the information on the Council and the WG 'Lle' website. Signage will be used to denote public toilet facilities too.</p> <p>STUDENTS</p> <p>The intention to promote, maintain and invest in local toilet facilities will benefit students and researchers who are residents of RCT as well as those who live further afield accessing their</p>	

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>educational needs with the county borough.</p> <p>CHILDREN AND PEOPLE WITH LOW LITERACY</p> <p>Access to information and advice on facilities will be provided through mapping locations and updating the information on the Council and the WG 'Lle' website. Signage will be used to denote public toilet facilities too.</p>	
<p>Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i></p>	Positive	The focus on maintenance and investment in facilities and promotion, means that those with low or no wealth will have free access to local toilet provision for themselves and those that they care for.	As above
<p><u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken</i></p>	Positive	The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 details deprivation as lack of access to opportunities and resources which we might expect in our community; income, employment, health, education, access to services,	WPLS Annual Return and WG WPLS Assessment 2019/20

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<i>electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>		<p>housing, community safety and physical environment.</p> <p>Having local toilet facilities has a positive effect on individuals and their families who experience material deprivation in the same way as they have a positive effect on people who have no/low wealth or who live in poverty.</p>	

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p><u>Area Deprivation</u> <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport))</i></p>	Positive	<p>The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) highlights 8 categories that are assessed when considering levels of deprivation.</p> <p>To achieve this strategy, the following will be completed which will have a positive impact on area deprivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the current level of provision of public toilets; • analyse the findings of the completed assessment of need activities for toilets available for use by the public in their area; • consider the requirements of the general population; • identify the needs for particular user groups; • identify any gaps in current provision; • support Welsh Government initiatives to improve information available on toilet facilities; • provide information setting out the steps which the local authority proposes to take to meet this need, 	<p>WIMD</p> <p>10% of the most deprived LSOAs in Wales are in RCT; 29 are in the top 20%; 45 are in the top 30%.</p> <p>NOMIS - the most recent data indicates thatL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 43,700 people in RCT are economically inactive (29.2% of the population). - 6,055 individuals are claiming out-of-work benefits - 22% of households in RCT with working age adults are workless households - the gross weekly pay for males who work full-time is below the Welsh average

		and any other information which the council considers appropriate.	
<p>Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i></p>	Positive	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a legal duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to have due regard to the desirability of reducing socio-economic inequalities.</p> <p>The focus on maintenance and investment in facilities and promotion, means that all socio-economic backgrounds will have free access to local toilet provision for themselves.</p>	<p>The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD).</p> <p>Well- Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.</p> <p>Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>RCTCBC Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024.</p>
<p>Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p>	Positive	<p>Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a legal duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to have due regard to the desirability of reducing socio-economic inequalities.</p> <p>This proposal will have a positive impact on all residents affected by socio-economic disadvantage (which has been exacerbated by Covid for those who were already on low</p>	<p>The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD).</p> <p>Well- Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.</p> <p>Equality Act 2010.</p>

		<p>incomes and who were relatively likely to be living in poverty).</p> <p>The focus on maintenance and investment in facilities and promotion, means that all those that at a socio-economic disadvantage will have free access to local toilet provision..</p>	<p>RCTCBC Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024.</p>
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SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**
- 4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.
- 4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.
- 4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.
- 4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?
- Yes No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

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

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will prepare an interim progress report setting out the steps taken in line with the strategy every two years, commencing from the date of the last published strategy. The interim progress report will be published within six months of the end date of the two year period. Following the publication of this Revised Local Toilets Strategy in May 2023, progress will be considered, and a report prepared and published before the end of November 2025.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council may review its strategy at any time following which it must publish a statement of the steps which it has taken in accordance with the strategy. Following a review, if it is decided to revise the strategy it will publish the revised strategy and then prepare an interim progress report covering the two-year period commencing from the date of publication.

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

November 2025

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

The Community Development Team will monitor the plan and reports will be provided to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee as and when required.

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

The results of the monitoring will inform the development of a new Strategy and action plan to be published in 2028.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the definition of ‘Key Decisions’ must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Decision please forward your impact assessment to Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqlA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

SECTION 6 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

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

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name:

Position:

Date:

I recommend that the proposal:

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

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name:

Position:

Date:

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



Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Local Toilets Strategy 2023 - 2028



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

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Introduction

Provision of, and access to toilets is an issue that affects public health. Accessible, clean toilets that are well located in places such as town centres, parks, cycle trails and walking routes can help encourage people to take exercise and stay more physically active. This has clear health and economic benefits. Conversely, toilets that are poorly designed, inadequately maintained and inappropriately located can create an atmosphere of neglect that discourages use. A lack of adequate toilet facilities can impact on a person's physical and mental health, as well as affecting the wider environmental health of the population.

Toilets for public use matter to everybody and remain a high-profile issue. They are, however, even more important to certain groups within society, including older people, people with disabilities, people with particular needs (including certain medical problems), women, children and young people and their families. These groups can be disproportionately affected by poor provision; for example, poor provision is understood to have particular negative impacts on older people, as some may be less likely to leave their homes without having confidence that adequate facilities will be available to them. This can contribute to increased social isolation and inactivity, as well as affecting people's ability to maintain independence and dignity in later life.

To deliver a strategic approach to the provision of toilets across Wales, the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires local authorities to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for its area. The first Local Toilets Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf was published in 2019 and in line with statutory requirements it was stated that this should be reviewed within a year of each ordinary election for the area. The next election date following this original publication was Thursday 5 May 2022, therefore the latest date for the review is 4 May 2023.

The provision of toilets has implications for public and individual health, transportation, crime prevention, urban design, economic and cultural development and social equality and accessibility. It is an important factor in delivering a 'people friendly' environment for everyone who visits shops, leisure and entertainment venues, sports facilities, parks and green spaces, and everyone who travels around and to our borough. Toilets can make an impact on the comfort of individuals and families who visit our public spaces and their perception of the area as a desirable place to visit.

Why do we need a strategy for providing toilet facilities?

This strategy contributes towards achieving accessible and clean toilets wherever people live, work or visit. Need for provision may increase in time as developments take place, population needs change, and through welcoming visitors to the area. This is an opportune time to set a strategy for promoting access to toilet facilities where they are needed.

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 received Royal Assent in July 2017 and brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically Local Toilet Strategies.

The aim of Part 8 is to ensure each local authority in Wales assesses the needs of its community in relation to toilets, and then takes a strategic and transparent approach to best meet that need. The intended effect is to improve the planning of provision so that any such decisions are taken within the overall context of meeting the communities' identified needs. A strategic approach will also help to mitigate any negative impacts of changes to provision.

The local authority has responsibility to:

- assess the community's need for toilets, including changing facilities for babies and changing places facilities for people with disabilities;
- provide details of how to meet the identified need;
- produce a Local Toilets Strategy; and
- review the strategy, update and publicise revisions.

Local authorities had to prepare and publish their initial strategies by 31 May 2019. The duty to prepare a Local Toilets Strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. The local authority must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. Upon review of this strategy, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is required to publish a statement of progress.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. Public sectors have a duty to consider the long-term impact of the decisions they make and the Act puts in place a sustainable development principle which tells public bodies how to meet their duty under the Act. The principle is made up of five ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people:

Long term: the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs.

Prevention: how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

Integration: considering how public bodies' wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

Collaboration: acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body meet its wellbeing objectives.

Involvement: the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

Due regard has been made to the above five ways of working when preparing, reviewing, consulting on and publishing this strategy.

The Aims of this strategy

This strategy aims to review the quality and quantity of local toilets throughout the county borough and to provide or facilitate the provision of clean, safe, accessible and sustainable toilets for residents and visitors to the area at locations where the need for such facilities has been identified.

To achieve this strategy, we will:

- identify the current level of provision of public toilets;
- analyse the findings of the completed assessment of need activities for toilets available for use by the public in their area;
- consider the requirements of the general population;
- identify the needs for particular user groups;
- identify any gaps in current provision;
- support Welsh Government initiatives to improve information available on toilet facilities;
- provide information setting out the steps which the local authority proposes to take to meet this need, and any other information which the council considers appropriate.

In reviewing the initial strategy, we have reviewed the above and considered any relevant updates and changes.

Reviewing the strategy

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will prepare an interim progress report setting out the steps taken in line with the strategy every two years, commencing from the date of the last published strategy. The interim progress report will be published within six months of the end date of the two year period. Following the publication of this Revised Local Toilets Strategy in May 2023, progress will be considered, and a report prepared and published before the end of November 2025.

The strategy will be reviewed within a year of each ordinary election for its area in line with statutory guidance. The next election date in Wales following publication of the revised strategy is May 2027, therefore the latest date for review is May 2028. If no changes are made to the strategy following the post-election review, then Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will publish an interim progress statement covering a two-year period commencing from the date of the last election.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council may review its strategy at any time following which it must publish a statement of the steps which it has taken in accordance with the strategy. Following a review, if it is decided to revise the strategy it will publish the revised strategy and then prepare an interim progress report covering the two-year period commencing from the date of publication.

How has this strategy been developed?

In preparing the initial Local Toilets Strategy, due regard was made to demographic and health data from the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough area, detailed in Appendix 1.

Engagement with other local authority services, community groups and the public was undertaken to understand what is currently available and how any gaps can be mitigated.

A public consultation was undertaken for four weeks between 17 October and 14 November 2018, to assess the needs of residents, and people working or visiting the county borough. Engagement mechanisms included:

- Online via the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council website and social media;
- Email alerts and correspondence;
- Face to face discussions at various community venues;
- Paper questionnaires requested by groups and residents.

A range of organisations were engaged with by sending the questionnaires directly to them for response, including Rhondda Cynon Taf Access Group, RNIB, Wales Council for the Deaf, Cwm Taf Community Health Council, 50+ Forums and Rhondda Cynon Taf Older Persons Advisory Group, RCT Citizens Panel, RCTCBC Tourism Service, Third Sector Organisations, Carers Support Project, Town Centre Chambers of Trade and business forums etc.

A total of 97 respondents completed the questionnaire and have been included in the analysis. These have been used to influence the content of this strategy.

On behalf of all Welsh local authorities, Caerphilly County Borough Council contacted all of the national retailers who operate across the country, as part of a collaborative exercise across Wales to establish whether these businesses would be prepared to be part of the strategy by allowing their toilet facilities to be used by non-customers, signposted via national websites and phone apps and agreeing to display a sticker showing the national toilet logo. The results were disappointing as no businesses that were contacted volunteered to offer their toilet facilities to the public and to be mapped. Council intends to revisit this exercise at a local community level at the next review date in 2025.

A statutory 12-weeks public consultation was undertaken between 4 February and 29 April 2019 on the initial draft Local Toilets Strategy. Engagement mechanisms and organisations engaged with were replicated as per the Assessment of Need public consultation. Engagement also took place with the Community Liaison Committee and a draft strategy was scrutinised by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

A total of 60 respondents completed the questionnaire and the responses received were considered when producing the Local Toilets Strategy.

As part of the review of the original 2019 Local Toilets Strategy a further period of local community consultation was undertaken from July 2022 – October 2022. This is detailed in a later section of this revised strategy.

How does it fit with other Council priorities and plans?

In order to succeed, our Local Toilet Strategy needs to integrate with other existing priorities and plans such as the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Wellbeing Plan 2023-2028.

The Council's Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" sets out a clear vision to make Rhondda Cynon Taf 'the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent,

healthy and prosperous'. The Council is committed to delivering three main priorities under this plan, as follows: ensuring **people** are independent, healthy and successful; creating **places** where people are proud to live, work and play; and enabling **prosperity** by creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial, and to fulfil their potential and prosper. The Local Toilets Strategy can contribute to these, supporting a number of the objectives within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 to make the vision a reality.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Wellbeing Plan 2023-28: 'A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg', contains two objectives: **Healthy Local Neighbourhoods** – where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported, and valued; and, **Sustainable and Resilient Local Neighbourhoods** – where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities, valuing, managing and enjoying our green and blue spaces responsibly.

These plans set the strategic direction at a regional and local level. The Local Toilets Strategy cuts across a number of these objectives and aims to support them. Publicly accessible toilets are needed by every one of us at some point where we live, work or visit and so the provision touches on all areas of the Council in some way.

Who provides public toilets?

Providing toilet facilities in separate buildings has been the traditional model for providing local toilet facilities. There are benefits from co-located provision in existing buildings wherever possible, to reduce some of the negative aspects such as anti-social behaviour and vandalism and the associated costs.

Commercial providers in retail centres with extended opening hours and in entertainment venues and visitor attractions have an important role to play in satisfying the needs of their customers and the public as a whole. The case for publicly accessible toilets in a wider variety of community buildings will become stronger. This draws in a wider range of potential partners to manage and fund them.

The provision of local toilets for public use is not a statutory requirement of local authorities in Wales. Due to financial cutbacks within local government, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, like other local authorities, may need to close traditional toilet facilities. This strategy aims to mitigate potential impacts by making toilets in more Council facilities available for public use and to work with the private sector to help promote their facilities.

The Council has continued the level of investment to maintain the current provision. The Council does not charge for use of its public toilets.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has continued to invest in facilities since the 2019 Local Toilets Strategy with an extensive enhancement and refurbishments programme, completed at the following venues and totalling in excess of circa £315,000:

- Canolfan Pennar Community Resilience Hub – as part of a significant development programme the installation of a changing place and toilet facilities including an accessible toilet in 2019.
- Porth Plaza Community Resilience Hub – as part of a significant development programme the installation of a changing place and toilet facilities including an accessible toilet in 2020.

- Llys Cadwyn Community Resilience Hub – as part of a significant development programme the installation of a changing place and toilet facilities including an accessible toilet in 2020.
- Rhondda Heritage Park – refurbishment during 2020 included the installation of a changing place, which although resulted in the reduction of the number of male toilets, also allowed for the provision of a fully accessible disabled toilet.
- Dare Valley Country Park – as part of the extensive development of an amenities block extension during 2021, the installation of a changing place, toilets and showers. Further improvements to accessibility were undertaken during early 2023.
- National Lido of Wales, Lido Ponty / Ynysangharad War Memorial Park - following the devastation caused by Storm Dennis, complete refurbishment of the facilities was required which included the toilet facilities and the installation of a changing place during 2021.

In addition to the enhancements to the Council owned and managed facilities above, three further developments have taken place working with key community partners:

- Yr Hwb Community Resilience Hub - benefited from significant development under RCTCBC Community Asset Transfer arrangements, which included an accessible toilet open to the public during extended opening hours. This venue launched in July 2019.
- Cynon Linc - significant development of a Community Asset Transfer in August 2020, with construction works commencing and concluding in October 2021. This facility is open to the public during building opening hours and attached to a GP surgery. It includes fully accessible toilets, and a changing place with toilet and shower.
- Arts Factory - RCTCBC supported the installation of facilities that provide beyond what is normally expected in a standard accessible toilet, including electric hoisting and adult changing bed in Spring 2021.

This investment demonstrates the Council's commitment to invest where it matters to communities.

Local authorities are not the only providers of toilet facilities and other providers and options are available. A combination of these forms part of this strategy and helps to achieve the actions described later.

- **Council owned:** Includes standalone, purpose built buildings providing separate areas for Female, Male, and wherever possible, an accessible unit for disabled people and baby changing facilities. The Council is responsible for the maintenance, management and cleaning of these facilities.
- **Within council facilities, offices and green spaces:** Toilet facilities may be made available to the general public where the individual location, access and circumstances allow, such as libraries, sports centres and some Council offices. There are also toilets located at some parks and countryside settings. This is part of a wider need to ensure that all services offered are accessible by all members of the community.
- **Changing places:** Facilities for individuals with a range of disabilities and limited mobility who are unable to access standard disabled toilets. These facilities feature specialist equipment including hoists and changing benches to enable these individuals to access public toilets in their communities. There are a number of changing places available in Rhondda Cynon Taf,

some in Council owned buildings and others in commercial settings. For full details of available facilities please see: changing-places.org/find

A link to the public conveniences provided by the council is [here](#).

Please also refer to Appendix 2 for a list of the current provision of Council owned facilities. This includes traditional public conveniences, urinals, automated/chargeable facilities (20p fee) and changing places for disabled individuals.

- **Commercial / Retail sector provision:** Many toilet facilities provided by commercial and retail businesses have been primarily or solely for use by customers. Some shop managers in town centres understand that people come in to use the toilets and recognise that this may lead to people purchasing whilst inside. Most visitor and tourist attractions and entertainment venues such as cinemas provide toilet facilities. Members of the public depend on such facilities.
- **Voluntary schemes via private providers:** A survey was undertaken on an All-Wales basis with larger national retailers to seek an agreement in principle that their toilet facilities could be used by the general public. Those that responded declined such an agreement.

Mapping locations

This is an important part of our strategy as it will ensure that people who need to use a toilet facility can easily access information about the location, opening times, accessibility and type of facilities available.

Participating premises will display a sticker in a prominent place, indicating that toilets are available for the public. The sticker will display the logo stipulated by Welsh Government, as below:



The British Toilet Association also recommends that signs be fitted on the outside with information like opening hours, contact information for reporting problems, and the specific facilities provided inside, such as whether there are baby changing facilities available.

Once we have identified the toilets that will be publicised as available for use by the general public, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will prepare a dataset to a given specification and make it available as open data on the Council website. The dataset will consist of the location and specified characteristics of the identified toilets. This data will also be included in the Welsh Government system and joined to other local authority datasets to produce the national dataset for the National Toilet Map hosted by Data Map Wales. Data Map Wales is a geo-portal that serves as a hub for data and information covering a wide spectrum of topics, but primarily around the environment. All-Wales maps are generated based on the datasets provided by local authorities that can be configured to focus on the national picture, or on local areas. The data included will be available as an open data service accessible to everyone. The link can be accessed [here](#).

The Council will periodically review and update the Welsh Government data repository to allow access to accurate information by guide and map publishers, residents and visitors.

The Welsh Government has not developed an app, as many people are unable to use a smartphone for a number of reasons. It is more appropriate to focus on ensuring the information is available online through a wide range of websites and via traditional offline methods.

For data to be classed as open data it must be made available under an open licence. Within the Public Sector this can be achieved by publishing data under the Open Government Licence (OGL).

As the data provided by local authorities is to be made available as open data, it will be available for reuse by third parties, either directly from the local authority's own website, or via the joined dataset behind the Data Map Wales map. This might include other online map services, app developers or commercial interests, as well as being available for reuse by other public sector organisations.

The dataset will be available in Welsh and English. The public will be able to see and search the data as it appears on the Data Map Wales website, to see the whole of Wales or to look at particular areas.

What we learned from the Community Consultation

As part of the review of the RCTCBC Local Toilets Strategy, local community consultation took place during the period July 2022 – October 2022, allowing for the opportunity to review the findings from the 2019 assessment of public need. 130 people participated who agreed that the key points captured in the 2019 Local Toilets Strategy remained valid with nothing further to add.

A summary of the 2022 local community consultation is included in Appendix 3.

The 2019 Local Toilet Strategy conducted a four-week period starting in October 2018, an Assessment of Need public consultation was conducted across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This involved engaging with communities and a wide range of interested parties to consider the requirements of the general population, to consider the needs for particular user groups, to review existing toilet facilities, and to identify any gaps in current provision.

The engagement was conducted via a range of approaches including feedback from the public, social media, online content and emails, surveys and questionnaires, attendance at community venues.

Respondents were asked a wide variety of questions relating to areas most visited within Rhondda Cynon Taf; times of visiting; details of toilet and changing facility provision; attractions and parks most visited; followed by a series of statements relating to facilities which respondents were asked to agree or disagree with.

Some key findings from the surveys are provided below:

- 91% of respondents are a resident of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- Respondents rated facilities in the towns and villages visited most often as primarily inadequate, as opposed to the other options available, during early morning, between 9am and 6pm, during evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- In relation to attractions and parks visited most frequently, respondents felt that toilet provision was adequate during the day but inadequate early morning and evenings. Both changing facilities for young children and people with disabilities were deemed to be inadequate during the day with none available early morning and evenings.
- There is concern about feeling unsafe using public toilets in relation to facilities being used for anti-social behaviour and drug activity.
- Lack of changing facilities for individuals with disabilities was highlighted with specific mention in relation to both children and adults.
- Respondents felt that there are too few public toilet facilities available and that the location of facilities is not convenient.
- Many respondents indicated that there is not enough information on where facilities are located.
- The lack of facilities has stopped many respondents from visiting certain locations.
- Respondents indicated that facilities are not open at the times that they are needed.
- The majority of respondents felt that toilets should be free to use.

Respondents were asked what they would prefer as the best way to find out about where the nearest toilet and changing facilities are located when they are out and about. 64% of respondents said that a sticker or poster displayed in the window of premises where facilities are available was their preferred option, with 18% preferring the option of an app on their mobile phone. 18% of respondents indicated preference to other options, with suggestions including a website, social media, signposts in prominent locations, a toilet map, local paper, etc.

Respondents were asked whether their response to the survey had been influenced (positively or negatively) by the range of protected characteristics as specified in the Equality Act 2010. The issues raised included gender identity, gender reassignment, problems relating to a range of disabilities and health issues, use of facilities by parents with children, issues regarding disabled toilet facilities not being of adequate size for wheelchairs to enter, requirement of hoists for disabled individuals, etc.

What we learned from the 2019 twelve week public consultation

In preparation of the 2019 Local Toilet Strategy a 12-week period of public consultation starting in February 2019 was conducted across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This involved engaging with communities and a wide range of interested parties to consult on the draft Local Toilets Strategy, which had been produced following the Assessment of Need public consultation. The 12-week public consultation asked a number of questions, including if respondents felt that the strategy provides clear information to help understand why the actions proposed in the strategy are necessary; if they agree with the actions under Objective 1: to enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities; and if they agree with the actions under Objective 2: to promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities and to provide further information if they felt that there was anything missing from the proposed objectives and supporting actions.

The engagement was conducted using a range of approaches including feedback from the public, social media, online content and emails, surveys and questionnaires.

The full results of the 12 weeks public consultation are provided in Appendix 3 of this strategy.

Some key findings from the public consultation are provided below:

- 92% of respondents are a resident of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 8% represent a local group or organisation, 7% were a local Elected Member and 7% work in Rhondda Cynon Taf borough.
- 72% of respondents feel that the strategy provides clear information to help understand why the actions proposed in the strategy are necessary, with 25% indicating they feel that the strategy partially provides clear information to help understand why the actions proposed in the strategy are necessary. Explanations provided to substantiate responses to this question included reference to only one set of free public toilets in Pontypridd which is deemed inadequate;; opinion that public conveniences should be provided by the borough Council and not local businesses and others; concerns that people more likely to need facilities are not able to access online information.
- 83% of respondents agree with the actions under Objective 1: to enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities, with 17% partially agreeing. Reasons provided included current facilities are either closed or close early; café facilities do not always like their toilets being used without being a customer; a query regarding why local businesses/private sector should cover the cost of providing toilets when they already pay business rates to the council;; concern regarding some disabled toilets not being suitable for dual purpose of baby changing facilities; request for improved opening times of toilets in Pontypridd town centre and better physical signage to existing public toilets in Pontypridd town centre.
- 90% of respondents agree with the actions under Objective 2: to promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities, with 10% partially agreeing. Respondents expressed concerns that toilets open at night could be used by drug users and be unsafe and vandalised; availability of facilities in towns on the weekends and evenings; concern regarding some disabled toilets not being suitable for dual purpose of baby changing facilities; request for permanent toilet provision in the town centre, especially at night time.

Respondents were asked if there was anything missing from the objectives and supporting actions and some of the responses include: concern about changing facilities for disabled adults and older children; use of social media to ensure members of the public have access to availability on toilets immediately; more facilities for young mothers and babies and disabled people requested; mapping 3rd sector organisations that allow access to facilities; remuneration for local businesses to allow members of the public to use their facilities; concern about assistance alarms provision in disabled toilets particularly in remote locations.

No respondents indicated that they felt that their response to the survey had been influenced (positively or negatively) by the range of protected characteristics as specified in the Equality Act 2010.

28% of respondents indicated that they have a long-term illness or health problem and 22% advised that they have a disability.

During the 12-week public consultation, feedback on the draft strategy was provided by the Community Liaison Committee and the Authority's Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

Members of the Community Liaison Committee considered the draft strategy and put their questions and observations forward. A Member commented on the lack of provision within some towns and communities, and where there were provisions, Members felt that they were inadequate for many reasons.

In relation to availability in stores such as supermarkets, Members felt that more could be done to locate them at the front of the store rather than in out of the place areas, including at the rear of stores.

A Member felt there to be a need for premises to advertise that they have these facilities for public to see. Members of the Community Liaison Committee resolved to acknowledge the draft Local Toilets strategy and wished that their views and comments would be taken into consideration when preparing the final Strategy.

The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee received the draft Local Toilets Strategy and broadly supported it. Members felt that in respect of baby changing facilities and disabled toilet facilities, numbers of each were low and that more could be done to encourage private sector and other groups to work together to make these facilities available where they are needed. There was also comment on the need to increase general provision of toilet facilities across the County Borough.

A Member questioned the provision of toilet facilities for local events and whether there is a set number of toilets in ratio to people attending. It was explained that there is an Events Advisory Group and this would be considered under their remit.

The Chair highlighted the importance of these facilities to residents of the County Borough and that knowing that there is toilet provision in many areas can make a difference in a person leaving their home, especially for people with certain health conditions. This will in turn have a positive effect on their wellbeing. Members also felt strongly that the lack of advertising is a problem as many residents are unaware of any facilities that offer the use of their toilet provision for public use. A Member commented about promotion of the Welsh Government toilet logo sticker, to ensure that the public understand that it means that members of the public are welcome to use facilities where the sticker is displayed.

A Member also raised an issue regarding the location of facilities within stores as this could be seen as an obstacle to people. It was felt that work needed to be carried out to encourage stores to locate them at the front of the store.

Comments were received in relation to having more toilet facilities available in cafes, bars, shops, etc. that would increase footfall to that business although it was recognised there will be costs involved in providing and maintaining facilities. Discussion will be needed with businesses. It was felt that increased toilet provision will be good for town centre footfall and the economy and "unlock the potential" of our towns.

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee resolved to acknowledge the draft Local Toilets strategy and wished that their views and comments would be taken into consideration when preparing the final Strategy.

What the Council can do to address the feedback

- **Ensure adequate facilities for the local population:** Our town centres are popular destinations identified by the assessment of need and they are the main transport hub for people arriving by train or bus. Provision should therefore focus in areas where most people visit and should be taken into consideration when reviewing future developments in and around town centres.
- **Facilities accessible to all, at all practicable locations:** Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will promote equal opportunities to provide appropriate, accessible and effective facilities to all sections of the community without prejudice or bias. Increase the provision of toilet facilities, including changing places and gender neutral toilets where possible, by exploring opportunities in existing and future developments. Radar keys for access to disabled facilities are supplied by the Council's One4All Centres.
- **Facilities suitable for the location:** Council provision will be primarily for local people, shoppers and visitors in busy areas and some larger parks. Parks attract residents and tourists and can often include children's play areas. There may not be other facilities close by which people can use whilst using the park. Local shopping centres generally include mixed retail shopping which are often small to medium size businesses and are areas where people are encouraged to stay for a length of time.
- **Easily found facilities with good direction signage and individual facility information signs:** Locations of Council owned toilets have been reviewed and are detailed in Appendix 2 and included on the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council website. The Council will improve awareness and information available on toilet provision in the area by ensuring the information on the Council's website is up to date and will regularly update the "Lle" open access data repository with Welsh Government.

The Council will consider displaying the toilet logo sticker at entrances to publicly accessible Council buildings and any community venue or private businesses that agree. Work with our local Neighbourhood Networks and Town Centre partners encouraging those partners who already allow access to display the toilet logo sticker and encourage others to do the same.

We will encourage health provider premises to also participate and display the toilet logo sticker.

- **To provide accessible information:** The Council's website includes information about the individual facilities across the borough. The information will be kept up to date so it can be used by the Council and other interested parties. We will also regularly update the "Lle" open access data repository with Welsh Government. Promote newly available changing places and Community Hubs, as well as the Libraries and Leisure Facilities who already allow access.

- **Tourist related provision:** The number of tourists and people from outside the area visiting Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough and our visitor attractions throughout the year places additional demands for toilet facilities. The Welsh Government’s Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 outlines that “investment is to be targeted at access arrangements, changing places and disabled facilities (with the commitment dovetailing) with the new Tourism priorities document ‘Welcome to Wales 2020-2025’.” The size of facilities should be adequate for the number of people expected to use the toilets without overcrowding or undue waiting times. A standard of provision based on pedestrian flow count footfall figures could be considered where it is practicable to do so. This could inform considerations if additional toilet facilities are required at specific times.
- **Evening services at key locations where specific need is established:** Anti-social and drug related misuse, vandalism and graffiti damage to Council public toilet facilities have previously led to most facilities being locked up at a scheduled time in the early evening. Facilities provided by shops and other businesses are usually limited to their opening hours for safety and security reasons. Due regard will be made to such issues when undertaking future reviews.

Development of the night-time economy and changes in town centres mean that they are also leisure and entertainment hubs rather than predominantly centres for retail and commercial trade.

Night-time economy growth can lead to an increase in drug and alcohol related anti-social behaviour. It is recognised that publicly accessible facilities should be in close proximity to key night-time gathering areas, such as taxi ranks, car parks, railway stations, and bus stations / stops. The provision of temporary facilities can be considered during major events and at particularly busy times.

- **Clean, safe and well-maintained facilities:** Council maintained toilet facilities are subject to rigorous routine cleansing operations. Council owned public toilets and urinals in RCT are cleaned Monday – Saturday with all facilities except disabled toilets closed on Sundays. Regular maintenance is carried out when needed and in response to reported defects.
- **Non-charging:** The Council will not charge the public to use toilet facilities in its buildings where there is provision. Private business providers are entitled to charge, if they deem it appropriate. Radar keys for access to disabled facilities are supplied by the Council’s One4All Centres.
- **Liaise with Town and Community Councils, business groups and other stakeholders:** Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council will work with the Town and Community Council’s and community and voluntary groups to explore how to provide toilet facilities in as many locations as possible using links established via our local Neighbourhood Networks and Town Centre partners to facilitate this.

- **Maximising availability in partnership:** The Council will work with local businesses and community groups to promote use of their toilet facilities and will explore options to increase local toilet provision through sponsorship, advertising, partnership working and any community asset transfer opportunities.
- **Provision of adequate toilet facilities by the promoters / organisers at one-off events:** Adequate toilet facilities for people attending one-off outdoor events need to be considered, through temporary installations or through the use of existing facilities at or near the event location. This must be in agreement with the Council. The Events Safety Advisory Group provides guidance on temporary toilet facilities for event organisers and to ensure compliance with relevant regulations. Consideration will be given to provision of facilities to meet specific equality needs.
- **Sustainable provision within the available budget:** Improvements and developments to date demonstrate the Council's commitment to invest where it matters to communities. It will continue, where possible, to maintain the current provision of toilets and secure every opportunity to improve and enhance facilities in the County Borough.

Objectives and Action Plan to implement the Local Toilets Strategy

The following two objectives have been developed with supporting actions:

1. To enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities;

- Promote equal opportunities to provide appropriate, accessible and effective facilities to all sections of the community, including changing facilities for babies and changing places for disabled persons. Looking for opportunities to include these provisions in any new (Council owned) developments where possible, and publicising more widely the already available facilities.
- Explore the option of displaying the toilet logo sticker at the entrances of appropriate publicly accessible Council buildings, community venues and private businesses that agree to participate.
- Work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and health care providers to encourage them to make facilities available to the public, to participate in the mapping scheme, and to display the toilet logo sticker in appropriate premises.
- Improve awareness and information available on toilet provision in the borough by updating information on the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council website and regularly update the "Lle" open access data repository with Welsh Government.
- Explore providing improved physical signage to existing facilities, in particular to consider new accessible signage to tackle discrimination.
- Review cleansing operations and standards periodically to ensure effective provision within allocated resources.

- Review opening hours of existing facilities with a view to exploring alternative opening hours where practicable.
- Work with the Police, members of the public, community groups and other interested parties, to ensure that facilities are as safe as possible.

2. Promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities;

- Explore all available options, including working with the private sector, community and voluntary groups and Town and Community Councils, to make more local toilets and changing facilities available where they are most needed. Working with our local Neighbourhood Network partners and consider any opportunities for community asset transfers where available.
- Work with partners to improve toilet provision close to key night-time gathering points, including taxi ranks, car parks, railway stations, bus stations and stops.
- Ensure that the Events Safety Advisory Group continues to provide advice and guidance on appropriate and accessible temporary toilet facilities to be provided at organised events to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- Consider dementia-friendly improvements such as increasing colour contrast in Council owned toilet facilities.
- Consider ratio of male to female facilities, whereby 1:2 is the ideal ratio as outlined by WG.
- Consider toilet provision for the LGBTQI+ community
- In line with the Council's Tourism Strategy, consider the required toilet facilities to serve the needs of visitors.
- Consider allowing members of the public free access to additional toilet facilities in publicly accessible Council buildings and promote this using the toilet logo stickers.
- Promotion of all available facilities using the toilet logo sticker with associated public awareness raising campaign, so community members recognise the logo and have an understanding that premises that display it allow the public access to their toilet facilities.

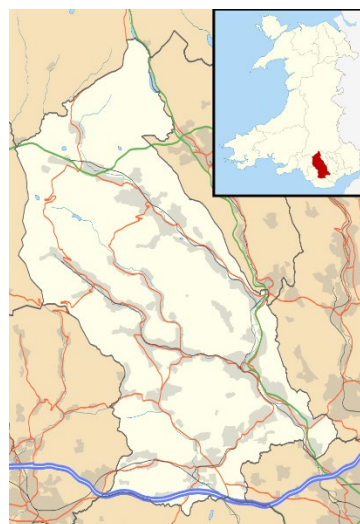
Potential options that have been considered and discounted, with explanation

- **Letting policies:** The Council could consider options to introduce a clause in leasing agreements which means that when the Council is letting its own property to a suitable business, for example, a café or shop, then the leasing agreement would include the requirement to include public access to the toilet facilities. However, it is envisaged that tenants may raise concerns around cleaning, maintenance and availability and if such a requirement were to be introduced, it could deter prospective tenants from progressing with the lease.
- **Late Night Levy:** The Council could explore the options and powers to introduce a charge for premises that have a late alcohol licence. However, in April 2017 a House of Commons review was conducted of the levy and led to the suggestion that it should be scrapped. Only 8 Local

Authorities in England and Wales have introduced a levy since 2013 and one has since removed it. There are no current levies in place in Wales. The levy did not generate the amount of income expected, including when introduced in areas with a large night-time economy. Many premises have late licences but use them infrequently for specific events or at certain times a year. It is understood that where the levy was introduced, many premises applied to change their hours rather than pay the levy. Before introducing a levy there is a need for wide consultation and discussions with the Police and Crime Commissioner and approval is required by Licensing Committee and Council. At least 70% of any income raised would go to the Police, 30% can be used by the local authority. Uses of the income have to be in line with specific objectives and publicised each year. Toilet provision for the night-time economy could be included under public nuisance and be part of a number of initiatives relating to crime reduction, public safety, etc. That would reduce the amount of income available for that function. After considering the costs involved in implementing, monitoring and reporting on such a scheme, a night-time levy is not considered to be a feasible option for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council as there is not the volume of premises to generate enough income to make a levy worthwhile.,

- **Planning Conditions:** Some larger commercial developments that will include cafes, bars, shops, entertainment venues, etc. could possibly be required, as a planning condition, to allow general public access to any toilet facilities that are being built in the premises; however, there is no policy support at national level for imposing planning conditions to allow the general public access to toilet facilities at private commercial premises. Any such condition would fail the test that it must be necessary to make the development acceptable from a planning point of view.

Appendix 1 – Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough area Demographic and Health Data



The area:

Rhondda Cynon Taf is the second largest Local Authority in Wales, being 424km² in size and forming part of the South Wales Valleys and Cardiff Capital Regions. The county borough was formed in 1996 following the abolition of the county of Mid Glamorgan. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council was formed by the merger of the former Mid Glamorgan districts of Rhondda, Cynon Valley and Taf Ely (with the exceptions of Creigiau and Pentyrch, which were added to Cardiff). The county consists of five valleys: the Rhondda Fawr, the Rhondda Fach, Cynon, Taf and Ely Valleys. Rhondda Cynon Taf is bordered by Merthyr Tydfil and Caerphilly to the east, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to the south, Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot to the west and Powys to the north. Its key towns are Pontypridd, Aberdare, Llantrisant with Talbot Green, Mountain Ash, Porth, Tonypany, Treorchy and Ferndale, with other settlements and towns including Pontyclun, Maerdy, Hirwaun, Llanharan, and Tonyrefail.

The area developed from the discovery and mining, primarily for export, of high-quality Welsh coals. The landscape was historically dominated by coal-waste heaps and deep mine pitheads. The history of the area remains evident, having influenced the layout of settlements with many of the roads lined with semi-ribbon development of closely packed Victorian terraces of houses which have given the valley communities their distinctive appearance. Given the unique landscape there are topographical constraints associated with travelling within the region. However there is an established road and rail network serving the area including the M4 to the south, the Heads of the Valley A465 to the north and the A470 running through the region, as well as rail links serving many of the major towns in the area. There are plans afoot to improve on this through the creation of the Cardiff Capital Region supported by the Metro transport system, which will provide increased connectivity within the region and beyond. Welsh Government have in recent years established a Valleys Taskforce, which will work alongside the Cardiff Capital Region to ensure the likes of the Metro positively impact the region and also serve to promote the area as a tourism destination.

Local Population:

There are 241, 873 people living in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This is projected to increase to 252,418 by 2040. The numbers aged 65 years and over will grow significantly, with the biggest increase in those aged 90 years and over.

Poverty and deprivation:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf it is acknowledged that there are areas with higher levels of deprivation. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 is the most comprehensive measure of multiple deprivation available. The concept of multiple deprivation upon which the WIMD 2019 is based is that separate types of deprivation exist, which are separately recognised and measurable. The WIMD 2019 therefore consists of eight types, or domains, of deprivation, each of which contains a number of individual measures, or indicators (1).

The information below shows the number of people in RCT living in neighbourhoods ranked among the most and least deprived 20% of neighbourhoods in Wales on WIMD 2019.

Number of people in RCT Wide living in the most deprived 20% of areas in Wales	Number of people in RCT Wide living in the least deprived 20% of areas in Wales
65,208	37,061
27.0% (Wales average = 19.5%)	15.4% (Wales average = 19.8%)
Source: Welsh Government (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019)	

Working age Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Benefits are benefits payable to all people of working age (16-64) who need additional financial support due to low income, worklessness, poor health, caring responsibilities, bereavement or disability.

Universal Credit (UC) has replaced legacy benefits for new claimants. The UC rollout began in April 2013, with single jobseeker's moving on to the new benefit and by March 2016 the rollout intensified to include other groups who are out of work or on low incomes. The chart below shows a breakdown of the proportion of UC claimants that are either in employment or unemployed across RCT and comparator areas.

Housing Benefit (HB) can be claimed by a person if they are liable to pay rent and if they are on a low income and provides a measure of the number of households in poverty.

Income Support is a measure of people of working age with low incomes and is a means tested benefit payable to people aged over 16 working less than 16 hours a week and having less money coming in than the law says they need to live on.

¹ The eight domains of deprivation included are: Employment, Income, Health, Education, Community safety, Housing, Physical environment, Access to services.

Universal Credit claimants – in Employment (Oct-22)	Universal Credit claimants – Unemployed (Oct-22)	
7,874	14,284	
5.2% (Wales average = 5.6%)	9.5% (Wales average = 9.0%)	
Income Support (IS) claimants (May-22)	Housing Benefit claimants (Aug-22)	Universal Credit claimants (Nov-22)
1,178	10,653	22,484
0.8% (Wales average = 0.6%)	10.3% (Wales average = 9.9%)	15.0% (Wales average = 14.8%)
Source: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)		

Vulnerable Groups: Disability

When considering the numbers of people in Rhondda Cynon Taf who are living with a disability the following measures are used: the claiming Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payments and Disability Living Allowance.

Attendance Allowance is payable to people over the age of 65 who are so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that they need a great deal of help with personal care or supervision.

Until April 2013, Disability Living Allowance was payable to children and adults in or out of work who are below the age of 65 and who were disabled, and required help with personal care or had walking difficulties. It is a non-means tested benefit, which means it is not affected by income. From April 2013 Personal Independence Payments (PIP) have been introduced to replace Disability Living Allowance for all new claimants. PIP helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health or terminal ill-health.

Attendance Allowance claimants (May-22)	Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (Oct-22)	PIP Males (Oct-22)	PIP Females (Oct-22)
6,617	21,203	9,517	11,689
14.2% of people (Wales= 13.8%)	14.1% of people (Wales= 11.6%)	12.9% of males (Wales= 10.6%)	15.3% of females (Wales= 12.7%)
PIP with mental health conditions (Oct-22)	PIP with respiratory disease (Oct-22)	Households on Universal Credit - Limited Capability for Work Entitlement (Aug-22)	Disability Living Allowance claimants (May-22)
7,092	917	5,113	7,776
4.7% of people (Wales= 4.0%)	0.6% of people (Wales= 0.4%)	4.9% of households (Wales= 4.6%)	3.2% of people (Wales= 2.5%)

Vulnerable Groups: Pensioners

There are two measures included: pensioners without access to transport and pensioners in poverty.

Pensioners without access to transport are those with no access to a car or van. The dataset only includes pensioners living in private households.

Pensioners in poverty are those in receipt of Pension Credit. Pension Credit provides financial help for people aged 60 or over whose income is below a certain level set by the law.

Private pensioner households with no car or van (Census 2011)	Households of one pensioner (Census 2011)	State pension claimant (DWP:Nov-20)	Pension credit claimant (DWP: May-22)
10,481	13,173	43,841	6,785
49.0% of pensioner households (Wales average = 38.5%)	61.6% of pensioner households (Wales average = 59.7%)	93.8% (Wales average = 92.5%)	14.5% (Wales average = 12.3%)

Health and Wellbeing: General Health and limiting long term illness:

This section provides information on general levels of health, focusing on the number of people living in neighbourhoods with poor levels of overall health (health deprivation hotspots) and the number of people with a limiting long-term illness, with breakdowns by housing tenure for RCT. Health deprivation ‘hotspots’ are neighbourhoods ranked among the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality. All neighbourhoods are grouped into ten equal sized groups “deciles”; the 10% of neighbourhoods with the highest level of health deprivation are grouped in decile 10, and so on with the 10% of neighbourhoods with the lowest levels of health deprivation grouped in decile 1.

Number of people living in health deprivation ‘hotspots’ (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014)	People with a limiting long-term illness (Census 2011)	People aged 16-64 with a limiting long-term illness (Census 2011)
99,242	60,589	30,029
42.0% (Wales average = 19.3%)	25.8% (Wales= 22.7%)	20.0% (Wales= 16.9%)

People living in owner occupied housing, with a Limiting long-term illness (Census 2011)	People living in social rented housing, with a Limiting long-term illness (Census 2011)	People living in private rented housing, with a Limiting long-term illness (Census 2011)
44,800	11,119	5,620
25.4% have a limiting long-term illness (Wales average = 20.9%)	36.0% have a limiting long-term illness (Wales average = 32.0%)	25.7% have a limiting long-term illness (Wales average = 20.6%)

Data taken from Community Insight profile for RCT Wide OCSI/HACT 2021

Appendix 2 – List of the current provision of council owned facilities

Location (Type)	Opening Hours	Facilities			
		Male	Female	Baby Change	Disabled (Radar Key)
Lake Street, Ferndale (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	No	No
Maerdy Park, Maerdy (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Bridgend Square, Pentre (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
91 Tylacelyn Road, Penygraig (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pontypridd Road, Porth (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hannah Street, Porth (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dunraven Street, Tonypany (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Bute Street, Treherbert (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Off Station Road, Treorchy (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Ynyshir Road, Ynyshir (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	No	No
Aberdare Bus Station, Duke Street, Aberdare (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monk Street (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alexandra Terrace, Cwmaman (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	No	No
Off Kendon Court, Hirwaun (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	No	No
Oxford Street, Mountain Ash (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pontypridd Bus Station (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bus Depot, Talbot Road, Talbot Green (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windsor Place, Ynysybwl (Public Toilet)	9-5 Monday – Saturday; Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes	No	No
Hendrewen Road, Blaencwm (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Brook Street, Blaenrhondda (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Cemetery Road, Maerdy (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Carne Street, Pentre (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Chepstow Road, Cwmparc (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No

De Winton Street, Tonypandy (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Graig Terrace, Ferndale (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Rees Street, Gelli (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Glyncornal Lake, Llwynypia (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Main Road, Pontygwaith (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Rheola Bridge, Porth (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Sandybank, William Street, Ystrad (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Stag Square, Treorchy (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Swan Street, Penygraig (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Cemetery Road, Trealaw (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Cadwgan Terrace, Trehafod (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Ynyswen Road, Ynyswen (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Gelligaled Road, Ystrad (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Main Road, Coed Ely (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Broadway, Pontypridd (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
East Road, Tylorstown (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Penrhys Road/Pleasant View, Tylorstown (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
St Albans Terrace, Tynewydd (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Aber-Rhondda Road, Ynyshir (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No
Bridgend Square (Opposite), Pentre (Urinal)	24/7	Yes	No	No	No

Appendix 3 – Community Consultation results

Rhondda 50+ Forum – 20/7/22 (23 present)

- Get the basics rights – practical considerations in design of facilities (consider needs of disabled users, those with health needs etc). Key example, hook on the back of the door, shelf for belongings etc
- Cleanliness important
- Lack of bins in toilets
- Disabled toilets not always available

Pontypridd Neighbourhood Network - 9/9/22 (12 present)

- Increased provision (in Taff Ely)
- For physical activity (walking groups etc) toilet facilities are essential (even if just a portaloo)
- Cleanliness is important to people
- Signposting where toilets are is important as people don't want to ask strangers

CF38 / Salem Chapel Neighbourhood Network - 13/09/22 (14 present)

- Availability and accessibility of toilets for pregnant women
- Look at availability of a card which allows access to facilities for non-patrons (mentioned anecdote from family member who has such a card)
- Lady out walking came into community venue to use loo during meeting. No female facilities in Tonteg just the urinals. Another attendee talked positively about how welcoming and open the group/venue is as she came in whilst on a walk with her young son to use the toilet and ended up staying to take part in the coffee morning.
- People working in communities (postmen, YEPs colleagues etc) they rely on community venues, council buildings etc to use facilities during working day. Could more be done to promote these facilities – displaying a sign etc.

North Cynon Neighbourhood Network – 22/09/22 (14 present)

- Businesses and others might be more inclined to open up facilities to public if WG considered offering some financial incentive to do so.
- Opening times of facilities continues to be an issue, although the public can understand the difficulties in terms of managing anti-social behaviour, safety, maintenance/cleaning costs
- Anecdote regarding a lock failing in Aberdare park toilets, no safety pull cord to alert anyone of issue.
- Aberdare Library were offering a key to use toilet there historically but stopped due to abuse of facilities.
- Could a phone code be considered to access facilities, then each user is linked to their visit and may be more responsible for what they do when they use facilities. Need to consider the digital exclusion element here.
- Community Asset Transfer/Community ownership option, works well elsewhere with honesty box system.

Tylorstown (Rhondda Fach) Neighbourhood Network – 27/02/22 (12 present)

- Nearest toilets that people were aware of were in Ynyshir and Ferndale. Nothing present in the Tylorstown area.
- Even the places that are open (in Ynyshir and Ferndale for example) are not cleaned well. All agreed that a replacement is needed to modernise the toilets.
- People have less access to toilets in the mornings and the evenings. It was mentioned that the Toilets behind The Strand in Ferndale are only accessible between the hours of 9am and 5pm.
- Also a lack of toilets that are accessible for those with disabilities.
- It was mentioned that Welfare Hall does let people in to use their toilet facilities if needed but it was mentioned that this could maybe be promoted more. We all agreed that stickers similar to the “breastfeeding friendly” idea would be perfect to have outside venues that are happy to let public members use their bathroom.
- Feedback is similar to what came from original consultation – key issues are around a need to refurbish/upgrade current toilets, alongside better signage to those buildings/shops that are happy to allow members of the public to use their facilities.

Gilfach Goch (SW Taf Ely) Neighbourhood Network – 28/09/22 (14 present)

- All attendees agreed that there remains a significant shortage of available local toilets facilities and that on the whole the consultation information from the original public needs assessment remains valid.
- Toilet facilities are needed in town centres if the public are to be encouraged to visit.
- Many attendees confirmed a number of local premises already informally allow the public to use their facilities: GGCA, Tonyrefail Community shop, the church etc. Although they did suggest this is not without it’s risks in terms of drug activity / anti-social behaviour. Many agreed that it would benefit the public to be made aware of this with the stickers mentioned. The chamber of trade and local school will be key links in this particular area and with many others present are keen to support.

Llantrisant and District 50+ Forum IDOP event – 1/10/22 (approx. numbers: 20 directly engaged over 250 in attendance)

- Many people echoed the concerns that there are not enough facilities locally
- Respondent only lived locally for 3 years and considers local facilities far better than what she is used to in England
- Many felt that businesses should open up facilities, the public would support their businesses as a thank you for the goodwill shown
- Keen to see facilities promoted, like the idea of stickers
- Situation seems the same as previous “assessment of public need” but possibly worse due to pandemic
- Toilets close too early – it’s like we aren’t allowed a life after dark”
- Willing to pay for facilities – like in Barry. Paid for turnstile for entry, with money used for cleansing, maintenance etc.

Monday Club, Beddau – 3/10/22 (5 present)

- Beddau and Tynant library already informally offer their facilities to the public and would be happy to promote this with sticker system
- All agreed it is an important topic and needs to be addressed
- Understand need for partners to contribute and promote what is available

- Pontyclun café 50 toilet mentioned as a good example of a local toilet

OPAG Meeting - 4/10/22 (7 present)

- Poor provision in Pontypridd considering it is our principal town. People frequently urinating in the street/steps near Sardis Rd. This is the area deemed the gateway to Pontypridd and needs to more appealing/welcoming and clean.
- 20p to use market toilet, people don't carry change anymore – consider a contactless card payment or token option? In this situation person involved then had to visit a national coffee retailer and purchase a coffee as she felt obliged to in order to use toilet.
- Treorchy outdoor toilets to side of library were mentioned as a good example, although lots of young people hanging around blocking access on times.
- Lack of toilets restricts people leaving their homes (older people, those with medical needs etc)
- Greater promotion of available facilities needed.
- When considering producing a card to gain access to toilet facilities there is a stigma with doing this and many people wouldn't want to highlight/publicise their medical condition/vulnerability. Ageing Well Card suggested as a consideration – updating of this. Could work with Older People's Commissioner's team on this?
- Many not keen on automated toilets, feel unsafe – doors opening randomly and people getting trapped etc.

Bryncynon Strategy IDOP event – 5/10/22 (approx. numbers: 10)

- Limited toilets in local area, no public conveniences as such. Have to go into business etc to use their facilities. In some Pontypridd businesses there is an expectation you purchase something if you go into use the toilet.
- Another stated that Pontypridd businesses are very accommodating, and she has never been denied access – always asks first.
- Many would be keen to see stickers used to promote available facilities and to give them confidence to go in and use facilities.
- Mindful of some people abusing available facilities and this may put businesses and other premises off taking part.
- Unaware Llys Cadwyn facilities available to public.
- Disabled lady doesn't access town centres due to mobility issues but also due to lack of toilets. She feels more comfortable visiting supermarkets where she knows disabled facilities are available, although she stated there should be more than one disabled toilet available.

The consultation highlighted that public toilet provision within the local authority area is a key area of concern for those engaged with, which included a significant number of older people. Specifically, attention was focused on a lack of clear, accessible information identifying the location of public toilets. Participants suggested that it would be helpful for toilet facilities to be more widely promoted, perhaps digitally on the RCT Council website, and many others commented on a lack of promotion of toilets available for public use. Several community organisations who already offer their facilities to the public and passers-by stated that they would happily promote their facilities if this were an option. Notably, it was clear that this issue has significant impact on older peoples'

confidence levels regarding going out into the community, with some stating they or those they knew would avoid visiting certain locations if they were aware toilet facilities were unavailable.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18 SEPTEMBER 2023

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC'S DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, STREETCATRE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLORS M.WEBBER, B. HARRIS AND A. CRIMMINGS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The two Public Spaces Protection Orders related to dog controls within Rhondda Cynon Taf are due to expire on the 30th September 2023. At any point before expiry of these orders, the Council can vary or extend them by up to three years if it considers it necessary to prevent the original behaviour the orders were attempting to address from occurring or recurring.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to (i) inform Members of the outcomes of the public consultation exercise initiated by Cabinet in relation to the dog control public spaces protection orders and (ii) seek authority to extend the two Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to dog controls in Rhondda Cynon Taf (the 'Dog Control PSPOs'), subject to any amendments Members may wish to consider in response to the consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the overwhelming public support in the consultation for the extension of the Dog Control PSPO's relating to Dog Controls within Rhondda Cynon Taf for a further 3 year period from 1st October 2023;
- 2.2 Considers the responses to the public consultation, as detailed in Appendix 1, together with the Equality & Welsh Language Impact Assessments at Appendices 2 and 3, and determines whether any amendments are required to the existing prohibitions in relation to the PSPO's as detailed in Appendices 4A and 4B to the report;
- 2.3 Subject to 2.2 above, extends the Dog Control PSPOs as detailed in Appendix 4A and 4B to the report; and
- 2.4 Subject to 2.3 above, gives delegated authority to the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services, in consultation with the Group Director,

Finance, Digital and Frontline Services, to produce the final PSPOs relating to Dog Controls and ensure their publication on the Council's website.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Dog fouling remains a significant concern for the Council and for those who live, work and visit the County Borough. Dog Fouling is unpleasant and is a serious risk to human health, particularly amongst children.
- 3.2 The Dog Control PSPO's have allowed the Council to introduce a range of reasonable and proportionate restrictions on the use of publicly accessible land across the County Borough and helped control the harmful activities of irresponsible dog owners whilst allowing responsible dog owners to continue to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- 3.3 Despite the introduction of the orders in October 2017 and their renewal in October 2020 there remains a minority of dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs or keep them under control. Officers therefore consider it vital the orders, which would ordinarily expire on 30th September 2023, are renewed for a further period in order to maintain the significant benefits the orders have had in relation to dog fouling and ensure appropriate powers remain in place to deal with the minority who continue to flout the laws.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Dog fouling is unsightly, unpleasant and can lead to toxocariasis in humans. Toxocariasis causes serious illness and even blindness. It is caused by a parasite that lives in dogs' digestive systems. Eggs are present in the faeces of infected animals. If infected material is ingested, the eggs hatch into larvae and can cause toxocariasis. The disease can be controlled if dog faeces are disposed of immediately in a responsible manner.
- 4.2 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 (the 'Act') introduced provisions whereby a local authority can make Public Spaces Protection Orders ('PSPOs'). A PSPO is designed to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in an area. The behaviour must be having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the community, it must be persistent or continuing and it must be unreasonable. PSPOs are designed to ensure that the law-abiding majority can enjoy public space, safe from anti-social behaviour.
- 4.3 The majority of dog owners are responsible, clean up after their dogs and keep them under control. However, a minority of irresponsible dog owners create significant problems. The Council receives many complaints each year about dog fouling in public places. In addition, despite the introduction of the Dog Control PSPO's some of our playing fields need to be checked for dog fouling before they can be used; on occasion individuals wishing to use the playing fields for sport are doing this.

5. CURRENT DOG CONTROL PSPOs

5.1 The following two Public Space Protection Orders came into effect on 1st October 2020:

[RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL \(DOG CONTROL\) PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER 2020](#)

[RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL \(DOG CONTROL – ABERDARE PUBLIC PARK\) PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER 2020](#)

(the “Dog Control PSPO’s”)

5.2 This report reviews the impacts of the Dog Control PSPOs and considers the case for extending them for a further three years, as permitted by the Act following the completion of a public consultation exercise.

5.3 The original introduction of the Dog Control PSPOs created transparency and consistency within Rhondda Cynon Taf and gave authorised officers the ability to issue fixed penalty notices for offences that were not able to be previously enforced.

5.4 The activities prohibited by the Dog Control PSPOs are:

- (i) The prohibition of Dog Fouling in all Public Places within Rhondda Cynon Taf;
- (ii) A requirement for a person in charge of a dog to keep that dog on a lead at all times in Cemeteries owned and/or maintained by the Council;
- (iii) A requirement for a person in charge of a dog at all times to carry bags or other suitable means for the disposal of dog faeces;
- (iv) A requirement for a person in charge of a dog to follow a direction given by an Authorised Officer, if they deem reasonably necessary, that a dog be put and kept on a lead in a Public Place within Rhondda Cynon Taf for such period and/or in such circumstances as directed by the Authorised Officer; and
- (v) A prohibition excluding dogs from all Schools, Playgrounds and Marked Sports Pitches owned and/or maintained by the Council and certain Community Council sites as set out in the Order.

5.5 In relation to the Dog Control PSPO covering Aberdare Park there is a specific requirement for a person in charge of a dog to keep that dog on a lead at all times in Aberdare Public Park. This requirement is consistent with existing provisions that have been in place since 1866 (local bye law) and with the expectations of many users of the park. Further detail in respect of this particular requirement can be found in the report presented to Cabinet in [September 2017](#) prior to the original commencement of the PSPO.

5.6 The Dog Control PSPOs were not put forward as a means of unduly restricting the exercising or recreation of dogs across the County Borough. The reason for making the Dog Control PSPOs was to address the detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality caused by the irresponsible behaviour of a

small minority of dog owners; and to set out a clear standard of behaviour to which all dog owners were required to adhere.

- 5.7 The Council employs a dedicated team of Wardens who patrol the County Borough with powers to enforce the Dog Control PSPOs in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy. The penalty for committing an offence of failing to comply with a PSPO without reasonable excuse is a maximum fine of level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1,000). Alternatively, the opportunity to pay a fixed penalty of £100 may be offered in place of prosecution. The fixed penalty of a £100 is the maximum amount which can be levied.

6. EXTENSION OF THE DOG CONTROL PSPOS

- 6.1 At any point before expiry of the Dog Control PSPOs the Council can extend them by up to three years if it considers it is necessary to prevent the original behaviour from occurring or recurring.
- 6.2 According to section 60(2) of the Act, before the time when a PSPO is due to expire, the local authority that made the PSPO may extend the period for which it has effect if satisfied on reasonable grounds that doing so is necessary to prevent-
1. Occurrence or recurrence after that time of the activities identified in the Order, or
 2. An increase in the frequency or seriousness of those activities after that time.
- 6.3 Section 61 of the Act makes provision for the Order to be varied by increasing or reducing the affected area, or by altering or removing a prohibition or requirement included in the Order or by adding a new one. For an order to be able to be varied, the Council must be satisfied that, on reasonable grounds, the following two conditions are met.

The first condition is that:

- a. Activities carried on in a public place within the Council's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; or,
- b. It is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.

The second condition is that the effect or likely effect, of the activities:

- a. Is or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature;
- b. Is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable; and,
- c. Justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

- 6.4 When the existing PSPO was renewed in 2020 a number of Community Council owned sites were also included within it as a result of consultation feedback and requests from Community Councils.

- 6.5 If the Dog Control PSPOs are to be extended this must be done before the time the Orders are due to expire, on 30th September 2023. In the event of the orders not being extended, they would lapse on 1st October 2023 at which point there would be no restrictions on dogs in Rhondda Cynon Taf (save for any enforceable local byelaws).
- 6.6 Officers consider it reasonable to assume that anti-social behaviour in regards to dog controls in the restricted areas would reoccur, and/or increase in the frequency and/or seriousness if the Orders are not extended. There would continue to be a positive effect on local environmental quality with the proposed extended and varied orders and continued enforcement against dog fouling and irresponsible dog owners.
- 6.7 Consultation feedback received prior to the introduction of the Dog Control PSPOs in [2017](#) and when it was renewed in [2020](#) highlighted that there was overwhelming public support for the introduction of the orders and prohibitions and requirements in relation to the control of dogs. Over 90% of respondents supported the Council's proposed approach to dealing with dog fouling and that dog fouling should be prohibited.
- 6.8 A report published by Keep Wales Tidy entitled 'An Analysis of Local Environmental Quality in RCT 2022-23' shows that the presence of dog fouling on streets in RCT has remained consistent (at 10.9%) when compared to the period the PSPO was last renewed in 2020. It is worth noting however that in 2021-22 the presence of dog fouling was recorded on 8.9% of streets – so the most recent report does unfortunately evidence an increase. Prior to the original introduction of the PSPO in 2017 this figure was around the 18% mark. The report also shows that instances of dog fouling are generally spread evenly across the County Borough. This report does therefore demonstrate that since its introduction in 2017 the PSPO has led to a reduction in the presence of dog fouling on the streets of RCT but also highlights it still remains an issue.
- 6.9 The Council has issued more than 1,000 fixed penalty notices for breaches of the Dog Control PSPO's since their introduction in October 2017.
- 6.10 Factoring in the above officer's proposed to Cabinet an extension to the Dog Control PSPOs, for a further period of three years from 1st October 2023, in the form set out at Appendix 4A and 4B to this report.
- 6.11 At its meeting on 28th June 2023 the Cabinet agreed to initiate a six week public consultation exercise on a proposal to extend the Dog Control PSPO's for a further 3 year period from 1st October 2023.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The consultation on the proposed extension to the Dog Control PSPOs ran for a six week period from 10th July to 18th August 2023. The full consultation report can be found at Appendix 1 to the report. The aim of the consultation was to

gather the views of residents and other relevant bodies and interested parties on proposals to renew a Public Spaces Protection Order, with regards to dog fouling in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

7.2 The methodology adopted included an online questionnaire and a webpage outlining the proposal to extend the Dog Control PSPOs. Promotion was via posters in key Council facilities (including parks), social media and the press. A short video was also produced and placed on the website and social media. There was also engagement with key stakeholders and the [Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#). A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address allowed postal responses. Overall, more than 320 people were engaged in the consultation process.

7.3 **Consultation Key Findings**

- 88.3% of respondents to the online survey said they supported the Council's approach to dealing with dog fouling.
- There was wide scale support, with over 89% of respondents agreeing with each of the elements of the Dog Control PSPOs and that they should be continued over the next 3 years.

	Agreed
A.)Dog owners MUST clean up their dogs' mess immediately and dispose of it properly.	98.1%
B.)Dog owners MUST carry a means to pick up dog mess (i.e. bags) at all times.	97.2%
C.)Dog owners MUST follow a direction from an authorised officer to put a dog on a lead.	92.7%
D.)Dogs are BANNED from all schools, children's play areas and marked sports pitches maintained by the Council.	89.2%
E.)Dogs MUST be kept on a lead at all times in Council maintained cemeteries	95.2%

- The main themes identified from the consultation responses/comments were:

Themes
Increased Fines (see para 4.7 Appendix 1)
More Enforcement/CCTV – (see para 4.8 Appendix 1)
More bags and bins needed (see para 4.9 Appendix 1)
Dogs should be on leads at all times/everywhere (see para 4.10 Appendix 1)

Improved signage/communication (see para 4.11 Appendix 1)
More enclosed/dedicated areas to allow dogs off a leash (see para 4.12 Appendix 1)

- 80.2% of respondents agreed that the maximum permitted fixed fine of £100 should remain in place. The majority of respondents that said it should not, did so as they stated they would like it to be a higher amount or increase for repeat offenders. As stated in paragraph 5.7 above the fixed penalty of £100 is the maximum amount which can be levied under the relevant legislation and it cannot be increased for repeat offences.
- 73.3% of respondents agreed that dogs should continue to be kept on leads at all times in Aberdare Park. 15.7% stated “don’t know”, mainly as they were not familiar with the area or the park, if the data is analysed without the “don’t know” answers, 87.0% of respondents were in agreement. Some residents raised the lack of a safe or enclosed space for dogs to exercise as a concern. A large proportion of residents did say similar restrictions should be in place for other parks in RCT, notably in Ynysangharad Park [other than in the designated dog walking area].
- A report published by Keep Wales Tidy entitled ‘An Analysis of Local Environmental Quality in RCT 2022-23’ shows that the presence of dog fouling on streets in RCT has remained consistent (at 10.9%) when compared to the period the PSPO was last renewed in 2020. It is worth noting however that in 2021-22 the presence of dog fouling was recorded on 8.9% of streets – so the most recent report does unfortunately evidence an increase. Prior to the original introduction of the PSPO in 2017 this figure was around the 18% mark. This report does therefore demonstrate that since its introduction in 2017 the PSPO has led to a reduction in the presence of dog fouling on the streets of RCT but also highlights it still remains an issue. The Council was keen to see if residents agreed that there had been a reduction in dog fouling in the last 6 years. In contrast to the results in detailed in the report, 61.1% of residents believe that the dog fouling levels had not decreased in the last 6 years. However, some of the specific comments received through the survey suggest that there has been an improvement.
- A number of responses were received from key stakeholders, such as the Dogs Trust and RSPCA and these are summarised in Section 6 of the consultation report.
- The full consultation survey comments and responses including emails and letters have been made available for Cabinet Members to review ahead of the meeting.

7.4 In summary, there is clearly still overwhelming public support for the prohibitions and requirements included in the Dog Control PSPOs and for their extension for a further three year period.

7.5 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposal at its meeting held on 17th July 2023. Members commented that they were supportive of the proposals within the consultation. They did query how many people had been fined for dog fouling and if there are regular offenders, can they be fined more. This point was a common issue raised in the consultation and has been addressed above.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY (INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY) IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council must be able to demonstrate that a PSPO is a necessary and proportionate response to the problems caused by the activities of dogs and those in charge of them. The Council is required to balance the interests of those in charge of dogs against the interests of those affected by the activities of dogs. This must take into consideration the need for people, particularly children, to have access to dog-free areas and areas where dogs are kept under strict control, and the need for those in charge of dogs to have access to areas where they can exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.

8.2 In developing the original PSPO an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken to ensure that:

- The Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties, and
- Due regard has been taken of the likely impact of the decision in terms of equality and discrimination.

8.3 The Equality Impact Assessment has now been refreshed following the completion of the consultation period using the feedback received from that process. This is attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

8.4 As a result of that exercise it is considered the impact on residents, visitors and businesses is expected to continue to be primarily positive, as these proposals should continue to act as a deterrent to irresponsible dog ownership. Taking into account the exemptions set out in 8.5 and 8.6 below in respect of any identified impacts in the EIA on those with a disability and mitigation identified therein to counteract that, together with possible impacts on individuals who may have reduced mobility and thus unable to pick up dog faeces there is no adverse impact on any other protected characteristics in relation to the extension of the Dog Control PSPOs.

8.5 The provisions of the proposed Dog Control Orders would not apply to a person who:

- (i) is registered as partially sighted or blind, in a register compiled under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948;

(ii) is registered as “sight-impaired”, “severely sight impaired” or as “having sight and hearing impairments which, in combination, have a significant effect on their day to day lives”, in a register compiled under section 18 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014;

(iii) has a disability which affects their mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination, or ability to lift, carry, or otherwise move everyday objects, such that he cannot reasonably be expected to remove the faeces; or (iv) has some other disability, such that he reasonably cannot be expected to remove the faeces.

8.6 The provisions of the orders would not apply to a dog trained by a registered charity to assist a person with a disability and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance.

8.7 For the purposes of the orders, a ‘disability’ means a condition that qualifies as a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance.

8.8 Nothing in the Order shall apply to the normal activities of a working dog whilst the dog is working. This includes dogs that are being used for work in connection with emergency search and rescue, law enforcement and the work of HM Armed Forces and farm dogs that are being used to herd or drive animals.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Should the proposed orders be extended there would be a need to amend existing signage to reflect this however any associated costs would be met from existing budgets.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 Section 60(2) of the Act states that before the time when a public spaces protection order is due to expire, the local authority that made the order may extend the period for which it has effect if satisfied on reasonable grounds that doing so is necessary to prevent—

(a) occurrence or recurrence after that time of the activities identified in the order, or

(b) an increase in the frequency or seriousness of those activities after that time.

10.2 An extension under this section—

(a) may not be for a period of more than 3 years;

(b) must be published in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State.

10.3 A public spaces protection order may be extended more than once.

- 10.4 Section 61 states that where a public spaces protection order is in force, the local authority that made the order may vary it—
- (a) by increasing or reducing the restricted area;
 - (b) by altering or removing a prohibition or requirement included in the order, or adding a new one.
- 10.5 A local authority may make a variation that results in the order applying to an area to which it did not previously apply only if the conditions in section 59(2) and (3) are met as regards activities in that area.

These are:

The first condition is that—

- (a) activities carried on in a public place within the authority's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or
- (b) it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect.

The second condition is that the effect, or likely effect, of the activities—

- (a) is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature,
- (b) is, or is likely to be, such as to make the activities unreasonable, and
- (c) justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

- 10.6 A local authority may make a variation that makes a prohibition or requirement more extensive, or adds a new one, only if the prohibitions and requirements imposed by the order as varied are ones that section 59(5) allows to be imposed.

The only prohibitions or requirements that may be imposed are ones that are reasonable to impose in order—

- (a) to prevent the detrimental effect from continuing, occurring or recurring, or
- (b) to reduce that detrimental effect or to reduce the risk of its continuance, occurrence or recurrence.

- 10.7 Where an order is varied, the order as varied must be published in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- 10.8 A local authority, in deciding whether to extend the period for which a public spaces protection order has effect (under section 60) and if so for how long and whether to vary a public spaces protection order (under section 61) and if so how must have particular regard to the rights of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly set out in articles 10 and 11 of the Convention.
- 10.9 A local authority must carry out the necessary consultation and the necessary publicity, and the necessary notification (if any), before extending the period for which a public spaces protection order has effect or varying it.

“the necessary consultation” means consulting with—

- (a) the chief officer of police, and the local policing body, for the police area that includes the restricted area;
- (b) whatever community representatives the local authority thinks it appropriate to consult;
- (c) the owner or occupier of land within the restricted area;

“the necessary publicity” means—

- (a) in the case of a proposed order or variation, publishing the text of it;
- (b) in the case of a proposed extension or discharge, publicising the proposal;

“the necessary notification” means notifying the following authorities of the proposed order, extension, variation or discharge—

- (a) the community council (if any) for the area that includes the restricted area.

The requirement to consult with the owner or occupier of land within the restricted area—

- (a) does not apply to land that is owned and occupied by the local authority;
- (b) applies only if, or to the extent that, it is reasonably practicable to consult the owner or occupier of the land.

In relation to a variation of a public spaces protection order that would increase the restricted area, the restricted area for the purposes of this section is the increased area.

11. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Whilst, as a result of this proposal, there are no specific impacts on

- (i) the use of the Welsh Language;
- (ii) increasing the number/percentage of Welsh Speakers; and
- (iii) increasing opportunities to use the Welsh Language

the signs that are used to transmit the details of the Dog Control PSPO to the public in relevant locations are all bilingual and will remain so should the PSPO be extended. Fixed Penalty Notices are also issued bilingually.

11.2 The majority of comments received through the consultation exercise survey responses agreed there was/would be no specific impact on the Welsh Language in the context of (i) – (iii) above.

11.3 Evidence used to support this conclusion includes the Welsh Language Promotional Strategy, Welsh Government’s [Cymraeg 2050 Strategy](#) and Consultation feedback which included comments such as *“I don’t believe there would be any detrimental impact on Cymraeg, provided the Council continues to maintain its bilingual provision.”*

- 11.4 Actions that can be taken to better contribute to positive future impacts include:
- (i) Supporting Welsh Language training and look at improving the number of bilingual Environmental Enforcement Officers; and
 - (ii) Pro-active recruitment of Welsh speakers to undertake the Enforcement Officer role. Look at positive recruitment e.g. targeting Welsh job sites, Welsh classes.
- 11.5 The Welsh Language Service advise officers ensure that that the process of issuing fines, from beginning to end, including any challenge to any payments etc. is available in both languages.
- 11.6 The full Welsh Language Impact Assessment can be found at Appendix 3 to the report.

12. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 12.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular *“Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work”*:
- 12.2 These proposals are also consistent with the Well-being Goals under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- *A healthier Wales – a society in which people’s physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*
 - *A Wales of cohesive communities – attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.*

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 Dog fouling remains a significant concern for the Council and for those who live, work and visit the County Borough and is a serious risk to human health, particularly amongst children.
- 13.2 The Public Spaces Protection Orders in relation to dog controls has allowed the Council to introduce a range of reasonable and proportionate restrictions on the use of publicly accessible land across the County Borough and helped control the harmful activities of irresponsible dog owners whilst allowing responsible dog owners to continue to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.
- 13.3 Despite the introduction of the orders in October 2017, and their renewal in October 2020 there remains a minority of dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs or keep them under control. Therefore officers consider it vital the orders, which would ordinarily expire on 30th September 2023, are renewed for

a further period of three years in order to maintain the significant benefits the orders have had in relation to dog fouling and ensure appropriate powers remain in place to deal with the minority who continue to flout the laws.

- 13.4 Cabinet is now asked to consider the responses to the public consultation together with the associated impact assessments and extend the Dog Control PSPO's for a further three year period from 1st October 2023 as detailed in Appendix 4A and 4B (accounting for any amendments required by it following consideration of the consultation response).

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

CABINET

18 SEPTEMBER 2023

**PROPOSED EXTENSION AND VARIATION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC'S
DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES,
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
AND DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, STREETCARE AND TRANSPORTATION
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS,
COUNCILLORS M.WEBBER, B.HARRIS AND A. CRIMMINGS**

Background Papers

a) Public Spaces Protection Orders (Dog Controls) – Joint Report of Director of Highways & Streetcare Services & Service Director of Public Health & Protection in discussion with the relevant Portfolio Holders, Councillor A Crimmings and Councillor J Rosser: 22nd June 2017

b) Public Spaces Protection Orders (Dog Controls) – Aberdare Park - Joint Report of Director of Highways & Streetcare Services & Service Director of Public Health &

Protection in discussion with the relevant Portfolio Holders, Councillor A Crimmings and Councillor J Rosser: 28th September 2017

c) PROPOSED EXTENSION AND VARIATION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC'S DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND GROUP DIRECTOR PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLORS A. CRIMMINGS AND R. LEWIS – 25TH June 2020

d) PROPOSED EXTENSION AND VARIATION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC'S DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AND GROUP DIRECTOR PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLORS A. CRIMMINGS AND R. LEWIS: 24 SEPTEMBER 2020

e) PROPOSED EXTENSION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC'S DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS – report of the director of legal & democratic services, director of public health, protection and community services and director of frontline services in discussions with the relevant portfolio holders, Councillors M. Webber, B. Harris and A. Crimmings: 28th June 2023

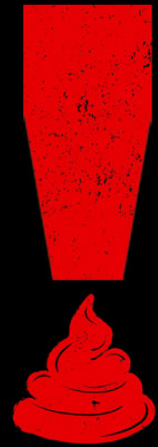
f) Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Chapter 12

g) Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014: Reform of anti-social behaviour powers: statutory guidance

Officers to contact:

Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal & Democratic Services; Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services; Stephen Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO CURRENT DOG CONTROLS



IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

CONSULTATION REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2023



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the consultation on proposals to renew a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) consultation on dog control in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- The consultation ran from the 10th July to the 18th August 2023. Overall, 319 survey responses and 5 emails/letters were received to the consultation.
- **88.3%** of respondents to the online survey said they supported the Council's approach to dealing with dog fouling and the renewal of the approach for the next 3 years.
- There was wide scale support for each of the elements of the PSPO, with **over 89%** of respondents agreeing with each of the elements of the PSPO and that they should be continued over the next 3 years.

	Yes
Dog owners MUST clean up their dogs' mess immediately and dispose of it properly.	98.1%
Dog owners MUST carry a means to pick up dog mess (i.e. bags) at all times.	97.2%
Dog owners MUST follow a direction from an authorised officer to put a dog on a lead.	92.7%
Dogs are BANNED from all schools, children's play areas and marked sports pitches maintained by the Council.	89.2%
Dogs MUST be kept on a lead at all times in Council maintained cemeteries	95.2%

- **80.2%** of respondents agreed that the maximum permitted fixed fine of £100 should remain in place. The majority of respondents that said it should not, did so as they stated they would like the amount to be higher.
- Respondents provided a large number of comments on the proposals and these have been summarised into the following main themes;

Increase Fines
More Enforcement / CCTV
More Bins and bags needed
Dogs should be on leads everywhere
Signage/Communication
Enclosed areas to allow dogs off of leash

- A separate PSPO, for Aberdare Park, was also introduced in 2017 and renewed in 2020 and states that dogs must be kept on leads at all times in Aberdare Park. 73.3% of respondents agreed that dogs should continue to be kept on leads at all times in Aberdare Park. 15.7% stated “don’t know”, mainly as they were not familiar with the area or the park, if the data is analysed without the “don’t know” answers, 87.0% of respondents were in agreement.
- Many of the respondents agree with continuing the restrictions in Aberdare Park, although some raised the lack of a safe or enclosed space for dogs to exercise as a concern. A large proportion of respondents said that similar restrictions should be in place in other parks in RCT.
- The Council was keen to see if residents agreed that there had been a reduction in dog fouling in the last 6 years. 61.1% of residents believe that the dog fouling levels had not decreased in the last 6 years.
- 52.0% of respondents to the online survey were dog owners. 98.4% of respondents were residents and 1.6% replied as organisations to the survey.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a consultation on proposals to renew a Public Spaces Protection Order on dog control in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 presents the results from the online survey.
- 1.5 Section 5 outlines some of the stakeholders and groups who responded to the consultation and emails received from members of the public.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 introduced provisions whereby a local authority can make Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs). The PSPO is designed to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in an area. The behaviour must be having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the community, it must be persistent or continuing and it must be unreasonable.
- 2.2 In 2017 the Council introduced a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to dog fouling across Rhondda Cynon Taf and this was renewed in 2020. The order says that;
 - Dog owners **MUST** clean up their dogs' mess immediately and dispose of it properly.
 - Dog owners **MUST** carry a means to pick up dog mess (i.e. bags) at all times.
 - Dog owners **MUST** follow a direction from an authorised officer to put a dog on a lead.
 - Dogs are **BANNED** from all schools, children's play areas and marked sports pitches maintained by the Council.
 - Dogs **MUST** be kept on a lead at all times in Council maintained cemeteries.
 - The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) also introduced an increased fine of £100, which Enforcement Officers can issue.
- 2.3 A separate PSPO, for Aberdare Park only, was also introduced on October 1, 2017 and renewed in 2020 and says that dogs must be kept on leads at all times in Aberdare Park.

- 2.4 The two Public Spaces Protection Orders related to dog controls within Rhondda Cynon Taf are due to expire on the 30th September 2023. At any point before expiry of these orders, the Council can vary or extend them by up to three years if it considers it necessary to prevent the original behaviour from occurring or recurring.
- 2.5 In accordance with the Act if the recommended proposed extension and variation of the Dog Control PSPOs is approved in principle the Council is then required to consult stakeholders. This report presents the findings of the consultation undertaken.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The consultation ran from the 10th July to the 18th August 2023.
- 3.2 The aim of the consultation was to gather the views of residents and other relevant bodies and interested parties on proposals to renew a Public Spaces Protection Order, with regards to dog fouling in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 3.3 The consultation used an online survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.
- 3.4 To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the [Councils consultation webpage](#) to encourage engagement. A short video was created outlining the key elements of the PSPO, this was placed on the webpage and also shared on social media sites.
- 3.5 An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation, including the following;
 - South Wales Police and Police & Crime Commissioner
 - Sports Clubs/Leisure 4 life App 12000 active users
 - Neighbouring local Authorities
 - Schools
 - Councillors/MPs/SMs
 - RSPCA, Kennel Club etc.
 - Neighbourhood Networks
- 3.6 Posters were placed in a number of key local parks, leisure centres and community centres.
- 3.7 A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address provided an option for postal responses.

- 3.8 Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, in order to allow them to share their views. Overall, there were a total of 5 emails/letters received from the public relating to the consultation.
- 3.9 The proposals were presented and discussed at the [Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 17th July 2023](#).
- 3.10 Overall, 319 survey responses and 5 emails/letters were received to the consultation.

4. Online Survey Results

- 4.1 Overall, 319 responses were received to the online survey.
- 4.2 88.3% of respondents to the online survey said they supported the Council's approach to dealing with dog fouling and the renewal of the approach for the next 3 years.

Do you support the Council's approach to dealing with dog fouling and the renewal of the approach for the next 3 years?	
Yes	281 88.3%
No	26 8.2%
Don't know	11 3.5%

Figure 1 - Support for the Council's approach

- 4.3 The renewal of the existing PSPO would include a number of separate elements. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following elements of the existing order and if they should be continued for the next 3 years.

The results are shown in the table below.

	Yes	No	DK
A.)Dog owners MUST clean up their dogs' mess immediately and dispose of it properly.	98.1%	0.6%	1.3%
B.)Dog owners MUST carry a means to pick up dog mess (i.e. bags) at all times.	97.2%	2.2%	0.6%
C.)Dog owners MUST follow a direction from an authorised officer to put a dog on a lead.	92.7%	6.0%	1.3%
D.)Dogs are BANNED from all schools, children's play areas and marked sports pitches maintained by the Council.	89.2%	9.8%	1.0%
E.)Dogs MUST be kept on a lead at all times in Council maintained cemeteries	95.2%	3.8%	1.0%

Figure 2 - Agreement with the elements of the PSPO

- 4.4 There was wide scale support, with **over 89%** of respondents agreeing with each of the elements of the PSPO and that they should be continued over the next 3 years.
- 4.5 80.2% of respondents agreed that the maximum permitted fixed fine of £100 should remain in place. A large number of respondents that said no, did so as they stated they would like the amount to be higher.

Do you agree that the fixed fine should remain at £100?	
Yes	80.2%
No	17.9%
Don't know	1.9%

Figure 3 - Do you agree that the fixed fine should remain at £100 (this is currently the maximum permitted)

- 4.6 Respondents provided a large number of comments on the proposals and these have been summarised into the following main themes;

Themes

Increase Fines
More Enforcement / CCTV
More Bins and bags needed
Dogs should be on leads everywhere
Signage/Communication
Enclosed areas to allow dogs off of leash

Figure 4 - Main themes from open responses

Increase Fines

- 4.7 The Council is limited to a maximum fixed fine of £100 in place of prosecution. However, a large number of respondents still felt that the fines should be increased;

“The fine should be increased to deter all offenders. Council should explore options for this.”

“The fine should be higher because then maybe people would actually pick up after their dogs”

“I think you should also prosecute those individuals that have been issued with a fixed penalty and refuse or don't pay the fine in full.....”

This was particularly the case for repeat offenders;

“Fines should double from the original for each subsequent offence.”

“Fine should be higher. Constant offenders prosecuted”

Enforcement

- 4.8 Many comments referred to a perceived lack of enforcement of the existing PSPOs and called for higher fines and more wardens/enforcement officers.

“This has been excellent for RCT but there are still too many that flout the law. We need regular enforcement of these laws if they are ever going to work.”

"It's all well and good bringing in controls but if they are not enforced then they are useless. I've never seen anybody patrolling my local area and the local bypass path is strewn with dog mess on the path a full bags thrown in the trees"

"I think there should be more officers making sure people are picking up after their dogs in places that are used by both dogs and children."

"Needs more enforcement officers patrolling and stopping this happening. On most days there is excrement on the streets where I live...."

"Increase in enforcement patrols, particularly around schools and playing fields. Tougher action on owners who leave their dogs off the lead or allow their dogs to roam the streets without control or supervision."

Dog Bins & Bags

- 4.9 Multiple respondents said that there are not enough dog waste bins provided in areas where dogs are walked, and that those already in place are not emptied often enough. Some comments also raise the issue of dog waste bags being provided.

"To encourage these rules to be acted upon by dog owners, more dog bins should be provided. Money from fines could be used for this purpose!"

"Sometimes as a dog owner, despite carrying poo bags you can occasionally get caught out and run out of bags on a walk. If bags were placed around housing estates, in parks, in dog walking spots then there would be no excuse from anyone not to pick up and it may also guilt people who would be likely to leave their mess into picking it up."

"I agree on most points made on this survey, however I've noticed a lack of dog waste bins around Aberdare...."

"Perhaps more frequent emptying of the bins would help"

"Need more bins for dog waste which are maintained and emptied regularly"

"The dog waste bins need to be placed back in the areas they have been taken from. Also the ones that are currently in use in RCT need to be emptied more frequently. Most bins are overflowing due to lack of being emptied."

Dogs on Lead Everywhere

- 4.10 Some of the respondents felt that dogs should be kept on a lead at all times in all public parks and some of the respondents referenced the need to expand the PSPO to cover public rights of way.

“All dogs should be kept on leads in any council parks especially where children are”

“Dogs should be kept on leads in all parks unless there is a dedicated and fenced of areas dogs can run around”

“Dogs should be kept on a lead in public parks, not everyone likes dogs running up to them, neither do other dogs. Dogs run off and foul in parks unnoticed by their owners”

“Also I wonder if all dogs should be on a lead in all public spaces, especially where children visit.”

“Consider if dogs should be on leads on combined footpath’s/ cycle paths”

A number of comments specifically mentioned Ynysangharad Park in Pontypridd.

“There are far too many dogs off the lead in Ynysangharad Park and this should be addressed. Some dogs are aggressive and owners are not in control. All parts of the park.”

“Dogs to be kept on leads in Ynysangharad war memorial park at all times other than in the designated Dog Pen Area”

Signage/Communication

- 4.11 The PSPO signage was mentioned in a number of responses, some suggested that the signage needed to be clearer and there needed to be more of them;

“Signage needs renewing in Ynysangharad Park, it has faded in several parts on the pathways especially around the cricket pitch and football field.”

“Signage needs to be improved.”

“More, pick up after your dog signs, and perhaps talks in schools of the danger that dog mess poses, and explain the unacceptable social repercussions.”

Enclosed areas to allow dogs off of leash

4.12 A number of comments suggested that the council should provide more enclosed areas for dogs in parks;

“I agree that in these places dogs should be on lead at all times but in other places dogs should be allowed off lead, maybe providing dog parks similar to the small provision at Ynysangharad park in other areas would be a good idea”

“Including, in housing estates and parks, adding monitored & enclosed areas to exercise dogs off lead would also be a good idea.”

“Provide an area where off lead walks /exercise is permitted as in Ynysyngharad Park.”

“Dogs need to run off lead to use up their energy. Areas should be provided in every area of RCT for dogs to run off lead.”

Aberdare Park

4.13 A separate PSPO, for Aberdare Park only, was also introduced on October 1, 2017 and renewed in 2020 and states that dogs must be kept on leads at all times in Aberdare Park.

73.3% of respondents agreed that dogs should continue to be kept on leads at all times in Aberdare Park. 15.7% stated “don’t know”, mainly as they were not familiar with the area or the park, if the data is analysed without the “don’t know” answers, 87.0% of respondents were in agreement.

Do you agree that dogs should continue to be kept on leads at all times in Aberdare Park?	
Yes	73.3%
No	11.0%
Don't know	15.7%

Figure 5 – Do you agree that dogs should continue to be kept on a lead?

4.14 Many respondents agree with continuing the restrictions in Aberdare Park, although some raised the lack of a safe or enclosed space for

dogs to exercise as a concern. A large proportion of respondents said that similar restrictions should be in place in other parks in RCT.

“Anyone in charge of a dog is responsible for controlling it's behaviour in public - however it isn't necessary for dogs to be leashed at all times.”

“If there are areas of wide open space, maybe there could be certain areas where dogs can be off lead if they are trained and controlled? Definitely kept on leads near any play areas/where it's very busy, especially with children.”

“This should be the case in all of our parks and public spaces.”

“Dogs should be free to exercise. It should be the owners who should be responsible in terms of keeping them on leads and letting them off leads.”

“Maybe have an area in Aberdare park for dogs, a dog park, there's plenty large enough areas to do this”

“Definitely. People are unable to control their dogs without it. There are a great deal of old people who walk their dog in the park and don't deal with it at all.”

Perceived Dog Fouling Levels

- 4.15 A report published by Keep Wales Tidy entitled ‘An Analysis of Local Environmental Quality in RCT 2022-23’ shows that the presence of dog fouling on streets in RCT has remained consistent (at 10.9%) when compared to the period the PSPO was last renewed in 2020. It is worth noting however that in 2021-22 the presence of dog fouling was recorded on 8.9% of streets – so the most recent report does unfortunately evidence an increase.

Prior to the original introduction of the PSPO in 2017 this figure was around the 18% mark. This report does therefore demonstrate that since its introduction in 2017 the PSPO has led to a reduction in the presence of dog fouling on the streets of RCT but also highlights it still remains an issue.

- 4.16 The Council was keen to see if residents agreed that there had been a reduction in dog fouling in the last 6 years.
- 4.17 In contrast to the results in the report, 61.1% of residents believe that the dog fouling levels had not decreased in the last 6 years.

Do you agree that the level of dog fouling has decreased in your local area over the last 6 years?	
Yes	27.3%
No	61.1%
Don't know	11.6%

Figure 6 - Dog Fouling Levels

Respondent Profile

- 4.18 52.0% of respondents to the online survey were dog owners.
- 4.19 98.4% of respondents were residents and 1.6% replied as organisations to the survey.

Equalities Question

- 4.20 Under the 'Equality Act 2010' and the 'Public Sector Equality Duties', the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents were therefore asked to state if the proposals would affect them because of: Gender, Age, Ethnicity, Disability, Sexuality, Religion / belief, Gender identity, Relationship status, Pregnancy, Preferred language.
- 4.21 Some comments raised concerns with limiting areas that people with mobility issues can exercise their dogs and highlighted the positive effects of walking with dogs in local areas. Other respondents raised concerns about feeling unsafe around off-lead dogs or dealing with dog fouling when mobility-impaired.

“I'm already limited to where I can walk my dogs due to my disabilities but extended the areas in which I wouldn't be able to walk my dog would make life for me very difficult as it is I often have to ask family members to walk my dogs and I'm grateful for the help I get but I do like to try and get out when I have someone to help me”

“As we age a dog can be a lifeline, there must be designated areas within easy reach for dogs to run and chase a ball”

“Many elderly people are unable to drive to areas to walk their dogs and a little wander around a field first thing in a morning or during the day where their dog can have a little run is so important for physical and mental well-being”

“Feel safer whilst using tramways, mineral lines and old railway walks like Monk street (top) to Cwmaman. Any pedestrian walkway, dogs should be on a lead, nobody these days takes the time to learn how to control their pet.”

“Disability is the only factor to consider here regarding slips/dogs mess on wheelchair wheels etc.”

“I am movement impaired. Dog mess on the streets is a consistent hazard I could really do without having to negotiate for something as simple as doing my shopping on my local high street.”

Welsh Language Question

- 4.22 The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 makes provision for the specification of standards of conduct in relation to the Welsh language and consequently the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on the Welsh Language.

The majority of responses received thought that there was no impact and questioned how this was related to dog controls. A small number mentioned signage as follows;

“I don't believe there would be any detrimental impact on Cymraeg, provided the council continue to maintain its bilingual provision”

“Bilingual signage should show the Welsh language then translated”

The comments received for the above 2 question have been made available to officers for the development of the associated impact assessments.

5. Stakeholder Responses

5.1 Responses were received from the following organisations;

- Dogs Trust
- RSPCA
- LLanharry Community Council

5.2 The following is a summary of comments received via email and letter;

Note: The full responses of the emails and letters will be made available for Cabinet and Officers to view

Dogs Trust

1. Re; Fouling of Land by Dogs Order:
 - a. Dogs Trust consider 'scooping the poop' to be an integral element of responsible dog ownership and would fully support a well-implemented order on fouling. We urge the Council to enforce any such order rigorously. In order to maximise compliance, we urge the Council to consider whether an adequate number of disposal points have been provided for responsible owners to use, to consider providing free disposal bags and to ensure that there is sufficient signage in place.
 - b. We question the effectiveness of issuing on-the-spot fines for not being in possession of a poo bag and whether this is practical to enforce.
2. Re; Dog Exclusion Order:
 - a. Dogs Trust accepts that there are some areas where it is desirable that dogs should be excluded, such as children's play areas, however we would recommend that exclusion areas are kept to a minimum and that, for enforcement reasons, they are restricted to enclosed areas. We would consider it more difficult to enforce an exclusion order in areas that lack clear boundaries.
 - b. Dogs Trust would highlight the need to provide plenty of signage to direct owners to alternative areas nearby in which to exercise dogs.
3. Re; Dog Exclusion and sport pitches
 - a. Excluding dogs from areas that are not enclosed could pose enforcement problems - we would consider it more difficult to enforce an exclusion order in areas that lack clear boundaries.
 - b. We feel that exclusion zones should be kept to a minimum, and that excluding dogs from all sports pitches for long stretches of the year is unnecessary. In some cases sports pitches may account for a large part of the open space available in a public

- park, and therefore excluding dogs could significantly reduce available dog walking space for owners.
- c. We would urge the Council to consider focusing its efforts on reducing dog fouling in these areas, rather than excluding dogs entirely, with adequate provision of bins and provision of free disposal bags
4. Re; Dogs on Leads Order:
- a. Dogs Trust accept that there are some areas where it is desirable that dogs should be kept on a lead.
 - b. Dogs Trust would urge the Council to consider the Animal Welfare Act 2006 section 9 requirements (the 'duty of care') that include the dog's need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns - this includes the need for sufficient exercise including the need to run off lead in appropriate areas. Dog Control Orders should not restrict the ability of dog keepers to comply with the requirements of this Act.
 - c. The Council should ensure that there is an adequate number, and a variety of, well sign-posted areas locally for owners to exercise their dog off-lead.
5. Re; Dogs on Lead by Direction Order:
- a. Dogs Trust enthusiastically support Dogs on Leads by Direction orders (for dogs that are considered to be out of control or causing alarm or distress to members of the public to be put on and kept on a lead when directed to do so by an authorised official).
 - b. We consider that this order is by far the most useful, other than the fouling order, because it allows enforcement officers to target the owners of dogs that are allowing them to cause a nuisance without restricting the responsible owner and their dog. As none of the other orders, less fouling, are likely to be effective without proper enforcement we would be content if the others were dropped in favour of this order.

The PDSA's 'Paw Report 2018' found that 89% of veterinary professionals believe that the welfare of dogs will suffer if owners are banned from walking their dogs in public spaces such as parks and beaches, or if dogs are required to be kept on leads in these spaces. Their report also states that 78% of owners rely on these types of spaces to walk their dog.

We believe that the vast majority of dog owners are responsible, and that the majority of dogs are well behaved. In recognition of this, we would encourage local authorities to exercise its power to issue Community Protection Notices, targeting irresponsible owners and proactively addressing anti-social behaviours.

RSPCA

RSPCA Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's consultation on the proposed extension to its current Public Space Protections Order (PSPO). PSPOs provide local authorities with a means of tackling dog fouling and other dog-related issues, such as access to public spaces. While RSPCA Cymru understands that local authorities have a duty to improve the communities they serve and protect human health, we would always urge any council to consider whether a PSPO is needed to achieve this. PSPOs risk punishing responsible dog owners for the actions of the less responsible, while potentially creating less spaces for dogs to exercise and express their natural behaviours. While PSPOs offer an effective means of tackling dog fouling via Fixed Penalty Notices for those who fail to clean up after their pet, we would encourage a more flexible approach to other issues relevant to dogs as outlined below.

Dog fouling in public areas

RSPCA Cymru understands that dog fouling remains a significant issue for towns and cities across Wales. In order to encourage responsible dog ownership and keep our communities clean, the RSPCA agrees that local authorities should require owners to clean up their dogs' waste and dispose of it properly. To assist with this, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC could look towards the introduction of educational and promotional schemes around responsible dog ownership in areas where fouling is an issue. Other local authorities across Wales, such as Conwy CBC, work with the local community to reduce instances of dog fouling in their areas by encouraging the reporting of offenders, with such a scheme being something Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC could also consider introducing.

RSPCA Cymru also supports measures that require all dog owners to carry an appropriate bag to pick up their dog's faeces. In October 2020, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC renewed a previous PSPO, setting out conditions for dog owners to collect and dispose of dog faeces immediately. All dog owners were also required to carry an appropriate means - such as bags - for picking up dog mess at all times. RSPCA Cymru believes similar ongoing action from the council would encourage responsible dog ownership while facilitating more harmonious relationships between dog owners and the wider community.

Other dog-related issues

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC's previous PSPO on dog control required owners to put their dog on a lead when requested by an authorised officer. To ensure this condition is administered appropriately if continued, the RSPCA believes the experience and knowledge of the

officer/s imposing the condition should be sufficient enough to prevent dog welfare from being compromised. Consideration should always be made in terms of whether such an instruction is necessary, especially if there is no risk to the safety of people, the dog themselves or other animals, or if the dog is not out of control or causing distress.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC seeks to continue the exclusion of dogs from all schools, playgrounds and marked sports pitches owned and maintained by the council. Within an additional proposed extension to the existing PSPO, the council also seeks to extend dog controls at Aberdare Public Park, proposing that the order imposes the condition that a person in charge of a dog keeps them on a lead at all times.

Many dogs enjoy interacting with each other and other people, and it is important that dogs are able to express normal behaviour off the lead in the appropriate places. Being given an opportunity to be walked off a lead and being able to interact and play with new animals and people in an appropriate place is important in terms of ensuring a dog is well-socialised. Interaction with others is particularly important in the development of puppies and younger dogs. However, RSPCA Cymru recognises that not all dogs will be well-socialised and some may find situations with other animals and people threatening, therefore not all places will be appropriate for time off-lead. As a result, we are fully supportive of all dogs being kept on leads in children's play areas, on school grounds when they accompany those picking children up and in cemeteries when providing comfort to their owners. However, we would encourage a more flexible approach towards dogs being allowed off-lead on council-owned land such as parks and marked sports pitches.

Areas such as marked sports pitches and fields in parks can provide owners with the option to let their dog/s off lead responsibly when not in use, especially if adequate space is not available nearby. Additionally, we believe the existing provisions that make it an offence for an owner not to pick up their dog's faeces go some way to mitigating the issues associated with areas such as marked sports pitches and parks. We therefore always urge local authorities to consider this when deciding whether dogs need to be banned from these spaces. With the full exclusion of responsible dog owners on marked sports pitches being both restrictive and limiting, the RSPCA would consider allowing dogs on leads a better proposal than a blanket ban. This is something that has been adopted by some other local authorities in Wales, with some considering this a sufficient means of tackling dog-related issues in their communities.

Llanharry Community Council

Would like Llanharry park to be included in the proposal.

Public Responses via email/telephone;

5.3 A small number of emails and phone calls were received from members of the public and comments included;

- Reports of individual dog fouling incidents and hotspot areas.
 - Support for the PSPO and the need to enforce it to reduce dog fouling.
 - Dogs should be kept on leads at all times, especially where young children are playing.
 - Suggestion to provide designated dog friendly areas.
 - Need for more bins and more regular emptying.
-

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officers: Andy Wilkins/ Louise Davies/ Roger Waters

Service Director: See above

Service Area: Legal & Democratic Services, Public Health, Protection & Communities, Frontline Services

Date:

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

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

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

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC'S DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS

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

Dog fouling remains a significant concern for the Council and for those who live, work and visit the County Borough.

Dog Fouling is unpleasant and is a serious risk to human health, particularly amongst children.

The Public Spaces Protection Orders in relation to dog controls has allowed the Council to introduce a range of reasonable and proportionate restrictions on the use of publicly accessible land across the County Borough and helped control the harmful activities of irresponsible dog owners whilst allowing responsible dog owners to continue to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.

Despite the introduction of the orders in October 2017 and their renewal in October 2020 there remains a minority of dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs or keep them under control. Officers therefore consider it vital the

orders, which would ordinarily expire on 30th September 2023, are renewed for a further three year period in order to maintain the significant benefits the orders have had in relation to dog fouling and ensure appropriate powers remain in place to deal with the minority who continue to flout the laws

The Cabinet report can be found [here](#) (Agenda Item 6)

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

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 (the 'Act') introduced provisions whereby a local authority can make Public Spaces Protection Orders ('PSPOs'). In creating a PSPO the Local Authority will need to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to support the test as stated in the legislation and guidance. The test is designed to be broad and focus on the impact anti-social behaviour is having on victims and communities. A PSPO can be made by the council if they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the activities carried out, or likely to be carried out, in a public space:

- have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of
- those in the locality;
- is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;
- is, or is likely to be, unreasonable; and
- justifies the restrictions imposed.

To implement a Public Space Protection Order for dog controls to restrict persistent anti-social behaviour in public spaces. The aim of the Order is to prevent or reduce anti-social behaviour, as a result of irresponsible dog owners.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users
 - Employees
 - Wider community
- √
√ (in the context of those officers who administer and enforce the Dog Control PSPO's
√

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

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

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

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

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Positive	<p>The PSPO is considered to have a positive differential impact on all protected characteristics of age. All age groups benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all age groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces</p> <p>The exclusion of dogs from marked sports pitches, playgrounds benefits children, youths and adults that play sport as it helps to provide a clean and safe area for sports to be played on. The consultation feedback supported this conclusion with a number of comments highlighting the importance of maintaining a safe environment for young people particularly</p>	A report published by Keep Wales Tidy entitled ‘An Analysis of Local Environmental Quality in RCT 2022-23’ shows that the presence of dog fouling on streets in RCT has remained consistent (at 10.9%) when compared to the period the PSPO was last renewed in 2020. It is worth noting however that in 2021-22 the presence of dog fouling was recorded on 8.9% of streets – so the most recent report does unfortunately evidence an increase. Prior to the original introduction of the PSPO in 2017 this figure was around the 18% mark. The report also shows that instances of dog fouling are generally spread evenly across the

		<p>to be able to play and participate in sporting activities.</p>	<p>County Borough. This report does therefore demonstrate that since its introduction in 2017 the PSPO has led to a reduction in the presence of dog fouling on the streets of RCT but also highlights it still remains an issue.</p> <p>Consultation feedback received prior to the introduction of the Dog Control PSPOs in 2017 and when it was renewed in 2020 highlighted that there was overwhelming public support for the introduction of the orders and prohibitions and requirements in relation to the control of dogs. Over 90% of respondents supported the Council's proposed approach to dealing with dog fouling and that dog fouling should be prohibited.</p> <p>As part of the consultation launched in respect of the proposed renewal of the PSPO for a further 3 year period from 1st October 2023 there remains strong support for the PSPOs with 88.3% of respondents saying they continue to support the Council's approach. At the same time there was wide scale support (over 89%) for each of the elements of the PSPO.</p>
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		<p>Prior to the consultation it was identified that some individuals may have physical limitations (reduced mobility) and impairment that may reduce ability to remove dog fouling, restrict ability to restrain a dog on a lead and having to travel further to exercise their dog (on foot or by vehicle) – Enforcement Officers would therefore need to take a view on individual cases and are provided with training in relation to this.</p> <p>Some concerns were raised in the consultation with limiting areas that people with mobility issues can exercise their dogs and highlighted the positive effect of walking with dogs in local areas. Other respondents raised concerns about feeling unsafe around dogs off leads or dealing with dog fouling when mobility-impaired. The Council has introduced a dedicated fenced off dog walking area in Ynysangharad Park which has proved successful and is exploring opportunities to roll out similar schemes in other parks.</p>	<p>Consultation feedback did highlight that this was a concern and therefore the mitigation identified, and already implemented under the operation of the existing Order is important to address this point.</p> <p>Consultation comments included:</p> <p><i>“I’m already limited to where I can walk my dogs due to my disabilities but extended the areas in which I wouldn’t be able to walk my dog would make life for me very difficult as it is I often have to ask family members to walk my dogs and I’m grateful for the help I get but I do like to try and get out when I have someone to help me”</i></p> <p><i>“As we age a dog can be a lifeline, there must be designated areas within easy reach for dogs to run and chase a ball”</i></p> <p><i>“Many elderly people are unable to drive to areas to walk their dogs and a little wander around a field first thing in a morning or during the day where their dog can have a little run is so important for physical and mental well-being”</i></p>
<p>Disability <i>(people with visible and non- visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The PSPO dog controls is expected have a largely positive differential impact on all Protected Characteristics of Disability. This group will benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control.</p>	<p>Consultation feedback included comments such as:</p> <p><i>“Help me feel safer whilst using the Country Park”</i></p>

		<p>This will benefit all age groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces.</p> <p>Some potential issues that were identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to remove dog fouling • Reduced ability to restrain dog on lead • Ability to know about restrictions (sensory and cognitive impairment) • Reduced ability to communicate (hearing/speech impairment) • Ability to understand restrictions (cognitive impairment) <p>In order to address the potential impacts of these no enforcement on any Public Space Protection Order dog control will take place if an individual has a disability that affects the person's mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination or ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, in respect of a dog trained by a registered charity and upon which the person relies for assistance.</p>	<p><i>“disabled unable to crouch down and pick up poo? I thought they had a protected characteristic and the rules didn't apply”</i></p> <p><i>I'm already limited to where I can walk my dogs due to my disabilities but extended the areas in which I wouldn't be able to walk my dog would make life for me very difficult as it is I often have to ask family members to walk my dogs and I'm grateful for the help I get but I do like to try and get out when I have someone to help me”</i></p> <p><i>“Disability is the only factor to consider here regarding slips/dogs mess on wheelchair wheels etc.”</i></p> <p>Dog Control Order and dog fouling legislation provides exemptions in particular cases for registered blind people, deaf people and for other members of the public with disabilities who make use of trained assistance dogs. Consideration will need to be given to the application of these exemptions</p> <p>Exemptions for Disabled People The provisions in the Order do not apply to a person who: (a) is registered as partially sighted or blind, in a register compiled under section 29</p>
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			<p>of the National Assistance Act 1948; or (b) is registered as “sight-impaired”, “severely sight-impaired” or as “having sight and hearing impairments which, in combination, have a significant effect on their day to day lives”, in a register compiled under section 18 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014; (c) has a disability which affects their mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination or otherwise move everyday objects, in respect of a dog trained by a prescribed charity and upon which they rely for assistance.</p> <p>The dog exclusion provision in the Order does not apply to a dog trained by a registered charity to assist a person with a disability and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance. However, it is expected that all reasonable measures should be undertaken to prevent assistance dogs going onto marked sports pitches. When sporting activities take place on the pitches, dogs should be kept under control and not allowed to go onto the marked pitch. For the purposes of the Order, a “disability” means a condition that qualifies as a disability for the</p>
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			purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and a “disabled person” means a person who has such a disability.
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who’s gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>	Neutral	The PSPO dog controls is expected have a neutral impact on all Protected Characteristics of Gender Reassignment. However, this group will benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces	No specific issues were raised in the consultation process in respect of this protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i></p>	Neutral	The PSPO dog controls is expected have a neutral impact on all Protected Characteristics of Marriage and Civil Partnership. However, this group will benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces.	No specific issues were raised in the consultation process in respect of this protected characteristic.
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i></p>	Positive	The PSPO dog controls is expected have a positive differential impact on all Protected Characteristics of Pregnancy and Maternity. This group will benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces. Individuals may be characterised as having mobility issues relating to their pregnancy and therefore Enforcement Officers will need to take a view on individual cases. Training will be provided to all Officers with delegated authority to issue enforcement Fines.	Consultation feedback comments did highlight the risk of someone who is pregnant coming into contact with dog faeces and therefore supported a renewal of the dog control pspos.

<p>Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The PSPO dog controls is expected have a positive differential impact on all Protected Characteristics of Race. This group will benefit from having improved controls of antisocial behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces.</p> <p>Some considerations in respect of this protected characteristic might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of written Welsh/English used on signage • Understanding enforcement officers in conversation • Where a FPN is served understanding the content of such a penalty <p>These considerations could be mitigated by ensuring signs are more pictorial in nature.</p>	<p>No specific issues were raised in the consultation process in respect of this protected characteristic.</p>
<p>Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i></p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>The PSPO dog controls is expected have a positive differential impact on all Protected Characteristics of Religion. However, this group will benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive</p>	<p>No specific issues were raised in the consultation process in respect of this protected characteristic.</p>

		enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces.	
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Neutral	The PSPO dog controls is expected have a neutral impact on all Protected Characteristics of Sex. However, this group will benefit from having improved controls of antisocial behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces.	No specific issues were raised in the consultation process in respect of this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>	Neutral	The PSPO dog controls is expected have a neutral impact on all Protected Characteristics of Sexual Orientation. However, this group will benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces.	No specific issues were raised in the consultation process in respect of this protected characteristic.

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Neutral	The PSPO dog controls is expected have a neutral impact on the Armed Forces Community. However, this group will benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces	No specific issues were raised in the consultation process in respect of this protected characteristic.
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Neutral	The PSPO dog controls is expected have a neutral impact on Carers. However, this group will benefit from having improved controls of anti-social behaviour relating to dog control. This will benefit all groups to enjoy public spaces with reduced fear of anti-social behaviour relating to dog controls and support proactive enforcement relating to dog fouling in public spaces	No specific issues were raised in the consultation process in respect of this protected characteristic.

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

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

Yes *

No

Name: Andy Wilkins

Position: Director of Legal & Democratic Services

Date: 31st August 2023

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY) – NOT APPLICABLE TO THIS PROPOSAL

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Low Income/Income Poverty</u> <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Select from the following:		
<u>Low and / or No Wealth</u> <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	Select from the following:		
<u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>	Select from the following:		

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Area Deprivation</u> <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport))</i>	Select from the following:		
Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	Select from the following:		
Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i>	Select from the following:		

SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

In this EIA certain factors have been identified as challenges for certain protected characteristics. Below we have identified these and these are set out below alongside the mitigating actions and any action to be take.

ISSUE

- Dog owner due to age/mobility/latter stages of pregnancy is unable to clear dog fouling or comply with any other restriction
- Dog owner has sensory or mobility issues
- Dog owner has liveried/un-liveried assistance dog and is unable to clear fouling or comply with any other restriction

GENERAL MITIGATING ACTIONS

- Informing the community of the PSPO dog controls and how they will be managed.
- Promoting and communicating good dog ownership behaviours.
- Clear signing of controls.
- Media / social media information at regular intervals reinforcing the controls
- Direct engagement with specialist groups and the provision of good information/media.

ACTION TAKEN/TO BE TAKEN

Officers receive training about this aspect of enforcement and will continue to do so.

A FPN can be appealed and information submitted about mitigating circumstances. Appeals are determined by the service manager.

In the case of liveried assistance dogs the dog owner is not challenged by the enforcement officer other than to offer assistance.

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

N/A

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

The Dog Controls PSPOs have been in force since 2017, a period of six years. This has allowed the Council to refine its approach to enforcement (and associated mitigation in respect of potential negative impacts on any individual with a protected characteristic.) It has also allowed it to develop its approach to educating people about the issue of dog fouling and the provisions/rules of the dog control orders through press and social media campaigns. Feedback is also received as part of the enforcement process which is used by the relevant services to inform their approach, evaluate and if necessary revise it.

Data from an annual report produced by Keep Wales Tidy in respect of a survey of recorded incidents of dog fouling across the County Borough was also used to inform the proposal.

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

The consultation ran from 10th July 2023 until 18th August 2023.

The aim of the consultation was to gather the views of residents and other relevant bodies and interested parties on proposals to renew a Public Spaces Protection Order, with regards to dog fouling in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The consultation used an online survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.

To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the [Councils consultation](#)

[webpage](#) to encourage engagement. A short video was created outlining the key elements of the PSPO, this was placed on the webpage and also shared on social media sites.

An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation, including the following;

- South Wales Police and Police & Crime Commissioner
- Sports Clubs/Leisure 4 life App 12000 active users
- Neighbouring local Authorities
- Schools
- Councillors/MPs/SMs
- RSPCA, Kennel Club etc.
- Neighbourhood Networks

Posters were placed in in a number of key local parks, leisure centres and community centres.

A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address provided an option for postal responses.

Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, in order to allow them to share their views. Overall, there were a total of 5 emails/letters received from the public relating to the consultation.

The proposals were presented and discussed at the [Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 17th July 2023](#).

Overall, 319 survey responses and 5 emails/letters were received to the consultation.

The full consultation report , outlining the key findings and feedback from the consultation process included the emerging issues/themes will be appended to the Cabinet report put before Members prior to any decisions made in respect of the proposal to extending the dog control pspos for a further three year period.

88.3% of respondents to the online survey said they supported the Council's approach to dealing with dog fouling.

There was wide scale support, with over 89% of respondents agreeing with each of the elements of the Dog Control PSPOs and that they should be continued over the next 3 years.

	Agreed
A.)Dog owners MUST clean up their dogs' mess immediately and dispose of it properly.	98.1%
B.)Dog owners MUST carry a means to pick up dog mess (i.e. bags) at all times.	97.2%
C.)Dog owners MUST follow a direction from an authorised officer to put a dog on a lead.	92.7%
D.)Dogs are BANNED from all schools, children's play areas and marked sports pitches maintained by the Council.	89.2%
E.)Dogs MUST be kept on a lead at all times in Council maintained cemeteries	95.2%

The main themes identified from the consultation responses/comments were:

Themes
Increased Fines
More Enforcement/CCTV
More bags and bins needed
Dogs should be on leads at all times/everywhere
Improved signage/communication
More enclosed/dedicated areas to allow dogs off a leash

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

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

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

The Council's Cabinet will consider the Consultation Report (together with impact assessments) and decide, based on the feedback, whether to proceed with the proposal, amend the proposal or not proceed with the proposal. If the Council's Cabinet decides not to proceed, the Dog Control PSPO's would not be renewed and their relevant provisions fall away. If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, it will mean the Dog Control PSPOs will be extended for a further three year period from 1st October 2023. Should Cabinet determine to extend the Dog Control PSPOs their effectiveness will be monitored by the relevant service departments using feedback received from service users and data, such as the annual Keep Wales Tidy report.

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

Legislation requires the PSPOS to be reviewed every three years if they are to be renewed or varied. However feedback received in relation to the PSPOs during the intervening period is used by the relevant services to inform their approach to things such as enforcement and educational/press campaigns in respect dog fouling.

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

Director of Public Health Protection & Communities & Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services

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

As stated above legislation requires the PSPOS to be reviewed every three years if they are to be renewed or varied. Therefore all feedback received following any extension and subsequent extensions is used to inform that renewal process as is the case now.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW –

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the definition of ‘Key Decisions’ must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Decision please forward your impact assessment to Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqIA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough and positive Impact Assessment; and • Opportunity to provide evidence if referring to a specific age group. 	5 September 2023	Final decision subject to Cabinet Decision – no proposed amendments suggested by officers to what was originally consulted upon following review panel
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
No specific comments	5 September 2023	Final decision subject to Cabinet Decision – no proposed amendments suggested by officers to what was originally consulted upon following review panel

SECTION 6 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

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

The Council must be able to demonstrate that a PSPO is a necessary and proportionate response to the problems caused by the activities of dogs and those in charge of them. The Council is required to balance the interests of those in charge of dogs against the interests of those affected by the activities of dogs. This must take into consideration the need for people, particularly children, to have access to dog-free areas and areas where dogs are kept under strict control, and the need for those in charge of dogs to have access to areas where they can exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.

In developing the original PSPO an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken to ensure that:

- The Council meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duties, and
- Due regard has been taken of the likely impact of the decision in terms of equality and discrimination.

The provisions of the proposed Dog Control Orders would not apply to a person who:

- (i) is registered as partially sighted or blind, in a register compiled under section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948;
- (ii) is registered as “sight-impaired”, “severely sight impaired” or as “having sight and hearing impairments which, in combination, have a significant effect on their day to day lives”, in a register compiled under section 18 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014;
- (iii) has a disability which affects their mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination, or ability to lift, carry, or otherwise move everyday objects, such that he cannot reasonably be expected to remove the faeces; or (iv) has some other disability, such that he reasonably cannot be expected to remove the faeces.

The provisions of the orders would not apply to a dog trained by a registered charity to assist a person with a disability and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance.

For the purposes of the orders, a ‘disability’ means a condition that qualifies as a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance.

Nothing in the Order shall apply to the normal activities of a working dog whilst the dog is working. This includes dogs that are being used for work in connection with emergency search and rescue, law enforcement and the work of HM Armed Forces and farm dogs that are being used to herd or drive animals.

This EIA has identified there may be impacts on certain protected characteristics that require consideration should the proposal proceed.

It has identified mitigating actions that could be put in place and those already in place to mitigate any negative effects. These are highlighted in the preceding sections of the EIA, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics of age and disability.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS –

Lead Officers:

Name: Andy Wilkins / Louise Davies / Roger Waters

Position: Director of Legal & Democratic Services / Director of Public Health, Protection & Community Services/ Director of Frontline Services

Date:

I recommend that the proposal:

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

Head of Service/Director Approval: Andy Wilkins

Name: Andy Wilkins

Position: Director of Legal & Democratic Services

Date: 9th September 2023

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

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WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

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

Stage 1 – Information Gathering	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name:	PROPOSED EXTENSION TO RHONDDA CYNON TAF CBC'S DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS
Department	Public Health, Protection and Communities/ Frontline Services/ Legal & Democratic Services
Service Director	Louise Davies/ Roger Waters/ Andy Wilkins
Officer Completing the WLIA	Andy Wilkins
Email	Andrew.s.wilkins@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	01443 424105
Brief Description	<p>The two Public Spaces Protection Orders related to dog controls within Rhondda Cynon Taf are due to expire on the 30th September 2023. At any point before expiry of these orders, the Council can vary or extend them by up to three years if it considers it necessary to prevent the original behaviour from occurring or recurring.</p> <p>The proposal, subject to the necessary consultation prescribed in legislation, is to extend those orders and to authorise officers to publicise the proposed orders as required by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.</p>
Date	3 rd July 2023 / revised post consultation 3 rd September 2023
Please outline who this proposal affects?	<input type="radio"/> Service users ✓

**(Service Users, Employees,
Wider Community)**

- Employees ✓ (in the context of those officers who administer and enforce the Dog Control PSPO's)
- Wider community ✓ (including residents and those who work in the County Borough and visit it)

<p>What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?</p>	<p>Dog fouling remains a significant concern for the Council and for those who live, work and visit the County Borough.</p> <p>Dog Fouling is unpleasant and is a serious risk to human health, particularly amongst children.</p> <p>The Public Spaces Protection Orders in relation to dog controls has allowed the Council to introduce a range of reasonable and proportionate restrictions on the use of publicly accessible land across the County Borough and helped control the harmful activities of irresponsible dog owners whilst allowing responsible dog owners to continue to exercise their dogs without undue restrictions.</p> <p>Despite the introduction of the orders in October 2017 and their renewal in October 2020 there remains a minority of dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs or keep them under control. Officers therefore consider it vital the orders, which would ordinarily expire on 30th September 2023, are renewed for a further three year period in order to maintain the significant benefits the orders have had in relation to dog fouling and ensure appropriate powers remain in place to deal with the minority who continue to flout the laws</p> <p>The Cabinet report can be found here (Agenda Item 6).</p> <p>There are no specific links as to the use of the Welsh Language in respect of the proposal – Signs that are used to transmit the details of the Dog Control PSPO to the public in relevant locations are all bilingual and will remain so should the PSPO be extended. Fixed Penalty Notices are also issued bilingually.</p>
<p>Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.</p>	<p>All members of the public who live, work and visit the County Borough benefit from a safer, cleaner environment as a result of reduced dog fouling and dogs being kept under control. The proposal will not specifically affect Welsh Language groups.</p>
<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. There was, however, a small increase in RCT – the percentage of the population of the county borough who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%. Numerically, RCT saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough, from 27,779 speakers to 28,556 speakers. RCT was also one of only four LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tudful. All of these are neighbouring</p>

	<p>county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase in demand for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed, data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider what impact it may have on the services we provide.</p>
<p>Other relevant data or research</p>	<p>A public consultation exercise in relation to the proposal ran from 10th July 2023 until 18th August 2023.</p> <p>The aim of the consultation was to gather the views of residents and other relevant bodies and interested parties on proposals to renew a Public Spaces Protection Order, with regards to dog fouling in Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p> <p>The consultation used an online survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.</p> <p>To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the Councils consultation webpage to encourage engagement. A short video was created outlining the key elements of the PSPO, this was placed on the webpage and also shared on social media sites.</p> <p>An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation, including the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - South Wales Police and Police & Crime Commissioner - Sports Clubs/Leisure 4 life App 12000 active users - Neighbouring local Authorities - Schools - Councillors/MPs/SMs - RSPCA, Kennel Club etc. - Neighbourhood Networks <p>Posters were placed in in a number of key local parks, leisure centres and community centres.</p> <p>A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address provided an option for postal responses.</p>

Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, in order to allow them to share their views. Overall, there were a total of 5 emails/letters received from the public relating to the consultation.

The proposals were presented and discussed at the [Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 17th July 2023](#).

Overall, 319 survey responses and 5 emails/letters were received to the consultation.

The full consultation report , outlining the key findings and feedback from the consultation process included the emerging issues/themes will be appended to the Cabinet report put before Members prior to any decisions made in respect of the proposal to extending the dog control pspos for a further three year period.

88.3% of respondents to the online survey said they supported the Council's approach to dealing with dog fouling.

There was wide scale support, with over 89% of respondents agreeing with each of the elements of the Dog Control PSPOs and that they should be continued over the next 3 years.

The following question was specifically asked as part of the survey

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 makes provision for the specification of standards of conduct in relation to the Welsh language and consequently the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on the Welsh Language.

Please let us know how you feel the proposal could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive or Negative) and if in any way it treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language?

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	Whilst there are no specific impacts on the use of the Welsh Language as a result of this proposal, the signs that are used to transmit the details of the Dog Control PSPO to the public in relevant locations are all bilingual and will remain so should the PSPO be extended.	<p>Welsh Language Promotional Strategy</p> <p>Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy</p> <p>Consultation feedback included comments such as</p>	<p>Support Welsh Language training and look at improving the number of bilingual Environmental Enforcement Officers.</p> <p>Pro-active recruitment of Welsh speakers to undertake the Enforcement Officer role.</p>

			<p><i>"I don't believe there would be any detrimental impact on Cymraeg, provided the Council continues to maintain its bilingual provision."</i></p> <p>Some respondents indicated that <i>'bilingual signage should show the Welsh translated first'</i></p>	
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g. Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	Positive	Whilst there are no specific impacts on increasing the number/percentage of Welsh Speakers as a result of this proposal, the signs that are used to transmit the details of the Dog Control PSPO to the public in relevant locations are all bilingual and will remain so should the PSPO be extended.	<p>Welsh Language Promotional Strategy</p> <p>Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy</p>	<p>Support Welsh Language training and look at improving the number of bilingual Environmental Enforcement Officers.</p> <p>Pro-active recruitment of Welsh speakers to undertake the Enforcement Officer role.</p>

<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Whilst there are no specific impacts on increasing opportunities to use the Welsh Language as a result of this proposal, the signs that are used to transmit the details of the Dog Control PSPO to the public in relevant locations are all bilingual and will remain so should the PSPO be extended.</p>	<p>Welsh Language Promotional Strategy</p> <p>Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy</p> <p>Consultation feedback included comments such as</p> <p><i>"I don't believe there would be any detrimental impact on Cymraeg, provided the Council continues to maintain its bilingual provision."</i></p> <p>Some respondents indicated that <i>'bilingual signage should show the Welsh translated first'</i></p>	<p>Support Welsh Language training and look at improving the number of bilingual Environmental Enforcement Officers.</p> <p>Pro-active recruitment of Welsh speakers to undertake the Enforcement Officer role</p>
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the <u>Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards</u> e.g. increasing or reducing the Council’s ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	Signs that are used to transmit the details of the Dog Control PSPO to the public in relevant locations are all bilingual and will remain so should the PSPO be extended.	<p>Existing signs already installed in respect of those locations which are covered by the current version of the Dog Control PSPOs</p> <p>Consultation feedback included comments such as</p> <p><i>“I don’t believe there would be any detrimental impact on Cymraeg, provided the Council continues to maintain its bilingual provision.”</i></p> <p>Some respondents indicated that <i>‘bilingual signage should show the Welsh translated first’</i></p>	<p>Support Welsh Language training and look at improving the number of bilingual Environmental Enforcement Officers.</p> <p>Pro-active recruitment of Welsh speakers to undertake the Enforcement Officer role</p>
Treating the Welsh language, no less	Neutral	Signs that are used to transmit the details of the Dog Control	Existing signs already installed in respect of those locations which	Support Welsh Language training and

<p>favourably than the English language</p>		<p>PSPO to the public in relevant locations are all bilingual and will remain so should the PSPO be extended.</p>	<p>are covered by the current version of the Dog Control PSPOs</p>	<p>look at improving the number of bilingual Environmental Enforcement Officers. Pro-active recruitment of Welsh speakers to undertake the Enforcement Officer role</p>
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Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

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

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

<p>What are you going to do?</p>	<p>When are you going to do it?</p>	<p>Who is responsible?</p>
<p>Support Welsh Language training and look at improving the number of bilingual Environmental Enforcement Officers. Look at positive recruitment e.g. targeting Welsh job sites, Welsh classes</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Director of Frontline Services</p>

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

<p>What was identified?</p>	<p>Why is it not possible?</p>
<p>Guaranteeing Welsh speaking staff in order to be able to engage in the language choice of the members of the public, including any communication with regards to issuing of fines</p>	<p>Current staffing structure of service need to improve Welsh language skills / capacity before implementation.</p>

Stage 4 – Review

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

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

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

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

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
Welsh Language Services advise you to explore the options available to the targeted recruitment of Welsh speakers. Welsh Language Services advise you to ensure that that the process of issuing fines, from beginning to end, including any challenge to any payments etc. is available in both languages.	4 th July 2023	Amendments incorporated into draft of impact assessment prior to presentation at the review panel.
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The proposal is unlikely to have a direct effect on the Welsh Language or Welsh Language groups;	5 th September 2023	Final decision subject to Cabinet Decision – no proposed amendments suggested by officers to what was originally consulted upon following review panel

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity to include the consultation response which addresses the need for any related paperwork to be offered bilingually and that any verbal agreement from officers could be made verbally in both languages. This could be possible if more Welsh Language speaking staff were employed by the Council or if the current staff learned the language; and • It notes the proposal will have a neutral effect, but you could argue that just extending the policy would have a positive impact as it makes the language more visible throughout RCT. 		
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
No specific comments	5 th September 2023	Final decision subject to Cabinet Decision – no proposed amendments suggested by officers to what was originally consulted upon following review panel

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

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

The Council's Cabinet will consider the Consultation Report (together with impact assessments) and decide, based on the feedback, whether to proceed with the proposal, amend the proposal or not proceed with the proposal. If the Council's Cabinet decides not to proceed, the Dog Control PSPO's would not be renewed and their relevant provisions fall away. If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, it will mean the Dog Control PSPOs will be extended for a further three year period from 1st October 2023. Should Cabinet determine to extend the Dog Control PSPOs their effectiveness will be monitored by the relevant service departments using feedback received from service users and data, such as the annual Keep Wales Tidy report. Legislation requires the PSPOS to be reviewed every three years if they are to be renewed or varied. However feedback received in relation to the PSPOs during the intervening

period is used by the relevant services to inform their approach to things such as enforcement and educational/press campaigns in respect dog fouling. All feedback received following any extension and subsequent extensions is used to inform that renewal process as is the case now.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

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

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

Whilst, as a result of this proposal, there are no specific impacts on

- (i) the use of the Welsh Language;
- (ii) increasing the number/percentage of Welsh Speakers; and
- (iii) increasing opportunities to use the Welsh Language

the signs that are used to transmit the details of the Dog Control PSPO to the public in relevant locations are all bilingual and will remain so should the PSPO be extended

The majority of comments received through the consultation exercise survey responses agreed there was/would be no specific impact on the Welsh Language in the context of (i) – (iii) above.

There will be more Welsh seen (signage) and possibly heard (more officers issuing fines in Wales as part of improvements) and possibly even in the back office process of any appeals process. This is a positive and will make the language more visible in RCT.

Evidence used to support this conclusion includes the Welsh Language Promotional Strategy, Welsh Government's [Cymraeg 2050 Strategy](#)

and Consultation feedback which included comments such as

“I don’t believe there would be any detrimental impact on Cymraeg, provided the Council continues to maintain its bilingual provision.”

Actions that can be taken to better contribute to positive future impacts include:

- (i) Supporting Welsh Language training and look at improving the number of bilingual Environmental Enforcement Officers; and
- (ii) Pro-active recruitment of Welsh speakers to undertake the Enforcement Officer role. Look at positive recruitment e.g. targeting Welsh job sites, Welsh classes

This approach was also supported by a consultation response:

Pe tai cynrychiolwyr/ staff yCyngor sydd gyfrifol o oruchwylio'r mesurau ac sy'n rhyngweithio gyda'r cyhoedd yn medru'r Gymraeg ni fyddai cynnig yn cael effaith negyddol ar yr iaith. Ond os na fyddai hyn yn bosibl mi ragwelaif y cynnig yn cael effaith negyddol ar y Gymraeg.

If Council representatives/staff who are responsible for overseeing the measures and who interact with the public know Welsh, the proposal would not have a negative impact on the language. But if this were not possible I foresee the proposal having a negative effect on the Welsh language.

The Welsh Language Service advise officers ensure that that the process of issuing fines, from beginning to end, including any challenge to any payments etc. is available in both languages. FPNs are issued bilingually.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Andy Wilkins	Service Director Name:	Andy Wilkins
Position	Director of Legal & Democratic Services	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments

		Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined ✓	
		Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language	
Signature		Service Director Signature	A S WILKINS
Date		Date	9 th September 2023

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (DOG CONTROL) PUBLIC SPACES
PROTECTION ORDER 2023**

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council ('the Council') in exercise of its powers under Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (the 'Act') hereby makes the following Public Spaces Protection Order:

1. This Order may be cited as the 'Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (Dog Control) Public Spaces Protection Order 2023' (the 'Order').
2. This Order comes into force on 1st October 2023 and shall have effect and remain in force for a period of three years from that date.

OFFENCES

3. The effect of this Order is to impose the following conditions within Rhondda Cynon Taf:
 - (i) The prohibition of Dog Fouling in all Public Places within Rhondda Cynon Taf;
 - (ii) A requirement for a person in charge of a dog to keep that dog on a lead at all times in Cemeteries owned and/or maintained by the Council;
 - (iii) A requirement for a person in charge of a dog at all times to carry bags or other suitable means for the disposal of dog faeces;
 - (iv) A requirement for a person in charge of a dog to follow a direction given by an Authorised Officer, if they deem reasonably necessary, that a dog be put and kept on a lead in a Public Place within Rhondda Cynon Taf for such period and/or in such circumstances as directed by the Authorised Officer; and
 - (v) A prohibition excluding dogs from all Schools, Playgrounds and Marked Sports Pitches owned and/or maintained by the Council and certain Community Council sites as set out in the Order.
4. For the purposes of this Order:
 - 4.1 'Dog Fouling' means failing to immediately remove the faeces of a dog by a person who is in charge of that dog.
 - 4.2 Placing dog faeces in a receptacle on land which is provided for the purpose, or for the disposal of waste, shall be a sufficient removal from the land. Being unaware of the defecation (whether by reason of not being in the vicinity or otherwise) shall not be a reasonable excuse for failing to remove the faeces.
 - 4.3 'a person in charge of a dog' means a person who habitually has a dog in his/her possession at any time unless at that time some other person is in charge of the dog.

- 4.4 'Public Place(s)' means any place to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right by virtue of express or implied permission.
- 4.5 'Authorised Officer' means a constable or a person authorised by the Council for the purposes of enforcing this Order.
- 4.6 For the purposes of 3(iv) above an Authorised Officer may only direct a person to put and keep a dog on a lead if such restraint is reasonably necessary to prevent a nuisance, or behaviour by the dog that is likely to cause annoyance or disturbance to any other person, or the worrying or disturbance of any animal.
- 4.7 'Rhondda Cynon Taf' means the whole area of the county borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf as shown in Schedule 1 to this Order.
- 4.8 'Cemeteries' means the areas of land as shown and detailed in Schedule 2 to this Order.
- 4.9 'Schools' means the areas of land as shown and detailed in Schedule 3 to this Order.
- 4.10 'Playgrounds' means the areas of land as shown and detailed in Schedule 4 to this Order.
- 4.11 'Marked Sports Pitches' means the areas of land as shown and detailed in Schedule 5 to this Order.
- 4.12 'Community Council sites' means the areas of land as shown and detailed in Schedule 6 to this Order.
5. It is an offence for a person, without reasonable excuse, to engage in activity which they are prohibited from doing by effect of this Order or fail to comply with a requirement to which a person is subject by effect of this Order.
6. The Council is satisfied that the conditions set out in Section 59 of the Act have been satisfied and, that it is in all the circumstances expedient and reasonable to make this Order for the purpose of prohibiting the above activities and introducing the stated requirements. The effect or likely effect of the activities is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature, such as to make them unreasonable, and justifies the restrictions imposed by this Order.

EXEMPTIONS

7. The provisions of this Order do not apply to a person who:
- (i) is registered as partially sighted or blind, in a register compiled under Section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948;
 - (ii) is registered as "sight-impaired", "severely sight impaired" or as "having sight and hearing impairments which, in combination, have a significant effect on their day to day lives", in a register compiled under Section 18 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014;

- (iii) has a disability which affects their mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination, or ability to lift, carry, or otherwise move everyday objects, such that he cannot reasonably be expected to remove the faeces; or
- (iv) has some other disability, such that he reasonably cannot be expected to remove the faeces.

8. The provisions of this Order do not apply to a dog trained by a registered charity to assist a person with a disability and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance.

9. For the purposes of this Order, a 'disability' means a condition that qualifies as a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance.

10. Nothing in this Order shall apply to the normal activities of a working dog whilst the dog is working. This includes dogs that are being used for work in connection with emergency search and rescue, law enforcement and the work of HM Armed Forces and farm dogs that are being used to herd or drive animals.

11. Where a person in charge of a dog wishes to rely upon any of the exemptions set out in this Order the burden shall be on that person to prove they satisfy the requirements of the exemption being relied upon.

PENALTIES

12. A person who is guilty of an offence under this Order is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

13. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by an Authorised Officer to a person who breaches this Order, offering them the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence by payment of a fixed penalty.

THE COMMON SEAL OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Was hereto affixed in the presence of

.....

Andy Wilkins

Director, Legal & Democratic Services

SCHEDULE 1 – RHONDDA CYNON TAF AREA

SCHEDULE 2 - CEMETERIES

SCHEDULE 3 – SCHOOLS

SCHEDULE 4 - PLAYGROUNDS

SCHEDULE 5 – MARKED SPORTS PITCHES

SCHEDULE 6 – COMMUNITY COUNCIL SITES

DRAFT

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (DOG CONTROL – ABERDARE PUBLIC PARK) PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER 2023

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council ('the Council') in exercise of its powers under Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (the 'Act') hereby makes the following Public Spaces Protection Order:

1. This Order may be cited as the 'Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (Dog Control – Aberdare Public Park) Public Spaces Protection Order 2023' (the 'Order').
2. This Order comes into force on 1st October 2023 and shall have effect and remain in force for a period of three years from that date.

OFFENCES

3. The effect of this Order is to impose the following condition within Rhondda Cynon Taf:
 - (i) A requirement for a person in charge of a dog to keep that dog on a lead at all times in Aberdare Public Park.
4. For the purposes of this Order:
 - 4.1 'a person in charge of a dog' means a person who habitually has a dog in his/her possession at any time unless at that time some other person is in charge of the dog.
 - 4.2 'Aberdare Public Park' means all land within the boundary of Aberdare Public Park as detailed in Schedule 1.
 - 4.3 'Authorised Officer' means a constable or a person authorised by the Council for the purposes of enforcing this Order.
5. It is an offence for a person, without reasonable excuse, to engage in activity, which they are prohibited from doing by effect of this Order or fail to comply with a requirement to which a person is subject by effect of this Order.
6. The Council is satisfied that the conditions set out in Section 59 of the Act have been satisfied and, that it is in all the circumstances expedient and reasonable to make this Order for the purpose of prohibiting the above activities and introducing the stated requirements. The effect or likely effect of the activities is, or is likely to be, of a persistent or continuing nature, such as to make them unreasonable, and justifies the restrictions imposed by this Order.

EXEMPTIONS

7. The provisions of this Order do not apply to a person who:
 - (i) is registered as partially sighted or blind, in a register compiled under Section 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948;
 - (ii) is registered as “sight-impaired”, “severely sight impaired” or as “having sight and hearing impairments which, in combination, have a significant effect on their day to day lives”, in a register compiled under Section 18 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014;
 - (iii) has a disability which affects their mobility, manual dexterity, physical coordination, or ability to lift, carry, or otherwise move everyday objects, such that he cannot reasonably be expected to remove the faeces; or
 - (iv) has some other disability, such that he reasonably cannot be expected to remove the faeces.
8. The provisions of this Order do not apply to a dog trained by a registered charity to assist a person with a disability and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance.
9. For the purposes of this Order, a ‘disability’ means a condition that qualifies as a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 and upon which a disabled person relies for assistance.
10. Nothing in this Order shall apply to the normal activities of a working dog whilst the dog is working. This includes dogs that are being used for work in connection with emergency search and rescue, law enforcement and the work of HM Armed Forces and farm dogs that are being used to herd or drive animals.
11. Where a person in charge of a dog wishes to rely upon any of the exemptions set out in this Order the burden shall be on that person to prove they satisfy the requirements of the exemption being relied upon.

PENALTIES

12. A person who is guilty of an offence under this Order is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
13. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by an Authorised Officer to a person who breaches this Order, offering them the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence by payment of a fixed penalty.

THE COMMON SEAL OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Was hereto affixed in the presence of

.....

Andy Wilkins

Director, Legal & Democratic Services

DRAFT

SCHEDULE 1

DRAFT



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

LOCAL COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEME (2023)

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE, DIGITAL & FRONTLINE SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN OBE

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides details of a further Local Cost of Living Support Scheme (2023).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended to:

2.1.1 Note and agree the detail of the proposed Local Cost of Living Support Scheme (2023).

2.1.2 Note and agree the implementation arrangements and delegation to the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services as detailed at section 9.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has already delivered a number of cost of living support schemes which have been funded by Welsh Government and supplemented with the Council's own resources. The latest scheme delivered during the Autumn of 2022, allocated support of £2.890M and was funded by £1.990M of the Council's own resources. This report proposes a further Local Cost of Living Support Scheme (2023), the total cost being £4.292M with the funding proposals set out in the report.

4. LOCAL COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEME (2023)

- 4.1 The details of the proposed further Local Cost of Living Support Scheme (2023) are set out as follows:

a. Payment to Families with one Child or more of Compulsory School Age

- A payment of £125 will be available / made to families with one or more child(ren) of compulsory school age. It will be one payment per family, not per child.
- Families of electively home educated child(ren) will be eligible, as will families of child(ren) that attend a school outside of Rhondda Cynon Taf but reside within the County Borough.
- It is estimated that 22,000 families will be entitled to this £125 payment.
- The cost to the Council of this element of the local scheme amounts to **£2.750M**.

b. Support to Lower Paid Council Staff

- Council staff continue to provide valued public services. Our lowest paid employees however, are more likely to be suffering from the ongoing cost of living crisis.
- In recognition of this it is proposed that all employees who are remunerated at Grades 1 to 6 are paid a one-off support payment supplement to their salary.
- In scope roles would include cleansing operatives, collection operatives, home care and social care workers, cooks, cleaners, school crossing patrols etc.
- This would equate to £125 per employee and would be made to approximately 5,800 employees.
- The cost to the Council of this payment would amount to **£0.942M** (including on-costs).

c. Local Cost of Living Hardship Fund – Resident Support

Fuel - £100k

Discretionary voucher payment for residents experiencing significant financial difficulties related to heating their homes.

Food - £60k

Discretionary payment to residents experiencing significant financial difficulties, to purchase small energy efficient kitchen appliances, such as slow cookers, and will also include a supermarket food voucher.

Housing (additional Discretionary Housing Payments) - £100k

It is proposed that the existing available resources for Discretionary Housing Payments is supplemented with an additional allocation of £100k. This will be awarded in line with existing processes.

The total cost of the resident support package would amount to **£0.260M**.

d. Local Cost of Living Hardship Fund – Community Support

Winter Welcome Centres/Warm Hubs – £80k

It is proposed to invite Expressions of Interest, for Community Venues to register as Winter Welcome Centres, providing warm pack items, warm drink and snacks to residents attending centres.

It is also proposed to further support Winter Welcome Centres with additional funding for **Food Support (£30k)** for venues able to provide hot meals and an additional allocation to support residents who are experiencing significant **Financial Hardship (£50k)**.

The total cost of the Community Support Package would amount to **£0.160M**.

e. Support to Food Banks – £50k

It is proposed that **£50k** is provided to support food banks and food support grants. This repeats the level of support which has previously been provided through the last 2 schemes.

f. Community Facilities Energy Support Grant

It is proposed to make available **£130k** to support energy cost pressures being felt across not for profit community based facilities. Community based facilities which are run by not for profit organisations who are known to the Council (RCT together) and who provide a combination of activities and / or sporting activities will be invited to apply for this funding of £540 per organisation (this is subject to Council approving the funding as part of the Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities report being presented on 20th September 2023).

5. INDICATIVE SCHEME DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 The Local Cost of Living Support Scheme (2023) will be operationally delivered during the period October to December 2023.

Payment to Families with one Child or more of Compulsory School Age

- Compulsory School Age will be determined as at the start of the school term beginning September 2023;
- A child begins to be of compulsory school age the term following their fifth birthday;
- In line with this, if a family has one or more children born between 1st September 2007 (i.e. age 16 as at 31st August 2024) and 31st August 2018 (i.e. age 5 as at 31st August 2023) and reside in Rhondda Cynon Taf, then they will be eligible for a Family Payment; and
- The payment will not impact upon any benefits (e.g. Universal Credit).

Payment to lower paid Council Employees

- A payment of £125 will be made at the November 2023 payroll;
- It includes all Council staff on Grades 1 to 6 who are due to receive a payment in November 2023; and
- The payment will be classed as earnings and accordingly will be subject to tax, National Insurance and pension deductions.

Local Resident and Community Support

- It is anticipated that this fund will be available for distribution from October 2023, details of which will be made available on the Council's website.

Community Facility Energy Support Grant

- Community based not for profit organisations who are known to the Council (RCT together) and who run a combination of activities and / or sporting activities will be invited to apply for this funding.
- It is anticipated that invitations will be distributed during October 2023.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 Due regard has been given to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, namely the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

8. CONSULTATION

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

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The overall cost of the Local Cost of Living Support Scheme (2023) is £4.292M.
- 9.2 External Funding of £0.168M has already been secured and £0.130M is proposed to be allocated toward the Community Facility Energy Grant via the Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities report to Council on 20th September 2023. The balance of £3.994M will be funded from the release of earmarked reserves and resources already identified to support cost of living pressures across the Council and our communities.
- 9.3 The detail of the scheme including eligibility, assessment and its administration is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services in line with the Council's Constitution

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The recommendations have been compiled ensuring continued compliance with the Council's legal requirement to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs as set out in Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

In addition, the proposals support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, in line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

- 10.2 The Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director – Finance, Digital and Frontline Services will administer the Local Cost of Living Support Scheme (2023) and make the necessary determinations in accordance with the Council's 'officer scheme of delegation'.

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

- 11.1 The proposals are aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan "Making a Difference" 2020-2024, in particular the priority 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper' and also the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 well-being goal of "A more prosperous Wales".

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 This further cost of living support package will provide financial support to residents and community organisations across Rhondda Cynon Taf. It will also provide a one-off supplementary payment to the lowest paid employees of the Council and provide further financial support to our foodbanks that continue to provide invaluable help to residents.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

LOCAL COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEME (2023)

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE,
DIGITAL & FRONTLINE SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER OF THE
COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN**

Officer to contact: Barrie Davies.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH SEPTEMBER 2023

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2026/27

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE, DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR C LEYSHON

AUTHOR: Barrie Davies (01443 424026)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2023/24 to 2026/27, based on current modelling assumptions in advance of formulating the detailed budget strategy proposals for 2024/25 during the autumn.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- i. Note the current position modelled in respect of the ‘Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27’ and receive further updates in the autumn as part of the annual budget setting process; and
 - ii. Note that the MTFP will be presented to Council in September and will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in line with their terms of reference alongside our budget consultation arrangements.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Each year as part of the Council’s robust financial management arrangements, an update on the Medium-Term Financial Planning assumptions is provided to Members in advance of the detailed budget strategy work in the autumn.

- 4.2 The Public Sector has faced a sustained period of real term reductions in funding levels for a number of years and unprecedented challenges lie ahead for services across local government as a result of on-going difficult economic conditions, high levels of inflation and the widespread implications of the conflict in Ukraine. These conditions are resulting in sustained increases in demand and costs associated with many Council services, in particular Social Care Services, and the need for us to continue to provide additional support to our residents, businesses and communities as they deal with the impact of on-going increases in energy, food and other costs.
- 4.3 Locally, this Council has demonstrated its ability and willingness to invest in services over a long-term period, linked to our priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan "Making a Difference - 2020 – 2024", in order to meet the changing needs of our people and communities. The significant 'additional' investment already agreed by Members during recent years is providing real improvements across many areas including Schools, Town Centres, Roads and Parks and Play Areas, alongside specific packages of financial support, funded by the Council and Welsh Government, to help families through the cost of living crisis.
- 4.4 Whilst investment through the use of one-off funds has been very positive, the Council recognises that it must still address projected base budget shortfalls and make difficult decisions to balance its ongoing revenue budget into the medium term. This report provides an updated view on the range and scale of the significant challenge faced and the arrangements being put in place to address the budget gap across the planning period, recognising that this follows on from the Council needing to address the most significant budget gap it has ever faced, at £38M for the current year, through a wide range of budget reduction measures.
- 4.5 Welsh Government, as part of its 2023/24 settlement, provided an indicative all Wales settlement level for the next financial year (2024/25) at +3.1%. Members will note the UK Government Budget is scheduled to be announced in autumn 2023 and will be a key driver and determinant of any additional funding being made available to devolved nations for 2024/25 and also the prospects for settlement levels over the medium term.

5. CURRENT MODELLING ASSUMPTIONS

- 5.1 The detailed modelling assumptions are included as part of the updated 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27' and is attached at **Appendix 1**. The updated plan sets out the detailed basis of the medium-term strategy with references to revenue spending, capital plans, income levels and reserves.
- 5.2 Key assumptions used in the construction of the revenue budget modelling to 2026/27 are shown below:

5.3 Income

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

Year	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement
2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27	3.1%, 2.0% and 2.0% annum	3.0% per annum	4.0% per annum

- Council Tax increases are currently being modelled at 3.90% per annum.
- Specific grant funding from Welsh Government assumed to continue in respect of the Social Care Workforce Grant (£3.668M for 2023/24).
- Fees and charges uplifted by medium term inflation only (other than where exceptions have already been agreed by Cabinet).

5.4 Expenditure

- Service area pressures reflected which arise from statutory requirements, demand led pressures, demographics etc.
- Modelled uplifts included for pay and non-pay inflation (with agreed pay awards for teaching staff for 2022/23 and 2023/24 included on the basis of being fully funded by Welsh Government).
- Authority wide requirements reflected including Capital Financing, Levies and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Schools budget is modelled to cover, in full, pay and non-pay inflation plus specific budget pressures (and in the context of the projected range of local government settlement levels).

6. CURRENT MODELLING OUTCOMES

- 6.1 The modelling uses a number of assumptions which are all subject to change and will be reviewed as part of the detailed budget strategy work underway. Due to current uncertainty at a UK Central Government level around public sector funding levels, paragraph 5.3 sets out a range of modelling assumptions for Welsh Government funding levels for financial years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27. The variability of the potential level of the Settlement from Welsh Government has a significant impact on the budget gap, at £4.7M per 1%, and Figure 1 illustrates the outcome of the range of modelling assumptions currently applied.

Figure 1 : Modelled Budget Gap 2024/25 to 2026/27

Budget Requirement	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Additional Budget Requirement			
Additional Budget Requirement	46,920	41,715	38,710
Additional Resources			
Council Tax	6,409	5,100	5,299
Transition Funding	-9,105	0	0
Social Care Workforce Grant	0	0	0
WG Resource in line with WG indicative settlement for 2024/25 (+3.1%) and a Council assumption of settlement levels: 2025/26 +2% and 2026/27 +2%	14,611	9,719	9,913
WG Resource at +3%	14,140	14,564	15,001
WG Resource at +4%	18,853	19,607	20,391

Remaining Budget Gap at Welsh Government Settlement Levels	3 Year Budget Gap			
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
+3.1% increase for 2024/25, +2.0% increase for 2025/26 and +2.0% increase for 2026/27	35,005	26,897	23,498	85,400
3% increase per year	35,477	22,052	18,410	75,938
4% increase per year	30,764	17,008	13,020	60,792

Note: a 3.90% Council Tax increase per year is assumed as part of the modelled gap

6.2 As shown above, all of our planning assumptions result in a significant budget gap being faced by the Council. The extent of the impact on our services is clearly going to be largely and directly determined by the level of funding the UK Government provides to Welsh Government and thereafter the settlement level local authorities in Wales receive from Welsh Government.

6.3 The indicative all Wales settlement level provided by Welsh Government for 2024/25 of 3.1% is, as referred to above, informed by and reliant on the forecasted funding level to be provided by the UK Government. It is clear that this position is significantly out of line with inflationary and service pressures being faced across local government.

7. **BALANCING THE BUDGET**

7.1 The Council continues to focus on the budget gap position over the medium term and has successfully implemented a strategy of early identification and delivery of base budget reducing measures in-year. This has enabled the

Council to deliver financial savings early and to replenish the Medium-Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation Reserve which has been used proactively as part of the budget strategy for a number of years.

- 7.2 Whilst our priority and focus is on protecting and supporting residents, communities and businesses, this is set in the context of the Council facing a budget gap of £35M for the next financial year and follows on from the £38M budget gap in the current year, as referenced in paragraph 4.4. The significance of the year-on-year funding shortfalls will mean that the Council's priority and focus will be extremely challenging to continue to deliver at the same levels as in previous years.
- 7.3 As the above clearly demonstrates, in the absence of additional funding from UK Government and thereafter Welsh Government, the Council faces a significant budget gap for next year and across the medium term. It is clear, that the indicative funding allocation in no way reflects the reality of today and that UK Government urgently needs to provide assurance to Welsh Government / Local Government that additional funding will be forthcoming. In the absence of such assurance, and to enable this Council to discharge its statutory duty to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2024/25 by the 11th March 2024, then once again all options to reduce council spend and generate income will need to be considered. This is at a time when residents are continuing to face cost of living challenges with significant pressures on household budgets.
- 7.4 In this regard, we must now, in the absence of any indications of additional funding being provided to local government, embark on further reviews across all our services to urgently identify options which can be considered to close the budget gap being faced. Whilst our valued services and jobs will be safeguarded wherever possible, it is inevitable that there will be a need to make cuts in service levels and jobs in order to close the budget gap we face, unless or until we receive assurances as to likely more positive funding levels next year and into the medium term.
- 7.5 As part of our service and financial planning arrangements, opportunity must be taken to ensure we continue a programme of transformation and service delivery changes which we have made across many, if not all of our service areas, in recent years. The Council continues to make step changes in our working arrangements, supported by a number of key strategies including Office Accommodation Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and Digital Strategy, and are providing the direction and focus to deliver more efficient and effective services to residents.
- 7.6 In line with the above, the areas we will explore include the continued: maximisation of efficiency saving opportunities including on-going review of workforce requirements and resources; delivery of our Social Services Transformation Programme (including our Residential Care Homes for Older People Strategy and Children's Services Residential Transformation Strategy); review of our base budget requirements at both a service level and an authority wide level including our built assets; maximisation of opportunities to invest for

the long term and collaboration with others and progress the delivery of our climate change ambitions; and, as a last resort, proposals to reduce service levels. In parallel, there will be a continued focus on the principles of Digitalisation, Commercialism, Early Intervention and Prevention, Independence and being an Efficient and Effective Organisation.

- 7.7 We have for many years sought to prioritise funding for schools, ensuring they have been treated favourably in comparison with other council services and providing additional resources for inflationary pressures (pay and non-pay), pupil number movements and other cost pressures being felt across our schools, and alongside this, the requirement to deliver a budget efficiency target. In light of the aforementioned position, schools will need to be prepared to contribute to closing the funding gap we face, as the sector has done in previous years.
- 7.8 As work develops through the areas described in 7.6, this will be reported to Members as appropriate.
- 7.9 Greater certainty will be available on the level of savings required post the Provisional Local Government Settlement later in the year. The position will be reported to Members as soon as possible after the settlement publication and as referenced above, the continued focus across a medium-term planning period is paramount.

8. RESERVES

- 8.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan includes its Reserve Policy, setting out the important part reserves play in the overall financial management and financial standing of the Council.
- 8.2 The Council holds a number of categories of reserves, these being one-off funding allocations set aside for specific purposes and are continuously monitored as part of financial management and budgetary control arrangements to assess changes in risk and potential liabilities. This process also identifies reserves that can be released and made available to provide additional one-off investment in priority areas and infrastructure, subject to elected Member approval.
- 8.3 In addition to the above, the Council has also used reserves prudently as part of supporting its annual budget strategies over a number of years. Importantly, the approach recognises that due to their one-off nature, the use of reserves do not represent a sustainable strategy and more permanent changes / reductions to the base budget must be made to address budget gaps. By way of example, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan, to balance the budget based on modelled Welsh Government annual settlement levels at 3.1% for 2024/25 and 2% per year for 2025/26 and 2026/27, using reserves alone would require the use of over £182M of reserves and the Council would still have a need to reduce its base budget by over £85M at the end of this period.

9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

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

10. CONSULTATION

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

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

14. CONCLUSIONS

- 14.1 This report and the accompanying 'Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27' sets out the current position on the financial challenges facing the Council in the medium term. The report notes, that subject to the level of funding from Welsh Government, a significant budget gap is likely to be faced in 2024/25 and for the following two years.
- 14.2 The report also sets out that the current indicative funding allocation for 2024/25 in no way reflects the demands and pressures facing local government. Consequently, in the absence of any assurances from UK Government and thereafter Welsh Government of additional funding, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC must embark on further reviews across all its services to urgently identify options which can be considered to close the budget gap being faced and

enable the Council to discharge its statutory duty to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2024/25 by the 11th March 2024.

- 14.3 To support this work, the Council will continue the proactive strategy it has adopted in recent years to identify a range of budget saving options for consideration and reporting to Members as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

Other information

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview and Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2026/27

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR - FINANCE,
DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR C LEYSHON)**

Item:

Background Papers

- Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26
<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s36973/Appendix%201.pdf?LLL=0>
- Council Performance Report (Quarter 4 (Year-end) 2022/23)
<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s41942/Report.pdf?LLL=0>
- Budget Strategy 2023/24, Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26 and Council Tax Resolution 2023/24
<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MId=50004241&Ver=4&LLL=0>

Officer to contact: Barrie Davies.

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**Rhondda Cynon Taf
County Borough Council**

Medium Term Financial Plan

**2023/24 – 2026/27
(updated September 2023)**

Medium Term Financial Plan - Contents

Introduction and Purpose

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- Section 2 Strategic Context
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- Section 4 Council Tax
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- Section 7 National and Local Pressures
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- Section 10 Summary Spend Requirements and Resource Availability
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- Annex 1 Council Revenue Budget by Services Provided
- Annex 2 Council Revenue Budget by Priority Area
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- Annex 4 Council Earmarked Reserves

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

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

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

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

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

Section 1 Background and Corporate Plan Priorities

- 1.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf has a track record of strong and effective financial management. Medium Term Financial Planning is an essential part of these arrangements.
- 1.2 The austerity measures emanating from the actions of Central Government have impacted on the resources available to Welsh Government and consequently local government in Wales over a sustained period, recognising that for the last 4 financial years more positive local government settlements were received, this reflecting the key role local councils had and continue to have in supporting communities through the Covid-19 pandemic and on-going cost-of-living crisis. At a national level, the overall local government settlement for Wales over the last 10 financial years is shown below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Financial Year	All Wales Settlement
2014/15	-3.9%
2015/16	-3.5%
2016/17	-1.4%
2017/18	+0.2%
2018/19	+0.2%
2019/20	+0.2%
2020/21	+4.3%
2021/22	+3.8%
2022/23	+9.4%
2023/24	+7.9%

- 1.3 For Rhondda Cynon Taf the real term reductions in funding over many years has translated into a need to make budgetary savings of around £120M during the last 10 years or so, equating to a reduction of approximately 20% of the Council’s net budget.
- 1.4 The Council’s Corporate Plan ‘Making a Difference’ 2020 – 2024 sets the overall direction for the Council over the four-year period, describing its vision, purpose and ambition for the County Borough.
- 1.5 The Council’s vision is:

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

“To provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous”.

- 1.7 The Council is focused on the following three priorities that have also been adopted as its Well-being objectives in line with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act:
- Ensuring **People: are independent, healthy and successful**;
 - Creating **Places: where people are proud to live, work and play**; and
 - Enabling **Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.**
- 1.8 The Corporate Plan is a key component of the Council's budgetary and business planning process, and also sets out the key economic related conditions and drivers Rhondda Cynon Taf, like the wider local government sector in Wales, will operate within over the medium term: real term reductions in funding; rising pay inflation; increasing pressures on services driven by changes in population; wider financial pressures on households, for example, energy bills and housing costs; and increasing public expectations in terms of responding to climate change to ensure the Council's day-to-day activities become carbon neutral.
- 1.9 The MTFP is central to the delivery of Corporate Plan priority outcomes in an affordable and sustainable way. It aids robust and methodical planning as it forecasts the Council's financial position, taking into account known pressures; major issues affecting the Council's finances, including geo-political and national issues; and local challenges. The Council has taken steps, via stakeholder consultation as part of its 2022/23 Revenue Budget Setting process, to test whether its Corporate Plan priorities remain relevant: the feedback from this process showed that 87.0% of respondents agreed with the priorities of People, Places and Prosperity.
- 1.10 The Council has proved, over many years, it has the capacity and capability to respond to unprecedented challenges in a systematic and planned way, and at the same time, deliver essential public services, become a more efficient organisation, make significant additional investment in priority areas and work toward delivering climate change goals. The Corporate Plan ambitions seek to build upon this approach, including the transformational changes made over recent years supported by digital technology, to help ensure local residents and businesses are sufficiently skilled, supported and resilient to respond to the opportunities and threats the global economy presents to us all.
- 1.11 To be able to achieve these ambitions in a period when the Council is forecasted to have less resources to spend in real terms, rising costs and increased demand for services, it will deliver targeted investment in priority areas and further modernisation of services, alongside a requirement to continue a programme of delivering significant budget savings across all service areas to ensure the strong financial health of the Council is maintained.
- 1.12 The Council's agreed Revenue Budget for 2023/24 amounts to £609.955M. Annex 1 sets out the Council budget for 2023/24 as allocated across services.
- 1.13 The budget has also been analysed across the 3 priority areas of People, Places and Prosperity as set out in the Corporate Plan (referenced in paragraph 1.7) in

order to demonstrate the allocation of Council Revenue Budget resources to these priority areas. Whilst some allocation has been necessarily subject to a degree of 'best fit', this is still felt to be a helpful analysis and provides a basis to track resource allocation over time. This is attached at Annex 2. A similar analysis is also included for the 3-year capital programme at Annex 3.

Section 2 Strategic Context

- 2.1. The MTFP is set within the context of the UK economic position and public expenditure plans, with decisions made by the UK Government and the subsequent funding levels it provides to Welsh Government having a direct impact on spending and decision making by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.

National Context – United Kingdom

- 2.2 Since the Council approved its last MTFP (September 2022), the economic conditions continue to be very challenging, with the world economy already weakened by the Coronavirus pandemic and the wide-spread implications of the conflict in Ukraine. Inflation rates have remained high and are impacting not only on the Council's own expected future costs of supplies, but also on local business' finances and the cost of living for our residents – in the latter case, leading to increased fuel and food poverty being seen.
- 2.3 The Bank of England has responsibility for controlling the annual inflation rate¹ and, in doing so, provide price stability. Between July 2022 and March 2023, the annual inflation rate has been around 10%, well above the Bank of England's target of 2%, with the rate gradually reducing from April 2023 and at 6.8% in July 2023. One of the main causes of high inflation has been the conflict in Ukraine and this has led to marked increases in the price of gas, basic food items and goods from abroad. During this period there has also been pressure on prices from developments in the United Kingdom, with businesses charging more for their products because of the higher costs they face and, due to high numbers of job vacancies, employers have been offering higher wages to attract job applicants. The Bank of England has confirmed it will be continuing to take steps to return to a low and stable inflation position in line with its 2% target.
- 2.4 The UK Government Spring Budget 2023 allocated an additional £180M to Welsh Government over 2023/24 and 2024/25 as a result of spending decisions in England. The Spring Budget 2023 also announced, amongst other things, an extension to the Energy Price Guarantee to June 2023 limiting a typical household energy bill to £2,500 per year, more places on "skills boot camps" to encourage over-50s who have left their jobs to return to the workplace and support for childcare costs for parents on Universal Credit. The Welsh Government responded to the Spring Budget 2023 indicating that the funding level is up to £900M lower in real terms than expected at the time of the United Kingdom 2021 Spending Review and Office for Budget Responsibility analysis shows that living standards are expected to fall by 6% between 2021-22 and 2023-24 - the largest decrease since records began.

Welsh Government – Programme for Government

- 2.5 The Welsh Government has set out 10 well-being objectives it will deliver between 2021 and 2026 to improve the lives of people across Wales:
- Provide effective, high quality and sustainable healthcare.

¹ Annual Inflation Rate – i.e. consumer prices index rate

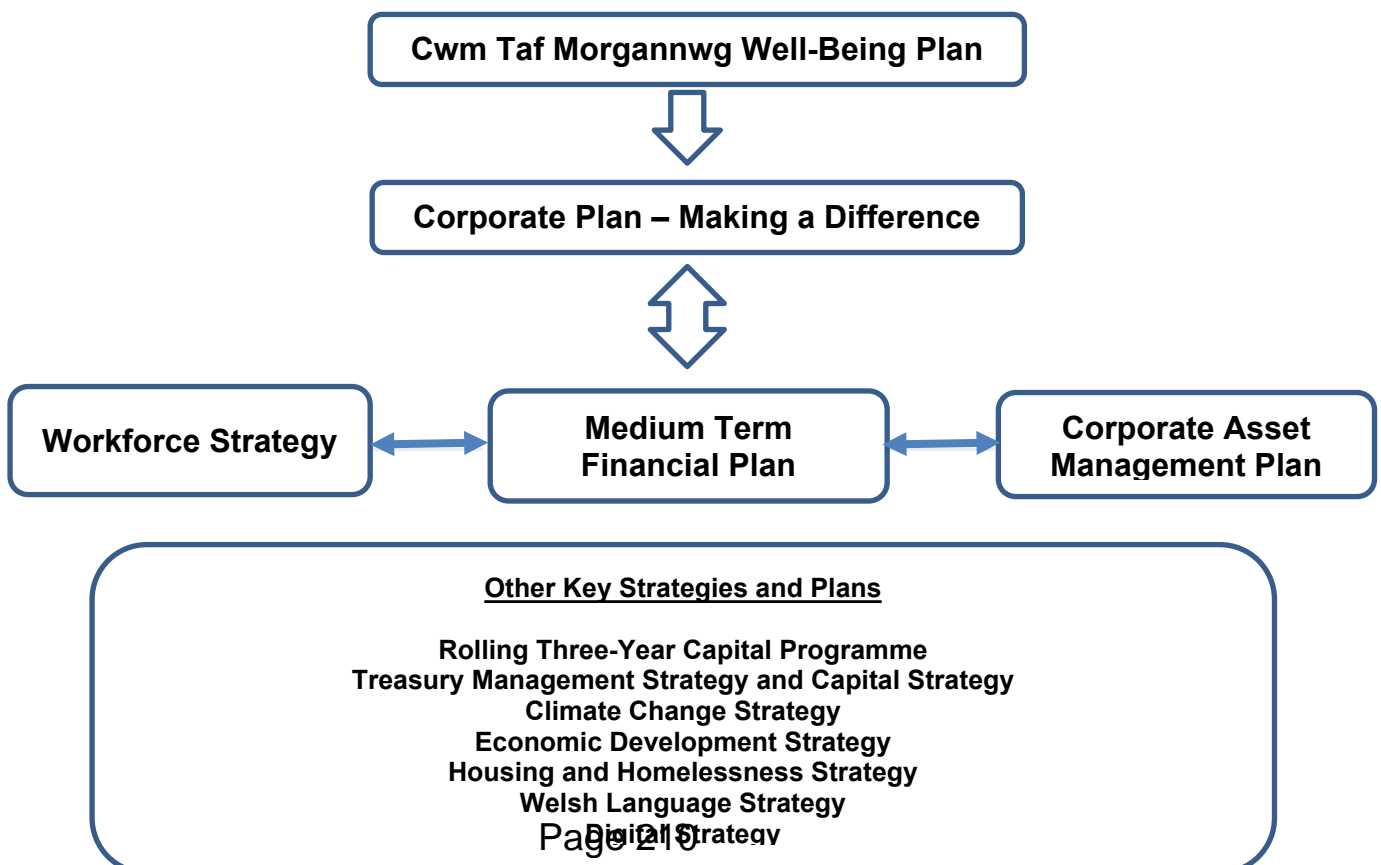
- Continue our long-term programme of education reform, and ensure educational inequalities narrow and standards rise.
- Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people.
- Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms.
- Build an economy based on the principles of fair work, sustainability and the industries and services of the future.
- Push towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive.
- Build a stronger, greener economy as we make maximum progress towards decarbonisation.
- Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work.
- Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do.
- Lead Wales in a national civic conversation about our constitutional future, and give our country the strongest possible presence on the world stage.

2.6 Local authorities, alongside Welsh Government and public, private and third sector partners, will play a key role in delivering the above objectives. The Council’s Corporate Plan priorities and service delivery planning arrangements align to these objectives.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council – Key Strategies and Plans

2.7 The Council has a number of strategies that underpin its Corporate Plan priorities that are aligned to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-Being Plan, the Welsh Government’s Programme for Government and take account of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015. The strategies and plans inform the direction of the Council and its day-to-day operations, and integrate with the MTFP. Figure 1 sets the MTFP within this strategic context.

Figure 1 – MTFP Strategic Context



- 2.8 Within this strategic context, Rhondda Cynon Taf is proactive in making decisions, some of which have and will continue to require difficult choices to be made, to ensure services are sustainable and support those most in need. This work has also included supporting residents through the cost of living crisis, using Council funds and funding from Welsh Government; for 2022/23, over £28M of support has been paid via Cost of Living Grants, Winter Fuel Payments, Free School Meal Payments during school holidays, Unpaid Carers Support Grant and self-isolation payments, helping eligible households to receive much needed financial support through this difficult period.
- 2.9 Looking ahead, although the financial outlook is one of uncertainty and risk, this MTFP aims to set out a robust position of the financial challenges and the programme of work planned to ensure the continued financial stability and resilience of the Council, and at the same time, reinforce the importance of the role to be played by both UK and Welsh Governments in providing adequate and flexible funding to local government.

Section 3 Local Government Settlement – Prospects

- 3.1 As referenced in Section 1, local government as a whole has received negative and below inflation settlements from Welsh Government in overall terms for 6 of the last 10 financial years. Whilst positive settlements have been received since 2017/18, for three of these years the levels have been some way below inflation, noting that for 2022/23 and 2023/24, the settlements were significantly above previous levels reflecting the intense funding pressures local authorities have and continue to operate under. For Rhondda Cynon Taf the level of settlements received, in comparison to the all Wales average, are shown below in Table 3.1.

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

Financial Year	RCT Settlement Level	All Wales Settlement
2014/15	-3.7%	-3.9%
2015/16	-3.7%	-3.5%
2016/17	-0.9%	-1.4%
2017/18	+0.4%	+0.2%
2018/19	+0.5%	+0.2%
2019/20	+0.8%	+0.2%
2020/21	+4.5%	+4.3%
2021/22	+3.8%	+3.8%
2022/23	+8.4%	+9.4%
2023/24	+6.6%	+7.7%

- 3.2 Welsh Government, as part of its 2023/24 settlement published on 28th February 2023, provided an indicative all Wales settlement level for the financial year 2024/25 at 3.1%, noting that the figure is dependent on the current estimate for Non-Domestic Rate income and future budgets. The indicative funding level for 2024/25, when set against continued high inflation levels; increasing demand for services, particularly for the most vulnerable within communities; and following a sustainable period of real term reductions in funding levels that has required the delivery of significant budget savings, will mean the Council facing, once again, a significant budget gap for the year ahead and over the medium term. Based on this position, it is highly likely the Council will be unable to close the budget gap from areas that do not impact on frontline services.
- 3.3 Linked to this, the timing of the level of funding to be provided by the UK Government to Welsh Government for the 2024/25 financial year is currently not confirmed, noting the UK Government’s update on 17th April 2023 *“the Government is required by law to commission the Office for Budget Responsibility to produce two forecasts per year and to hold a Budget each fiscal year. The Government will notify Parliament on the timing and nature of the next fiscal event when this is agreed, as a matter of course”*. This position results in uncertainty over future public sector funding levels in Wales.

- 3.4 The level of Welsh Government funding is a key factor in the Council's overall resource availability, accounting for 77.3% of our budget. Each 1% change in the level of Welsh Government funding amounts to approximately £4.7M of funding for this Council.
- 3.5 For planning purposes, this Council has modelled a range of scenarios based upon planning assumptions as summarised in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: RCT Planning Assumptions – Welsh Government Settlement

Year	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement	Potential Settlement
2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27	3.1%, 2.0% and 2.0%	3.0% per annum	4.0% per annum

United Kingdom Wide Economic Outlook

- 3.6 The Bank of England Monetary Policy Report (August 2023) forecasted that:
- Underlying Gross Domestic Product Growth is projected to remain slightly positive in 2023 and over the period to 2026, and is forecasted to be below pre-pandemic rates over the medium term. This is reflective of relatively weak potential supply, based on business surveys reporting a slowing in the outlook of activity and the increase in interest rates having played a role, and a waning boost from fiscal policy such as the cessation of the Energy Bills Discount Scheme.
 - Economic activity has showed continued resilience in recent months, this being reflective of a number of factors including the possibility of lower precautionary saving by households than previously assumed and related to a lower risk of job losses given the continued strength in labour market activity.
 - The Bank of England most likely projection for Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation is a return to the 2% target by mid-2025 and then falls below the target in 2026, as an increasing degree of economic slack (the amount of resources in the economy that are not used) reduces domestic inflationary pressures alongside declining external cost pressures.
 - The unemployment rate rose to 4% in the three months to May 2023 and is projected to gradually rise to just under 5% in 2026, with recruitment conditions being reported as tighter (higher number of vacancies) than normal.
- 3.7 The Office for Budget Responsibility Economic and fiscal outlook (March 2023) set out that Real Household Disposable Income (RHDI) per person, a measure of real living standards, is expected to fall by a cumulative 5.7% over the two financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24 and would be the largest two-year fall since records began in 1956/57. The fall in RHDI per person mainly reflects the rise in the price of energy and other tradeable goods of which the UK is a net importer, resulting in inflation being above nominal wage growth. This means that real living standards are still 0.4 per cent lower than their pre-pandemic levels in 2027/28.

A Welsh Picture

- 3.8 The Wales Governance Centre (Wales Fiscal Analysis) published a paper in December 2022 on the 'Welsh Budget Outlook 2022' which set out, amongst other things, forecasts for 'local government finance' and 'household income'.

Local government Finance

- 3.8.1 Even with the additional funding announced in the UK Government's Autumn 2022 Statement as a result of spending consequential in England, it is projected that annual council tax increases of 2% would leave local authorities £345 million short of the amount required to meet cost and demand pressures by 2024/25.
- 3.8.2 If the next UK Government sticks to the lean spending plans pencilled in by the current government, the funding gap could grow to £660 million by 2027/28. This would almost certainly imply a return to an era of spending cuts and above-inflation council tax increases after a brief hiatus over the pandemic.
- 3.8.3 Low interest rates on fixed loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) made borrowing an attractive way to finance capital expenditure during the 2010s, when the real value of Welsh Government grants was in decline. However, a steep rise in the cost of borrowing will make financing new capital projects considerably more expensive.

Household income

- 3.8.4 The Chancellor of the UK Government announced further targeted payments to low-income households, pensioners, and individuals in receipt of disability benefits in 2023/24. These payments will boost the disposable income of Welsh households in the poorest income decile by 10%. This is in addition to the 10.1% uplift planned for most benefits (including the state pension) in April 2023.
- 3.8.5 Rising food prices are now a key driver of the headline inflation rate. Even pre-pandemic, UK households in the poorest income quintile were spending more than twice as much on food and non-alcoholic beverages (as a proportion of their income) than households in the top income quintile.
- 3.8.6 The longer-term outlook for households remains bleak. By 2027, real disposable incomes in Wales will be over £10,000 lower than had the pre-financial crisis trend been sustained.
- 3.9 Linked to the above, the 2022/23 council tax increases across Wales were kept at their lowest level since 2012; given the budgetary outlook, it is likely that further increases will need to be considered in the medium term, strengthening the case for reforming the local tax system but will need to be considered against the backdrop of the expected fall in RHDI.
- 3.10 The squeeze on household incomes as communities continue to feel the impact of cost of living rises coupled with an increasing proportion of the population who are 65 years and over, is resulting in further demand for Council Services, particularly social services and schools; previous forecasts have indicated that

costs in these areas will account for over 75% of all local authority spending pressures by 2025/26. This picture continues to be generally consistent with that modelled for Rhondda Cynon Taf where the areas of social services and schools represent the most significant areas of forecasted expenditure.

- 3.11 The next UK Government Budget, currently scheduled for autumn 2023, will be key in determining resource levels for 2024/25, and will be taken account of as part of the Council's on-going medium term financial planning arrangements. It will be imperative that the UK Government Budget fully takes account of both inflationary and service pressures continuing to be faced by local government in the delivery of the wide range of much needed services to communities.

Section 4 Council Tax

- 4.1 Council Tax income accounts for 20.6% of the Council’s net budget, generating £125.865M from local taxpayers in 2023/24.
- 4.2 The total yield from Council Tax is determined by a combination of the level of the tax base and the level at which Council Tax is set.
- 4.3 The Tax Base is the measure of the relative taxable capacity of different areas within the County Borough and is calculated in accordance with prescribed rules. The Gross Tax Base is the number of chargeable dwellings in the area expressed as Band D equivalents after allowing for exemptions, disablement reductions and discounts. This is then adjusted for an assumed collection rate to give the Net Tax Base.
- 4.4 The Tax Base is provided to Welsh Government and is used as part of the distribution formula for the Local Government Settlement. The Tax Base is calculated for the County Borough as a whole and for those areas that have a Community Council.
- 4.5 The Tax Base movement over recent years is shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 – Tax Base Movement

Financial Year	Gross Tax Base (£)	Collection Rate	Net Tax Base (£)
2014/15	75,189	96.50%	72,557
2015/16	75,565	97.00%	73,298
2016/17	76,207	97.50%	74,302
2017/18	76,901	97.50%	74,978
2018/19	77,608	97.50%	75,668
2019/20	78,844	97.50%	76,873
2020/21	79,317	97.50%	77,334
2021/22	79,381	97.25%	77,198
2022/23	79,904	97.25%	77,707
2023/24	80,183	97.25%	77,978

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

Table 4.2 – Council Tax Levels

Financial Year	Band D Council Tax £*	Increase over Previous Year
2014/15	1,248.00	4.50%
2015/16	1,295.48	3.80%
2016/17	1,331.17	2.75%
2017/18	1,361.18	2.25%
2018/19	1,406.17	3.30%
2019/20	1,456.85	3.60%
2020/21	1,498.44	2.85%
2021/22	1,538.15	2.65%
2022/23	1,553.53	1.00%
2023/24	1,614.11	3.90%

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

- 4.8 The total amount raised through Council Tax is derived by multiplying the net tax base by the band D Council Tax charge, which for 2023/24 amounts to (77,978 x £1,614.11) £125.865M.
- 4.9 For modelling purposes in our medium-term calculations as part of this report, a Council Tax increase of 3.90% per annum is currently being used for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27, noting of course that this is a key decision for Members to make as part of setting each year's budget. In terms of generating resources, a 1% increase in the level of Council Tax will raise an extra £955k² of additional income each year (this is net of the costs associated with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme described in more detail below).

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

- 4.10 During 2022/23 the Council paid CTRS to 23,587 eligible applicants at a net cost to the Council of £25.587M, and for 2023/24 the Council has estimated the cost to be £25.784M, noting that the CTR Scheme in Wales is a national scheme developed by Welsh Government, with a fixed amount of funding provided as part of annual local government budget settlements.

Tax Base

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

² Based on 2023/24 Council Tax Income

- 4.13 All awards of this new exemption type have been reflected in the Council Tax Base from 1st April 2019.

Council Tax Premium

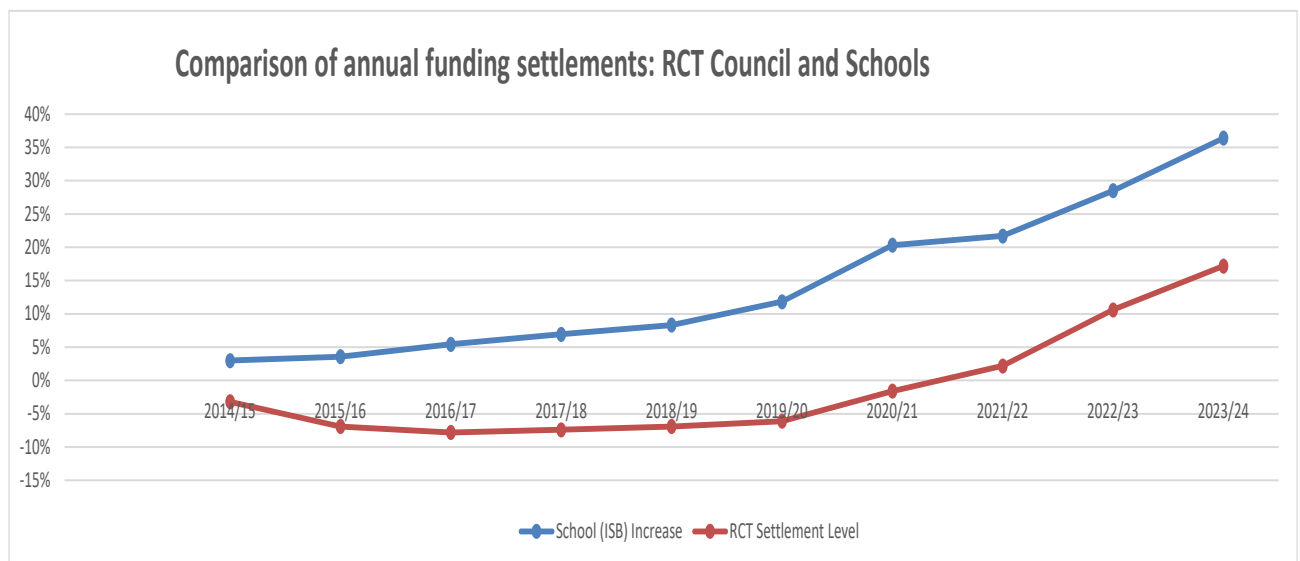
- 4.14 On 18th January 2023 full Council agreed the introduction of a Council Tax Premium for long term empty properties and second homes, following a public consultation process. The premium for long term empty properties was introduced from 1st April 2023 and the premium for second homes will be effective from 1st April 2024 in accordance with the requirements of the regulations, and will be incorporated into the Tax Base calculation in line with these timescales.
- 4.15 The implementation of the above measures form part of a wider programme of actions to support the delivery of the Council's Empty Homes Strategy 2022 – 2025, agreed by Cabinet on 17th October 2022, to bring empty properties back into use, increase the supply of affordable housing and enhance the sustainability of local communities.

Section 5 Individual Schools Budget (ISB)

- 5.1 The total Individual Schools Budget (ISB) for the Council in 2023/24 amounts to £186.976M and represents 31% of the Council's net budget.
- 5.2 Since 2014/15, the ISB has increased at a level above other Council services and above the level of the Council's own settlement from Welsh Government in all but 2 years, and, at the same time, recognising that there is still an expectation that schools will continue to make a positive contribution toward balancing the overall Council budget. The ISB has been subject to protection requirements by Welsh Government over this period which ended in 2016/17. The comparative ISB increases over the last ten years are shown in Table 5.1 and graphically below:

Table 5.1 – School Budget Increases Compared to RCT Settlement Levels

Year	School (ISB) Increase	RCT Settlement Level
2014/15	0.90%	-3.70%
2015/16	0.60%	-3.70%
2016/17	1.85%	-0.90%
2017/18	1.50%	0.40%
2018/19	1.40%	0.50%
2019/20	3.50%	0.80%
2020/21	8.50%	4.50%
2021/22	1.37%	3.80%
2022/23	6.80%	8.40%
2023/24	7.90%	6.60%



- 5.3 Over the past 10 years, the ISB has received an increase amounting to 34.3%, as opposed to the Council's remaining budgets having been increased by 16.7%. In monetary terms, applied to an ISB of £148.6M (2013/14 ISB), this amounts to an extra £26.1M being provided to schools over the period.
- 5.4 Pupil number forecasts are modelled across Primary, Secondary, All-Through and Special Schools sectors with the financial implications included in the Schools Budget requirement.
- 5.5 The levels of school reserves held as at the 31st March 2023 are shown in Table 5.2 below (draft, subject to audit). The 2022/23 year-end position has decreased compared to the previous year, as schools utilised the off-funding Welsh Government funding received in 2021/22 to support the on-going recovery from the pandemic and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

Table 5.2 – School Reserves

Type of School	31/03/2022	2022/23	31/03/2023
	£k	Movement	
	£k	£k	£k
Primary	10,461	-3,567	6,894
Secondary	6,529	-826	5,703
Special	1,262	-453	809
All-Through	2,309	-467	1,842
Total	20,561	-5,313	15,248

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

Section 6 Fees and Charges

- 6.1 The Council raises approximately £24M of income annually from fees and charges across services. The level of charges is reviewed annually.
- 6.2 Cabinet considered proposed revisions to 2023/24 fees and charges levels ([23rd January 2023](#)) with the objective to continue to provide a comprehensive range of quality services at affordable prices and, in doing so, not pass through to customers / service users the full impact of inflation when setting fees and charges levels over this period. Cabinet agreed at this meeting for the proposals to be consulted upon through phase 2 of the Council's 2023/24 Budget Consultation process and reported back to Cabinet for consideration as part of formulating a recommended Budget Strategy for 2023/24.
- 6.3 Cabinet considered the feedback from the phase 2 consultation process on [28th February 2023](#) and recommended a 5.0% standard increase to fees and charges (the initial budget modelling for 2023/24 had assumed a 2.0% increase), with the Council absorbing the implications of not applying a standard uplift in line with the CPI rate of inflation, and also for a number of areas to be subject to specific treatment following a detailed service by service review. Cabinet's recommendations were approved by full Council on 8th March 2023 and a summary of those areas subject to specific treatment are set out in Table 6.1.

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

Area of Charge	Specific Treatment
Car Park Charges	Freeze
Licenses (Hackney Carriage / Private Hire)	Freeze
Cinema Entrance Fee	Freeze
School Meals (Primary and Secondary)	£0.15 increase per meal (2-year price freeze in place for 2021/22 and 2022/23)
Leisure for Life (Membership) and Pay and Play	£0.50 increase per month for Membership (price frozen since 2018) Pay and Play – various price increases based on the activity
Bereavement Services	Cremation Fee – from £739.00 to £812.90 Burial Fee – from £1,924.00 to £2,116.40
Rhondda Heritage Park / Lido (Pontypridd) / Dare Valley County Park (caravan pitch charge)	Various price increases based on the service / facility accessed
Day Services – Meal Price	From £4.05 to £4.55 (price frozen for 2022/23)
Home Care Hourly Charge / Day Centre Daily Charge (non-residential care services)	From £17 per hour to £20 per hour (price frozen since 2014)
Bulky Waste Collection	From £12.75 to £17 for collection of up to 3 items
Residential Parking (annual permit charges)	First permit (from £10 to £12), Second permit (from £15 to £17.50) and Subsequent Permits (from £50 to £60)

Registrars (non-statutory) Building Regulations	20% increase (prices frozen since 2015)
Non-Statutory Food Export Health Certificates	From £32.50 to £35.75

- 6.4 The impact of the agreed changes set out in 6.3 and Table 6.1 increases income by £750k in a full year (as compared to all fees and charges being increased by 2.0%).
- 6.5 In addition, a number of fees and charges decisions have previously been approved and accordingly have already been incorporated into the Council's 2023/24 Budget Strategy. These are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 – Summary of decisions already approved

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

- 6.6 For completeness, a full list of all 2023/24 fees and charges across all Council services can be accessed [here](#).

Section 7 National and Local Pressures

7.0 Authority Wide Budgets

7.1 Appropriate sums must be set aside to cover a number of Authority Wide costs. For modelling purposes for 2024/25 onwards these include the following:

Capital Financing

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

Levies

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

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

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

Miscellaneous

The areas of expenditure held here include:

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

7.2 A summary of the projected requirement for Authority Wide budgets from the current year (2023/24 budget) to 2026/27 is shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 – Forecasted Authority Wide Budget Requirement

Authority Wide Budgets	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Current Budget	(Projected)	(Projected)	(Projected)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing	21,708	21,708	21,708	21,708
Levies	14,960	15,421	15,753	16,092
CTRS	25,784	26,789	27,834	28,920
Miscellaneous	14,261	15,201	16,277	16,334
Total	76,713	79,119	81,572	83,054
Change - Inc / (Dec)		2,406	2,453	1,481

7.3 Service Inescapable Pressures

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

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

Table 7.2 – Forecasted Inescapable Budget Pressures

Forecasted Inescapable Budget Pressures	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Schools	3,454	193	393
Education and Inclusion Services	608	1,108	115
Community and Children's Services	11,087	5,073	3,868
Finance, Digital and Frontline Services	2,388	915	471
Chief Executive's Division	146	75	19
Total	17,683	7,364	4,865
			29,912

7.6 Service Financial Risks

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

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

Table 7.3 – Forecasted Service Financial Risks

Financial Risks	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Value of Risk Included	-	7,646	10,464

7.9 School (ISB) Requirements

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

Table 7.4 – School (ISB) Modelled Budget

Schools (ISB) Modelled Budget	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Modelled Budget	200,239	209,153	217,673
Modelled Increase	13,263	8,914	8,520

Section 8 Inflationary Pressures

8.1 Employee Inflation

8.2 For modelling purposes, initial estimates of employee inflation levels built into the medium term financial plan, for both teaching and non-teaching pay, are: 5% for 2024/25, 4% for 2025/26 and 4% for 2026/27, and are based on a forward planning assumption of inflation gradually returning nearer to the Bank of England target of 2% over the medium term, recognising that this will need to be subject to on-going review, taking account of economic conditions and updated forecasts.

8.3 For the 2023/24 financial year, a pay award offer has been made by the national employers for all NJC employees at a flat rate increase of £1,925 per employee, irrespective of their SCP / Grade. The Welsh Government, who have devolved responsibility for teachers pay, have offered an increase of 5%, this being above the 3.5% forward planning assumption for the September 2023 pay award set out by the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body on 21st July 2022. It is anticipated that Welsh Government will provide additional funding to fully cover the outcome of the 2023/24 teachers pay negotiations, this being in the form of part-year funding for 2023/24 and on-going funding from April 2024.

8.4 Similarly, for the 2022/23 teachers pay award of 6.5%, effective from September 2022, it is anticipated that Welsh Government will provide on-going funding from April 2024 to fully cover the additional consolidated element of this pay award of 1.5%, noting that the additional cost for 2023/24 is being covered via one-off Welsh Government funding.

8.5 In respect of teachers pay, the Council's updated MTFP has been constructed based on the funding assumptions set out in paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4.

8.6 Employer's Pension Contributions

8.7 The Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund triennial valuation (2022) has been completed and a revised employer pension contribution rate has been incorporated into 2023/24 employee budgets and maintained at this level for modelling purposes for the period of this MTFP, through to 2026/27.

8.8 In respect of the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS), the result of the next actuarial review is to take effect in 2024/25. At present, although employer contribution rates are not yet known, it is anticipated that rates will increase significantly based on one of the key determinants (discount rate) used to calculate pension scheme contributions. This will also apply to other public service pension schemes such as the NHS, Police and Fire.

8.9 It is of note that the 2019 TPS valuation also resulted in increases to employer contributions, based on the discount rate, with the additional cost implications being fully funded by UK Government. The UK Government has also set out its commitment to provide funding for increases in employer contribution rates, as a result of the latest valuation and currently scheduled to take effect in 2024/25, and accordingly the estimated cost implications have been categorised as a

Service Financial Risk within the Council’s MTFP and the working assumption that this will be fully funded by the UK Government.

8.10 **Non-Employee Inflation**

8.11 The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee continues to set monetary policy to meet a 2% inflation target, noting that there remains considerable uncertainty around the pace that CPI inflation will return sustainably to the 2% target. Taking the latest forecast into account, inflation is included across all expenditure and income heads at 3% for 2024/25, 3% for 2025/26 and 2% for 2026/27. A number of specific cost areas, where inflation is known or anticipated to differ materially from these rates, have more appropriate inflationary allowances applied as detailed below.

8.12 **Specific Inflation**

8.13 There are some budget heads which are particularly volatile and susceptible to variations in rates of inflation which are outliers to the central forecasts, some of which, based on early indicative forecasts for 2024/25, are estimated to reduce. More detailed analysis and procurement intelligence is applied to uplifts for the following expenditure heads (that will be subject to on-going review and revision, as appropriate):

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

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

Table 8.1 – Forecasted Cost Of Inflation

Inflation	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Employee Related	18,650	16,296	16,018
Non-Employee	8,181	7,956	5,880
Total	26,831	24,252	21,898
			72,980

8.15 The above includes inflationary costs for schools.

Section 9 Specific Grants

- 9.1 The Council is mindful of the opportunities that are likely to accrue by the Council attracting specific grants to supplement its base revenue budget. Whilst specific grants can dilute local accountability, the fact remains that in attracting such funding, it allows us to undertake projects that otherwise we may have had to defer or cancel.
- 9.2 By their nature, specific grants tend to be time-limited and involve an assessment process. It is important therefore, that any specific grant funded programme complements the Council's locally determined priorities. In addition, even if they are initially successful in attracting specific grants, authorities are restricted in their ability to confidently forward plan, as they have no guarantee of ongoing (specific grant) funding. Consequently, because specific grants are time limited it is vital to develop appropriate "exit strategies".
- 9.3 Whilst specific grants come from a number of sources, for 2023/24 the Welsh Government alone will provide over £1.4Billion in total to Welsh Local Authorities. The allocation of specific grants remains a key feature of the Welsh Government's annual local government settlements, albeit, the Welsh Government is committed to reduce this form of hypothecation in the longer term as well as ensuring grant administration and management is as efficient as possible. The Council also continues to proactively explore and secure external funding from other sources, in line with Corporate Plan priorities, for example, from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 9.4 Table 9.1 sets out the main areas of expenditure and services which are funded currently by specific revenue grants.

Table 9.1 – Specific Revenue Grants

Award Body	Purpose	2022/23 Amount £M	2023/24 Amount £M
<u>Community & Children Services</u>			
Arts Council Wales	Arts Portfolio Wales	0.000	0.150
Shaw Trust & Working Links	Subsidisation of Employment of Disabled Workers	0.278	0.258
Department for Work & Pensions	Housing Benefit Subsidy Bed & Breakfast Scheme	0.437	0.437
Welsh Government	Adult Community Learning	0.000	0.531
	ENABLE – Support for Independent Living	0.000	0.004
	Children's and Community Grant	16.330	17.848
	Communities 4 Work	1.112	0.039

Award Body	Purpose	2022/23 Amount £M	2023/24 Amount £M
	Food Poverty Grant	0.030	0.000
	Inspire 2 Work	0.215	0.000
	Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme	0.556	0.556
	Substance Misuse Action Fund	4.865	4.865
	Community Learning Grant	0.442	0.000
	Youth Support Grant	0.712	0.729
	Child Burial and Cremation Grant	0.048	0.048
	Child Development Fund	0.429	0.000
	Housing Support Grant	12.239	12.360
	Integrated Care Fund	3.125	0.000
	National Exercise Referral Scheme	0.168	0.168
	National Approach to Advocacy (Children's)	0.049	0.049
	Out of Court Grant	0.041	0.000
	Regional Facilitation Grant	0.066	0.000
	Homelessness Prevention	0.000	0.060
	Parenting Support	0.000	0.077
	Regional Facilitation Grant	0.000	0.068
	Regional Integrated Fund	0.000	3.140
Cwm Taf Health Board	Regional Integration Fund	0.550	0.000
Heritage Lottery Fund	Arts Portfolio Wales	0.150	0.000
Home Office	Community Joint Care Programme	0.068	0.068
Sport Wales	Police & Crime Commissioner	0.142	0.142
	Youth Justice Provision	0.732	0.732
	Disability Sport Wales Community Scheme	0.020	0.020

Award Body	Purpose	2022/23 Amount £M	2023/24 Amount £M
	Free Swimming	0.106	0.060
	Local Sport Plan	0.475	0.475
	60 plus Active Leisure Scheme	0.051	0.082
	Juniors Swimming Development	0.000	0.046
UK Government	Shared Prosperity Fund	0.000	1.033
Total Community & Children's Services		43.436	44.045
<u>Education & Inclusion Services</u>			
	Post-16 Provision in Schools	10.704	11.419
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) - Delegated to Schools	9.030	9.030
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) Admin	0.018	0.018
	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) Foundation Phase	0.160	0.158
	Pupil Deprivation Grant	8.195	8.021
	Pupil Development Grant Children Looked After	0.474	0.497
	Education Grant – PDG Access - Minority Ethnic Gypsy Roma Traveller (MERGT)	0.285	0.303
	PDGEY Non-Maintained	0.090	0.128
	PDG EOTAS	0.023	0.031
	Early Years Pupil Development Grant (estimate)	1.659	1.491
	Teachers Pay	0.216	1.747
	Seren Network	0.074	0.062
	Nursery Childcare Administration	0.279	0.279
	Nursery Childcare	2.864	1.641
	Additional Learning Needs Transformation Grant (estimate)	0.099	1.678
	Additional Learning Needs (estimate)	0.519	0.000
	Period Dignity Grant (estimate)	0.209	0.236
Welsh Government			

Award Body	Purpose	2022/23 Amount £M	2023/24 Amount £M
	Reduction in Infant Class Sizes Grant	0.209	0.000
	Online Development Plan (estimate)	0.042	0.042
	Out of School Childcare Grant	0.083	0.083
	Welsh Medium Immersion	0.100	0.114
	Professional Learning Grant (estimate)	0.957	0.955
	RRRS (estimate)	1.902	2.609
	RRRS Non-Maintained	0.280	0.294
	ICT Hwb in Schools Infrastructure Grant	0.830	0.822
	FP Nursery (estimate)	0.299	0.413
	NQT	0.303	0.000
	Virtual Schools	0.040	0.000
	Education Grant - PDG Access - School uniform grant	2.017	0.000
	Education Grant – Whole School Funding	0.347	0.301
	Education Grant – Schools Essential Grant	0.000	1.071
	Summer Holiday Enrichment Programme (estimate)	0.170	0.192
	Elective Home Education	0.090	0.090
	Universal Free School Meals	0.094	4.636
Rural Payments Agency	Infant Milk (Estimate)	0.471	0.567
Total Education & Inclusion Services		43.132	48.928
Chief Executives			
Department for Work & Pensions	Housing Benefit Administration Grant	0.773	0.753
	Various Miscellaneous Grants	0.050	0.050
Welsh Government	NDR Admin Grant	0.394	0.394
UK Government	Shared Prosperity Fund	0.000	0.657
Total Chief Executives		1.217	1.854

Award Body	Purpose	2022/23 Amount £M	2023/24 Amount £M
<u>Finance, Digital & Frontline Services</u>			
	Caru Cymru	0.030	0.030
	Sustainable Waste Management Grant	1.051	1.051
	Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management	0.070	0.225
	Concessionary Fares	6.839	6.839
	Road Safety	0.101	0.101
	Bus Emergency Scheme	0.028	0.028
	Bus Service Support	0.665	0.665
UK Government	Shared Prosperity Fund	0.000	0.309
Total Finance, Digital & Frontline Services		8.784	9.248
TOTAL SPECIFIC REVENUE GRANTS		96.569	104.075

9.5 Assumptions are made in the MTFP about future levels of specific grants, in particular where they are effectively funding core services (e.g. the Sustainable Waste Management Grant which provides funding for our Recycling services and the Social Care Workforce Grant) and it is important that we seek to ensure their continuation beyond 2023/24.

Section 10 Summary Spend Requirements and Resource Availability

10.1 The impact of the aforementioned modelling, including schools, is aggregated into Table 10.1 to show the forecast budget position over the next 3 years. The modelling shows a projected budget gap over the 3-year period which needs to be addressed and closed with actions during the period. Whilst modelled over a 3-year period, the Council must also be mindful of its legal responsibility to set a balanced budget annually and, for the forthcoming financial year, this has to be completed before the 11th March 2024.

Table 10.1 – Summary Of Expenditure Requirements and Resources Available

Budget Requirement	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Additional Budget Requirement			
Inflation	17,023	15,531	13,771
Inescapables	14,229	7,170	4,472
Risks	-	7,646	10,464
Schools (Uplift)	13,263	8,914	8,521
Authority Wide	2,406	2,453	1,481
Additional Budget Requirement	46,920	41,715	38,710
Additional Resources			
Council Tax	6,409	5,100	5,299
Transition Funding	-9,105	0	0
Social Care Workforce Grant	0	0	0
WG Resource in line with WG indicative settlement for 2024/25 (+3.1%) and a Council assumption of settlement levels: 2025/26 +2% and 2026/27 +2%	14,611	9,719	9,913
WG Resource at +3%	14,140	14,564	15,001
WG Resource at +4%	18,853	19,607	20,391

Remaining Budget Gap at Welsh Government Settlement Levels	3 Year Budget Gap			
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
+3.1% increase for 2024/25, +2.0% increase for 2025/26 and +2.0% increase for 2026/27	35,005	26,897	23,498	85,400
3% increase per year	35,477	22,052	18,410	75,938
4% increase per year	30,764	17,008	13,020	60,792

Note: table not adjusted for roundings.

10.2 Clearly a significant determinant on the budget gap is the level of funding which the Council receives from Welsh Government. Each 1% change in the level of settlement from Welsh Government equates to an approximate £4.7M change in resources available to the Council (based on 2023/24 settlement levels).

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

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
0% increase per year	49,616	36,615	33,411

10.4 As the above clearly demonstrates, in the absence of additional funding from UK Government and thereafter Welsh Government, the Council faces a significant budget gap for next year and across the medium term, this being set in the context of the requirement for the Council to address its most significant budget gap in 2023/24 of £38M as well as year-on-year budget gaps in other years over the last decade. It is clear, that the indicative funding allocation for 2024/25 in no way reflects the reality of today and that UK Government urgently needs to provide assurance to Welsh Government / Local Government that additional funding will be forthcoming. Once again, in the absence of such assurance, and to enable this Council to discharge its statutory duty to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2024/25 by the 11th March 2024, then all options to further reduce council spend and generate income will need to be considered. This continues to be at a time when residents are faced with the on-going challenges of the cost of living crisis with significant pressures on household budgets.

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

- 11.1 Reserves play an important part of the overall financial management and financial standing of the Council. The Council's General Reserve balances at 31st March 2023 were £10.240M (draft, subject to audit). The level of general reserves will be kept under on-going review by the Council's Section 151 Officer and adjusted going forward, as appropriate, and taking into account the overall quantum of the budget and the financial risks therein and facing the Council.
- 11.2 The Council also holds Earmarked Reserves which are sums set aside for specific purposes. The full schedule of reserves is attached at Annex 3 (as per the draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23).
- 11.3 All reserves are reviewed at least twice yearly, at budget setting stage and as part of the year end closure of accounts process. In between, changes in risk and potential liabilities are continuously monitored as part of the Council's financial management and budgetary control arrangements and changes in reserve levels are actioned, following elected Member approval, as appropriate.
- 11.4 The Council has used reserves prudently as part of supporting its annual budget strategy for a number of years. Whilst reserves can be used to balance the budget, this alone is not a sustainable strategy and more permanent changes / reductions to the base budget must be made. With regard to the budget gaps modelled in Section 10, to balance the budget, for example, based on Welsh Government modelled annual settlement levels at 3.1% for 2024/25 and 2% per year for 2025/26 and 2026/27, using reserves alone would require the use of over £182M of reserves and the Council would still have a need to reduce its base budget by over £85M at the end of this period.
- 11.5 The Council holds reserves for the following purposes:

Capital and Investment / Infrastructure

Reserve	Purpose
Capital Developments	Resources set-aside from revenue budget, earmarked to fund the Council's approved 3-year capital programme.
Infrastructure / Investment	To fund current and future costs of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough.

Other Revenue Related Reserves

Reserve	Purpose
Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation Reserve (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2023/24 Budget Strategy.
Joint Committee Reserve	Reflects the Council's share of General and Earmarked Reserves of the Joint Committees in which it has an interest.
Revenue Grant Reserves (IFRS)	Carry forward of Revenue Grants not yet applied to spend – required accounting treatment to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards.
Financial Management and Human Resources Risk Management	Resources set aside as cover for future liabilities relating to various risks identified and being managed.
Treasury Management Reserve	Funding for known and potential future pressures upon the Capital Financing budget.
Insurance Reserve	To provide for estimated costs of incidents that have occurred during the policy year but have not yet resulted in a claim being received.
Prior Year Commitments	Carry forward of existing funding to finance projects for which commitments have already been made in the prior year.
Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation	Resources set aside as transitional (one-off) funding to support the Council's medium-term financial and service planning requirements.
Other Specific Reserves	Represents a number of reserves held for specific and identified purposes.
Invest to Save	Funding identified (pump priming) to support Invest to Save opportunities as and when they arise.

Section 12 Financial Planning and Balancing the Budget

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

Financial Planning

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

Climate Change

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

approving additional core resources as part of annual budget setting as it forward plans the delivery of the Strategy.

- 12.7 Delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy is an organisation wide approach and is taken account of as part of service decision making as well as when considering the key areas below of workforce, buildings and digital. This approach is to be further developed through the Council fully costing its decarbonisation plan to inform long term financial planning,

Our Workforce

- 12.8 The Council's workforce is its most valuable asset, reflecting the wide range of important roles employees undertake, and a new 'Human Resources Strategy and Council Workforce Plan 2023 – 2028' was agreed by Cabinet on [23rd January 2023](#). The new Strategy sets out the strategic and operational direction of how the Council will utilise and develop the workforce to achieve its vision and priorities in a climate of change and financial uncertainty.
- 12.9 This work is aligned to medium term financial planning arrangements through an integrated Payroll and HR System that provides real time workforce information to project future year workforce costs; inform the modelling of cost implications of service transformation, investment / disinvestment and service restructure proposals; and providing insight into areas that could realise short and medium term efficiency savings, for example, recruitment and retention and targeted support to help improve attendance levels.
- 12.10 The Council's staffing costs account for over 60% of the net annual budget. The need for integrated workforce and financial planning is therefore a key component of overall planning arrangements, underpinned by a suite of key management information, to ensure the Council: creates the right environment to optimise workforce performance; makes best use of all staffing resources; and delivers services as efficiently as possible.

Our Buildings

- 12.11 The Council has a varied asset base and keeps this under on-going review as part of its Corporate Asset Management Plan to inform the use of and investment in buildings to support the delivery of our priorities. The approach focusses on:
- rationalising the current asset base, including office accommodation, so we only retain assets that help us deliver our priorities;
 - maintaining the assets we do retain so that we can maximise their use, efficiency of operation and return, and provide the best possible services to our residents; and
 - identifying opportunities to acquire new assets / share assets where it helps us further achieve our priorities.
- 12.12 This approach has been reviewed and updated, and brought together in a 'Council Office Accommodation Strategy Workspace Plan: Fit for the Future', agreed by Cabinet on [15th May 2023](#). The Strategy sets out the vision and clear objectives for the continued rationalisation and modernisation of the Council's

office accommodation to make best use of assets, take action to mitigate the risks of climate change and create working arrangements that support an efficient and effective organisation.

Digital Driven Council

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

Balancing the Budget

- 12.15 The 2023/24 Budget Setting process identified £23.5M of budget savings (excluding school-based savings), following a detailed review of options during the year. The Council's well embedded financial planning arrangements are directing an on-going programme of work to assess further budget saving opportunities, whilst ensuring appropriate service resilience is maintained. This includes:
- a. Efficiency – we have for many years delivered significant efficiency savings as part of our ongoing work and which have contributed to closing the budget gaps we have faced. It is important that we maximise our efficiency more than ever as part of balancing next year's budget in order to ensure that we preserve, as far as is practicable, our critical services. This will include reviewing support service operations; further modernising processes in line with customer need; school efficiency opportunities / requirements; non-pay expenditure areas; collaboration opportunities; and changes in service demand.
 - b. Workforce – our work will focus on reviewing workforce requirements, informed by service self-evaluation and service delivery planning arrangements; progressing service transformation and restructuring proposals; ensuring full cost recovery of service costs; and further embedding hybrid and remote working.
 - c. Digitisation – our work will include supporting services to create digital solutions for business problems; further enhancing the availability of real time business intelligence to inform decision making and resource allocation; and increasing self-service / on-line options for customers alongside providing assisted digital support so that our residents and businesses are better equipped to access and use technology productively. This work will be underpinned by a secure and resilient infrastructure that will support customer needs and a modern mobile workforce.

- d. A Built Asset Review – a focus on reducing the back-office / support service office accommodation footprint further that will reduce running costs and backlog maintenance costs and the Council’s carbon footprint; ensuring accommodation is located in areas within good public transport links, including town centres, to support regeneration; sharing buildings to meet hybrid working arrangements across Council Services and also support the on-going development of community hubs that house multiple services, including partners, in accessible locations; an on-going programme of investment in energy saving measures to support further reductions in building running costs and carbon emissions; and reviewing rental agreements to maximise income.
 - e. Social Services Transformation Programme – the delivery of our new ‘Residential Care Homes for Older People Strategy’ and ‘Looked After Children: Residential Care Transformation Strategy 2022-2027’ (both agreed by Cabinet on [28th February 2023](#)). The financial impact of our ongoing preventative strategy will continue to be modelled alongside changes in demand for services linked to the demographic profile of the County Borough.
 - f. Review of base budget requirements - at both a service level and an authority wide level, with ongoing modelling around key service pressures including inflationary requirements, contractual arrangements and capital charges.
 - g. Invest to save – exploring options that will maximise opportunities to invest for the long term, benefiting residents and reducing our core ongoing spend requirements in doing so.
 - h. Service Reductions – reducing our service levels will always be a last resort, however we must now consider all options available to the Council to balance its budget in light of a potential significant budget gap for next year and across the medium term.
- 12.16 As part of progressing the above programme of work, the Council will collaborate and work with others where it is for the benefit of Rhondda Cynon Taf, with the overall approach aligned to the Council’s strategy of maximising opportunities across the following areas: Digitalisation; Commercialism; Early Intervention and Prevention; Independence; and Efficient and Effective Organisation.

Section 13 Capital Programme

- 13.1 The Council's 3-year capital programme, 2023/24 to 2025/26 was agreed by Council on the 8th March 2023.
- 13.2 The three-year Capital Programme is a key component of the overall Medium Term Financial Planning and Resources Strategy for this Council. Targeted capital investment can make a significant positive impact on service delivery and used effectively, is able to underpin the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities, where relevant.
- 13.3 The three-year programme amounts to £187M and includes further additional available funding of £7.1M for investment in priorities aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan, and has been funded from the Council's Infrastructure Reserve and General Capital Grant. The updated Capital Programme also includes the capitalisation of £4M of expenditure, that was funded from revenue budgets in previous years, for example, ICT software licenses, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal contribution and vehicle purchases, this being in line with accounting rules and as set out in the approved 2023/24 Revenue Budget Strategy.
- 13.4 The rolling 3-year programme is reviewed and determined annually (in March of each year) and provides service managers with the opportunity to plan investment in our infrastructure and assets over the medium term.
- 13.5 A summary of the current 3-year programme is provided in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1 : THREE YEAR SUMMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

GROUP	BUDGET		
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£M	£M	£M
Community & Children's Services			
Adult & Children's Services	7.105	0.300	0.300
Public Health, Protection & Community Services	3.782	2.419	0.315
Education & Inclusion Services			
Schools	32.560	8.844	0.100
Supplementary Capital Programme	5.808	2.775	2.775
Chief Executive's Division			
Regeneration	3.760	15.872	0.430
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	1.000	1.000	1.000
Planning & Countryside	0.078	0.078	0.000
Private Sector Housing	11.720	6.870	3.475
Corporate Estates	2.325	0.975	0.975
Finance & Digital and Frontline Services			
Finance & Digital Services	1.460	1.460	1.460
Highways Technical Services	10.725	1.805	1.705
Strategic Projects	16.940	8.080	0.125
Parks	0.820	0.070	0.070
Storm Dennis Flood Recovery	20.109	0.000	0.000
Waste Strategy	1.200	0.000	0.000
Fleet	1.200	1.600	1.600
Buildings	0.150	0.050	0.050
TOTAL CAPITAL BUDGET	120.742	52.198	14.380

Section 14 Consultation and Scrutiny

- 14.1 Following consideration of this MTFP by Cabinet, it is proposed that this document and the planning assumptions will be reported to full Council and thereafter be made available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of the consultation on the draft 2024/25 budget strategy.
- 14.2 The MTFP will be used as a basis of planning for our 2024/25 budget strategy consultation processes, updated as appropriate to reflect the implications of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be received in autumn 2023.

Section 15 Other Relevant Documents

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

Budget Book (2022/23)

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

Statements of Account

2020/21 Audited Statement of Accounts -

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

2021/22 Audited Statement of Accounts –

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/RelatedDocuments/StatementofAccounts/202223/StatementofAccounts2021to2022.pdf>

2023/24 Capital Strategy Report incorporating Prudential Indicators

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s40522/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy incorporating Investment Strategy, Treasury Management Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s40521/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

Council Performance Reports

Quarter 4 2021/22 -

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

Quarter 4 2022/23 –

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s41942/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

Corporate Plan (2020-2024)

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2020/03/04/Reports/AgendaItem6CouncilsDraftCorporatePlan20202024.pdf>

Council 3 Year Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s40014/Report.pdf?LLL=0>

GENERAL FUND REVENUE : SERVICES PROVIDED

2022/23 Budget		2023/24 Budget
£M		£M
	<u>Community & Children's Services</u>	
103.528	Adult Services	114.826
58.852	Children's Services	62.112
1.560	Transformation	1.541
18.766	Public Health, Protection & Community Services	23.669
182.706		202.148
	<u>Education & Inclusion Services</u>	
33.674	Education & Inclusion Services (Non Delegated)	36.024
174.745	Delegated Schools	186.976
208.419		223.000
	<u>Chief Executive</u>	
0.405	Chief Executive	0.411
13.066	Human Resources	13.163
5.159	Legal & Democratic Services	5.301
4.663	Corporate Estates	6.405
3.062	Prosperity & Development Services	3.219
26.355		28.499
	<u>Finance, Digital & Frontline Services</u>	
12.529	Finance & Digital Services	11.889
61.678	Frontline Services	67.706
74.207		79.595
491.687	Total Group Budgets	533.242
	<u>Authority Wide Budgets</u>	
21.308	Capital Financing	21.708
13.202	Levies	14.96
14.583	Miscellaneous	13.836
0.425	NDR Relief	0.425
25.587	Council Tax Reduction Scheme	25.784
75.105	Total Authority Wide Budgets	76.713
566.792	TOTAL REVENUE BUDGET	609.955

ANNEX 2

COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET BY PRIORITY AREA

<u>COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET - BY PRIORITY AREA</u>		
Budget 2022/23	Priority Area	Budget 2023/24
£'000		£'000
	<u>PEOPLE</u>	
59,603	Children's Services	62,843
109,169	Adult Services	120,287
5,099	Leisure (including physical participation) / Heritage Sites	9,720
173,871		192,851
	<u>PLACES</u>	
7,490	Libraries / Parks / Play Areas	8,346
1,503	Crime Reduction (including hate crime) / Anti-Social Behaviour / Domestic Violence / Substance Misuse	1,226
6,018	Highway cleanliness	7,050
24,400	Waste / Recycling	24,748
10,267	Highways Infrastructure and Road Maintenance / Condition	10,978
49,679		52,349
	<u>PROSPERITY</u>	
27,627	Economically active people / Job Seekers Allowance Claimants / Job Creation / Adult Education / Town Centres	28,228
220,058	School Attainment	238,111
425	Town Centre Vacancy Rates (businesses)	425
1,461	Housing / Affordable Housing Delivered / Homelessness Prevention	1,758
249,571		268,522
	<u>LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS</u>	
1,384	Customer Care	1,064
6,618	Office Accommodation/Buildings	8,230
8,002		9,294
481,122	TOTAL SPEND ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES	523,016
6,577	REGULATORY PUBLIC SERVICES	7,844
2,399	OTHER SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC	1,995
49,093	AUTHORITY WIDE COSTS	50,504
27,601	CORE SUPPORT	26,595
566,792	TOTAL COUNCIL BUDGET	609,955

ANNEX 3

COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME BY PRIORITY AREA

Priority/Scheme	3 Year Capital Programme 2023 - 2026			
	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget	Total 3 Year Budget
	£M	£M	£M	£M
People				
Adult Services	11.149	4.012	3.563	18.724
Children's Services	0.496	0.316	0.248	1.060
Total - People	11.645	4.328	3.811	19.784
Places				
Parks, Leisure, Libraries, Culture & Heritage, Open Spaces	5.384	0.419	0.200	6.003
Crime Reduction	0.171	2.171	0.050	2.392
Highways Cleanliness	0.234	0.054	-	0.288
Highways Infrastructure	48.395	10.586	1.880	60.861
Waste Strategy	1.325	0.307	1.553	3.185
Total - Places	55.509	13.537	3.683	72.729
Prosperity				
School Attainment	38.368	11.619	2.875	52.862
Business Support	1.574	1.998	1.140	4.712
Town Centres	1.893	14.074	0.290	16.257
Housing	7.784	3.695	-	11.479
Total - Prosperity	49.619	31.386	4.305	85.310
Living Within Our Means				
Management and rationalisation of service accommodation	2.365	1.092	1.015	4.472
Total - Living Within Our Means	2.365	1.092	1.015	4.472
Total Capital Budget Allocated to Council Priorities	119.138	50.343	12.814	182.295
Regulatory Public Services	0.144	0.331	0.106	0.581
Authority Wide Costs	-	0.064	-	0.064
Core ICT Systems Support	1.460	1.460	1.460	4.380
Total Capital Budget	120.742	52.198	14.380	187.320

COUNCIL EARMARKED RESERVES***Capital and Investment / Infrastructure**

Reserve	Purpose	Balance at 31/03/22	Transfers Out	Transfers In	Balance at 31/03/23
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Developments	Resources set-aside from revenue budget, earmarked to fund the Council's approved 3-year capital programme.	75,534	(17,417)	22,058	80,175
Investment / Infrastructure	To fund current and future costs of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough	19,800	(7,504)	12,654	24,950
Total		95,334	(24,921)	34,712	105,125

Other Revenue Related Reserves

Reserve	Purpose	Balance at 31/03/22	Transfers Out	Transfers In	Balance at 31/03/23
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Budget Strategy 2022/23	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2022/23 budget.	963	(963)	0	0
Revenue Budget Strategy 2023/24	Medium Term Financial Planning & Service Transformation (transitional funding) to be released to fund the 2023/24 budget.	0	0	9,105	9,105
Joint Committee Reserve	Reflects the Council's share of General and Earmarked Reserves of the Joint Committees in which it has an interest.	2,247	(2,247)	2,331	2,331
Revenue Grant Reserves (IFRS)	Carry forward of Revenue Grants not yet applied to spend - required accounting treatment to comply with International Financial Reporting Standards.	5,743	(5,743)	3,619	3,619
Financial Management and Human Resources Risk Management	Resources set aside as cover for future liabilities relating to various risks identified and being managed.	36,057	(26,770)	17,587	26,874
Treasury Management Reserve	Funding for known and potential future pressures upon the Capital Financing budget.	2,465	0	0	2,465
Insurance Reserve	To provide for estimated costs of incidents that have occurred during the policy year but have not yet resulted in a claim being received.	7,938	0	323	8,261
Prior Year Commitments	Carry forward of existing funding to finance projects for which commitments have already been made in the prior year.	34,776	(19,071)	10,245	25,950
Medium Term Financial Planning and Service Transformation	Resources set aside as transitional (one-off) funding to support the Council's medium-term financial and service planning requirements.	3,645	(4,105)	5,347	4,887
Other Specific Reserves	Represents a number of reserves held for specific and identified purposes.	4,222	(2,565)	1,770	3,427
Invest to Save	Funding identified (pump priming) to support Invest to Save opportunities as and when they arise.	4,969	(472)	2,390	6,887
Total		103,025	(61,936)	52,717	93,806
Total Earmarked Reserves		198,359	(86,857)	87,429	198,931

* Council Earmarked Reserves – draft position as at 31st March 2023, subject to audit.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN – INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE, DIGITAL & FRONTLINE SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN OBE

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the position regarding the opportunity for Cabinet to propose to Council to further invest in the Council's priority areas, aligned to the Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" 2020 – 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet agree:

- 2.1 To review and if acceptable propose the additional Corporate Plan investment priorities and funding arrangements as set out in the report at Appendix A to Council at its meeting on 20th September 2023.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The importance of investment in areas supporting key Corporate Plan priorities has already been recognised by the Council with £154M of additional resources, over and above normal Capital Programme allocations, invested since October 2015.
- 3.2 The attached report proposes to continue to invest a further £7.730M in key priorities which can be funded by existing resources already set aside for investment in infrastructure.

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of this report relate solely to the proposed report to Council at Appendix A.

5. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no Welsh language implications because the contents of the report relate solely to the proposed report to Council at Appendix A.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 There are no consultation requirements as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 All financial implications are included in the proposed report to Council at Appendix A.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

9.1 The proposed investment areas are in line with all the Corporate Plan priorities and the Council's five workstreams and contributes to all of the seven national wellbeing goals.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The draft report at Appendix A sets out the proposed investment areas and funding arrangements.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023 – 2024

COUNCIL

20th SEPTEMBER 2023

COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN – INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

REPORT OF THE CABINET

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the position regarding the opportunity for the Council to further invest in its priority areas, aligned to the Corporate Plan, “Making a Difference” 2020 – 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council:

2.1.1 Review and if acceptable agree the additional investment and funding arrangements as set out in paragraph 4 which, if agreed, will be incorporated into the Council’s Capital Programme.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The importance of investment in areas supporting key Corporate Plan priorities has already been recognised by the Council with £154M of additional resources, over and above normal Capital Programme allocations, invested since October 2015.
- 3.2 A further opportunity for investment is now available for consideration, subject to agreement by Cabinet on 18th September 2023.

4. **ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT**

- 4.1 In line with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, additional investment is now proposed across the following areas:

Investment Priority	£M
Highways & Roads	1.500
Structures	2.500
Making Better Use/Traffic Developments	0.550
Flood Alleviation Works	0.200
Streetcare Improvements (bins)	0.050
Parks & Green Spaces	0.300
Town Centre Enhancements	0.100
Leisure Centres	0.400
Extra Care and Modernisation of Accommodation for Older People	2.000
Community Facilities Energy Grants	0.130
Total Investment	7.730

- 4.2 The Council's unaudited draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023 show the Council has revenue stream earmarked reserves at the 31st March 2023 of £93.806M which are set aside for a variety of purposes. In addition, there are specific reserves relating to funding for the existing Capital Programme plus future Investment/Infrastructure.

- 4.3 The Investment/Infrastructure reserve is a specific reserve to fund the cost of maintaining and enhancing infrastructure across the County Borough. The balance of this reserve at 31st March 2023 was £24.950M, therefore the proposed investment priorities shown at paragraph 4.1 can be fully funded from this reserve.

- 4.4 Further detail on the proposed additional investment is shown below.

a) Highways & Roads (£1.500M)

Funding will continue to support the enhanced investment in the Council's largest asset, building on sustained increases in annual funding for highways capital maintenance over recent years.

b) Structures (£2.500M)

Funding will allow the continuation of the enhanced programme of capital repairs and maintenance of over 1,500 structures including, bridges, culverts, retaining walls, reinforced earth embankments and rock anchors. These structures are often critical to the continued safe operation of the highway network.

c) Making Better Use/Traffic Developments (£0.550M)

Funding will allow continuation of the programme of tackling congestion, pinch points and improving road safety by utilising existing road space to provide additional capacity.

d) Flood Alleviation Works (£0.200M)

Funding will continue to support small scale works on land drainage and flood alleviation schemes.

e) Streetcare Improvements (£0.050M)

Funding will support improvements to include new bins in public spaces.

f) Parks & Green Spaces (£0.300M)

This additional funding will allow the ongoing investment programme into the refurbishment of sports pavilions, upgrading of sports pitches and the repairs to parks infrastructure to be enhanced even further.

g) Town Centre Enhancements (£0.100M)

Funding will support townscape enhancements across our key town centres via a targeted approach to upgrading town centre buildings for increased business and commercial use and continuing to improve the quality of the townscape providing business investment and employment growth.

h) Leisure Centres (£0.400M)

Funding will support the capital maintenance of leisure buildings to ensure that the building decoration, floor coverings, changing facilities, and sport surfaces are maintained, adding to the customer experience. Each leisure facility will benefit from this investment.

i) Extra Care and Modernisation of Accommodation for Older People (£2.000M)

Funding will support the Council continuing its work with partners to deliver its strategy to modernise accommodation options for older people and deliver Extra Care housing across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

j) Community Facilities Energy Grants (£0.130M)

This funding would be made available to support energy cost pressures being felt across not for profit community based facilities.

The above investments support all of the Corporate Plan priorities of **People, Places and Prosperity**.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 Due regard has been given to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010, namely the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There are no consultation requirements as a result of the recommendations set out in the report. Subject to the decision of Council, consultation will be undertaken on specific areas, as appropriate, as part of developing/implementing projects.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. The proposed investment priorities totalling £7.730M are fully funded from Council resources already set aside for this purpose.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The recommendations have been compiled ensuring continued compliance with the Council's legal requirement to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs as set out in Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. In addition, the proposed investment areas support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, in line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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

- 10.1 The proposed investment areas are in line with the priorities included within the Council's Corporate Plan and support the sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in particular, planning for the 'long term', helping to 'prevent' problems occurring or getting worse in the future and delivering services in 'collaboration' with others.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This report has identified the opportunity to invest a further £7.730M of additional resources in our local area including our own assets in order to improve our infrastructure and the services which are available to our residents.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN – INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE,
DIGITAL & FRONTLINE SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADER OF THE
COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN**

Officer to contact: Barrie Davies.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th September 2023

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30th June 2023 (Quarter 1)

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR – FINANCE, DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)

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

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first three months of this financial year (to the 30th June 2023).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

Revenue

- 2.1 Note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 30th June 2023 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary).
- 2.2 Request that Cabinet approve the virements listed in Sections 2a - e of the Executive Summary that exceed the £0.100M threshold as per the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

Capital

- 2.3 Note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 30th June 2023 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
- 2.4 Note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 30th June 2023 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

- 2.5 Note the Quarter 1 progress updates for the Council's Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary) that include updates in respect of the Council's on-going work to deliver its Climate Change ambitions.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree the Council's financial and operational performance position as at the 30th June 2023 to enable elected Members and other stakeholders to scrutinise the performance of the Council.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 This report provides Members with the first update of the Council's financial and operational performance position for the financial year ending the 31st March 2024.
- 4.2 The aim of the report is to bring together the Council's performance into an Executive Summary and make available more detailed information to the reader through electronic links. Information contained in the Executive Summary includes financial data and progress against our Corporate Plan priorities (with exceptions highlighted within the detailed sections to ensure that elected Members and other readers are able to quickly identify the key issues) alongside updates on delivery of projects supported through additional investment.
- 4.3 Members will note that the on-going difficult economic conditions, including high levels of inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, continue to contribute to significant cost pressures and increases in demand across a number of services. Within this very challenging environment, the Council is prioritising its focus on frontline service delivery, as set out in the Executive Summary, to help support the needs of residents and businesses.

5.0 QUARTER 1 REPORT

- 5.1 The Quarter 1 report is attached and comprises:
- **Executive Summary** – setting out, at a glance, the overall performance of the Council as at Quarter 1 (i.e. 30th June 2023).

- **Revenue Monitoring** – sections 2a – e setting out the detailed projected financial spend against budget across our Revenue Budget with exceptions highlighted.
- **Capital Monitoring** – sections 3a – e setting out capital spend across our Capital Programme with exceptions highlighted and section 3f covering Prudential Indicators.
- **Organisational Health** – includes information on turnover, sickness absence, organisational health related investment areas and Council strategic risks.
- **[Corporate Plan](#) Priorities** – three action plans (Sections 5a – c) setting out progress updates for the priorities of People, Places and Prosperity, as well as progress to deliver Climate Change ambitions.
- **The Council's work to tackle Climate Change** – Section 6 providing an overview of progress to date to support the delivery of the Council's [Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT'](#).
-

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

- 6.1 The Council's Performance Report provides an update on financial and operational performance for the first 3 months of 2023/24; as a result, there are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications to report.

7.0 **CONSULTATION**

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

8.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

9.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

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

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

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

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 This report sets out the financial and operational performance of the Council as at Quarter 1 2023/24, that is, 30th June 2023.

11.2 The Quarter 1 revenue budget position is projecting a £2.489M overspend. This full year projection, forecasted as at June 2023, is primarily due to increases in demand for services, particularly social care services and additional inflationary cost pressures, for example, home to school contract costs. A programme of work is underway, as part of the Council's robust financial and service management arrangements, to review all areas of expenditure and income in parallel with on-going discussions with Welsh Government around additional funding requirements, to bring the revenue position closer in line with budget by year-end.

11.3 Capital investment as at 30th June 2023 is £22.994M, with a number of schemes being re-profiled during the first quarter to reflect changes in costs and updated delivery timescales, and also new external grant funding approvals received and incorporated into the Capital Programme. The Capital Programme for 2023/24 represents a sustained programme of investment that is supporting visible improvements to infrastructure and assets across the County Borough.

11.4 With regard to the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity, and its work to deliver Climate Change ambitions, positive progress overall has been made during the first quarter to support service development and improvement for the benefit of residents and communities across the County Borough.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Paul Griffiths

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

18th September 2023

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30th June 2023 (Quarter 1)

**REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GROUP DIRECTOR –
FINANCE, DIGITAL AND FRONTLINE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE
RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR LEYSHON)**

Item:

Background Papers

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths

**COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT
QUARTER 1 2023/24
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Contents

Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

Section 2 – REVENUE BUDGET

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

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

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

Section 3 – CAPITAL PROGRAMME

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

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

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

Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

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

Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN

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

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

Section 6 – THE COUNCIL’S WORK TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Progress update on the work being progressed across services to support the delivery of the Council’s Climate Change Strategy ‘Think Climate RCT’.

Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Executive Summary brings together and summarises the Council's financial and operational performance position as at 30th June 2023 (Quarter 1).

The Quarter 1 update is set in the context of the on-going difficult economic conditions including high levels of inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, that continues to contribute to significant cost pressures and increases in demand across a number of services. Within this very challenging environment, the Council is prioritising its focus on frontline service delivery, as set out in the Executive Summary, to help support the needs of residents and businesses.

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

Section 2 – REVENUE BUDGET

Revenue Budget Performance

Service Area	2023/24 – as at 30 th June 2023 (Quarter 1)		
	Full Year Budget £M	Projected Expenditure as at Quarter 1 £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
Education & Inclusion Services (2a)	223.000	222.732	(0.268)
Community & Children's Services (2b)	202.148	204.640	2.492
Chief Executive (2c)	28.499	28.381	(0.118)
Finance, Digital & Frontline Services (2d)	79.595	80.175	0.580
Sub Total	533.242	535.928	2.686
Authority Wide Budgets (2e)	76.713	76.516	(0.197)
Grand Total	609.955	612.444	2.489

The full year revenue budget variance, projected as at 30th June 2023, is a £2.489M overspend. Within this forecasted position, the main factors and conditions that are driving significant budget pressures, over and above the additional resources built into the 2023/24 revenue budget, are as follows:

- Increases in the cost of social care, reflecting the level of demand for services and the complexity and specialist nature of care required:

- Adult Services – for external residential / nursing placements (specialist placements) and Supported Living Schemes; and
- Children’s Services – for in-house and external residential placements.
- Inflation levels remaining high that is causing further cost pressures and impacting on, for example, home to school contract costs as a result of fuel prices and levels of pay, and food costs within the Council’s Catering Service.

A programme of work is underway, as part of the Council’s robust financial and service management arrangements, to review all areas of expenditure and income to bring the revenue position closer in line with budget by year-end. The outcomes from this on-going work will be incorporated into Performance Reports during the year.

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

Revenue budget variances projected at Quarter 1

1. Education & Inclusion Services

EDUCATION & INCLUSION SERVICES

- Additional Learning Needs (£0.196M underspend); and
- Catering (£0.098M overspend).

2. Community and Children’s Services

ADULT SERVICES

- Long Term Care & Support (£0.250M overspend);
- Commissioned Services (£0.472M overspend);
- Short Term Intervention Services (£0.118M overspend);
- Fairer Charging (£0.096M underspend); and
- Management, Safeguarding & Support Services (£0.110M overspend).

CHILDREN SERVICES

- Safeguarding & Support (including Children Looked After) (£1.731M overspend);
- Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (£0.071M underspend); and
- Management & Support Services (£0.146M underspend).

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

- Community Services (£0.056M overspend); and
- Leisure, Countryside and Cultural Services (£0.128M overspend).

3. Finance, Digital & Frontline Services

FRONTLINE SERVICES

- Transportation (£0.265M overspend);
- Strategic Projects (£0.060M overspend);

- Highways Maintenance (£0.051M overspend); and
- Waste Services (£0.224M overspend)

4. Chief Executive

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- Legal & Democratic Services (£0.050M underspend);
- Corporate Estates (£0.054M overspend); and
- Prosperity & Development (£0.104M underspend).

5. Authority Wide Budgets

- Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£0.236M underspend).

Earmark Reserve Update

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

Section 3 – CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Capital Programme Budget

Service Area	2023/24 - as at 30 th June 2023	
	Capital Budget £M	Actual Expenditure £M
Chief Executive (3a)	31.356	3.985
Finance, Digital & Frontline Services (3b)	68.392	7.965
Education & Inclusion Services (3c)	75.288	9.981
Community & Children's Services (3d)	17.020	1.063
Total	192.056	22.994

Key Capital Variances at Quarter 1

- Re-profiling of a number of projects to reflect changes in the total cost of schemes and revised delivery timescales.
- Grant approvals introduced into the Capital Programme: Welsh Government (WG) Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund (£0.287M); WG Resilient Roads Fund (£0.900M); WG Local Transport Fund (£0.400M); WG Active Travel Fund (£3.434M); WG Community Focused Schools (£0.905M); WG Voluntary Aided Schools Urgent Capital Repairs (£0.880M); WG Sustainable Communities for Learning (£12.997M); WG Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (£1.158M); WG ENABLE (£0.952M); Integrated Care Fund (£1.045M); WG Transforming Towns (£1.077M); WG 20mph Grant (£2.935M); and UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (£0.725M).

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

Prudential Indicators

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

Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

- Turnover

Service Area	2023/24		2022/23			
	As at 30 th June 2023		As at 30 th June 2022		As at 31 st March 2023	
	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover
Turnover – Council Wide	10,774	2.17	10,898	3.02	10,896	11.38
Chief Executive's Division	918	1.85	930	1.94	952	9.14
Education & Inclusion Services	1,282	1.40	1,249	0.88	1,278	6.03
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4,950</u>	<u>2.08</u>	<u>4,928</u>	<u>2.37</u>	<u>5,020</u>	<u>11.16</u>
Primary	3,085	2.56	3,092	2.26	3,142	9.64
Secondary	1,865	1.29	1,836	2.56	1,878	13.68
Community & Children's Services	2,660	2.89	2,873	5.85	2,722	15.94
Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	934	1.93	918	1.63	924	8.87

- Sickness Absence

Service Area	2023/24		2022/23			
	As at 30 th June 2023 %		As at 30 th June 2022 %		As at 31 st March 2023 %	
% days lost to sickness absence – Council Wide	5.10		5.52		5.34	
Chief Executive's Division	3.20		2.97		3.16	
Education & Inclusion Services	4.45		5.06		4.73	
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4.44</u>		<u>4.91</u>		<u>4.57</u>	
Primary	4.96		5.17		5.00	
Secondary	3.59		4.49		3.84	
Community & Children's Services	7.14		7.64		7.89	
Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	5.45		5.40		5.15	

For a more detailed breakdown of 2023/24 staff turnover and sickness absence information, [click here](#).

Organisation Health related investment areas

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

• Council Strategic Risks

The Council's operating environment has been reviewed, taking into account changing internal and external factors and the on-going impact of challenging economic conditions and cost-of-living crisis. Based on the review, the following updates have been made to the Strategic Risk Register:

- Existing strategic risks removed from the Strategic Risk Register based on the arrangements and progress the Council has put in place to manage and mitigate risks:
 - Risk 21 - service delivery on a regional footprint;
 - Risk 25 - planning arrangements to support the on-going recovery from Covid-19; and
 - Risk 29 – strategic approach to fulfilling counter terrorism duties.
- New strategic risks included within the Strategic Risk Register:
 - Risk 30 - If short and long term arrangements are not put in place to increase the capacity of specialist placements for pupils with highly complex and significant Additional Learning Needs the Council will not meet its statutory duty to provide appropriate additional learning provision to pupils and there will be additional costs incurred by the Council for costly out of county specialist placements.
 - Risk 31 - A future pandemic where the Council has not learnt from its experiences from the Covid-19 pandemic and have in place robust contingency plans that results in a lack of preparedness could adversely impact service continuity, health protection system responses and the delivery of support to residents, businesses and communities.
- Risk scores reviewed and, where required, updated to reflect the current assessment of risk.

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

Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN

Corporate Plan priority action plans for People, Places and Prosperity have been compiled and include a number of performance measures to accompany key actions, to provide Members with a full as picture as possible of the Council’s performance.

The priority action plans are in draft form, subject to approval, with a summary of progress made across each of the three priorities as at 30th June 2023 (Quarter 1) set out in Sections 5a - c. For Members information, as part of the summaries of progress, electronic links have been included to each priority action plan, providing more detailed information on the progress during the first quarter of the year.

Corporate Plan Priority Progress Update

- **PEOPLE** (Section 5a)

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful
Summary of progress to 30th June 2023
<p>Supporting our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life.</p> <p>We have continued our work to support our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life. Linc Cymru have appointed a new contractor to resume construction of the new Extra Care facility in Porth. Work will begin on site in September 2023. A community engagement event was held by Linc Cymru in Mountain Ash in May 2023 to involve residents in the development of a new Extra Care facility. Design options are being considered and this will progress throughout the year. The development of Extra Care homes offers an opportunity for older people to lead a more independent life and prevent unnecessary admissions to residential care. Extra Care also enables people to have more control and be more involved in decisions about their environment and the services they receive. All of the new Extra Care homes have also been designed to achieve ‘BREEAM’ excellence, the world’s leading sustainability assessment.</p> <p>We received full planning permission for a new specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities in adulthood and older age, to be built on the former Bronllwyn Residential Care Home site in Gelli. The new building will include several amenities including an entrance foyer, laundry facility, staff restroom, three day rooms, three sensory rooms, a commercial kitchen, toilet areas, nurse station, hairdresser, assisted bathroom and a training room. The wider development will include sustainable drainage features and a large courtyard to the west of the building that will provide an outdoor space for the facility’s residents and staff. Construction of this scheme is due to begin in summer 2023. Work is also progressing on a supported accommodation scheme as part of the ‘Big Shed’ development in Tonypany. The scheme will contain 8 apartments for adults with learning disabilities alongside staff accommodation.</p> <p>We continue to invest in reablement services to prevent escalation of need increasing or enable recovery and independence. We are working with Health to provide new intermediate care beds at Parc Newydd Care Home in Talbot Green to support timely discharge for people not yet ready for home. Refurbishment of the reablement facility is now complete and we are recruiting staff so that the facility is open during Winter 2023.</p> <p>We will continue to maximise new technology and ensure services are accessible and available to people and their families. Following on from our successful pilot in 2022/23, we are</p>

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

implementing the "[Just checking](#)" pilot recommendations within Supported Living to help deliver a better model of support that improves cost effectiveness and promotes more independence for individuals.

We continue the transformation of day services so that people with a learning disability have access to meaningful activity and opportunities in their own communities, including employment to achieve their personal goals and live ordinary lives. The draft day services strategy was presented to [Cabinet in May 2023](#) and it was agreed that targeted consultation would take place with people who use day services, their families and carers, staff and other associated stakeholders. We will support service users and their families and carers to understand and engage with the consultation process and the potential implications for them by offering face to face consultations, where requested, and creating an information pack for service users to ensure the relevant information is presented in an accessible and clear format.

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

We continue to encourage all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing as we know that this is key to living a long and healthy life, and reducing the risk of long-term illnesses such as heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes. Building on our leisure investment programme, we are focusing on delivering [Our Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022-27](#). Agreed in [October 2022](#), the strategy provides a framework for supporting all residents to be physically active on a regular basis as part of a healthy lifestyle. It aims to develop services to ensure that all residents have the information and support they require to be physically active, in a local environment that suits their needs. We are developing new initiatives and programmes to increase customer membership and visitor numbers across the service area e.g. student leisure passes during school holidays. During Quarter 1, there were nearly 448,000 visits to our indoor sports facilities (340,000 in Q1 2022/23) and over 51,000 visits to Lido Ponty (46,000 in 2022/23). We also exceeded our Leisure 4 Life membership target with 10,535 members (8,892 in 2022/23). We also want to strengthen how we involve customers by reintroducing customer surveys and evaluating the feedback to inform service changes and improvements. We are exploring how the survey can focus more on the softer, personal outcomes as a new way of gathering feedback to inform services.

We want to increase levels of engagement and participation in the arts and culture, and are developing and delivering new initiatives and programmes to increase visitor numbers to our cultural facilities. In partnership with Love Treorchy, we promoted an [Easter Treasure hunt](#) around Treorchy, finishing in the library. We promoted this event on social media and within our library. 1,975 visitors attended our Special Events in Rhondda Heritage Park during Qtr 1. This included an [Easter Egg-stravaganza](#) between 5th & 6th April. In total in Quarter 1, there have been 13,629 visits to Rhondda Heritage Park.

We continue to prioritise and strengthening relationships with residents and community groups and finding out what is important to residents utilising our Neighbourhood Networks. The aim of Neighbourhood Networks is to bring local partners together to help better connect our communities enabling groups and residents to have a say in shaping local priorities, and providing a place for local groups and partners to talk about things that are important to the community and identify solutions to any issues. During Quarter 1 a total of 20 Neighbourhood Network meetings have taken place with 249 community groups and organisations attending across the County Borough.

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

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

We continue to collaborate with our partners to support older people to stay in their homes longer, prevent unnecessary stays in hospital and to help get people home from hospital more quickly when they are well enough. We continue to implement a home first model approach to hospital discharge to meet the requirements of Discharge to Recover then Assess (D2RA). As part of this we have worked with Health to introduce the new electronic transfer of care (E-TOC) discharge referral process to manage the discharge of people from hospital on the right D2RA pathway. This will be monitored throughout the year.

Our work to review and redesign Community Mental Health Services with Health is ongoing. As part of this we will complete a review of current Community Mental Health Services and develop options to redesign our joint service offer to meet current and future long term need and demand pressures. A new work programme and timescales have been agreed with Health for 2023/24.

The Early Help pilot was successful and following review has now been mainstreamed following funding from South Wales Police. The Early Help app provides Police with a referral pathway when they are attending calls to the public. It aims to ensure that residents that appear vulnerable or in need of support but do not meet statutory service thresholds are able to be referred for support within the community, quickly.

We continue to raise awareness and develop the resident support offer within our communities. There has been a range of activities in Qtr 1 that strengthen our community offer including providing bundles of period products, 70% of which are reusable/sustainable, promoting Dementia Friendly Pontypridd during Dementia Action Week and developing a Dementia Listening Campaign for those with a lived experience of dementia to share their stories to build a picture of what dementia care looks and feels like in RCT. This will inform the support offer in the future.

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

We continue to implement our Children Looked After Prevention Strategy to ensure that services are targeted towards family support and that only those children for whom there is no safe alternative become looked after. A key priority within the strategy is to improve the numbers of children who can reunify home who have spent some time being looked after by the local authority. Work has begun to review our existing permanence policy as part of the wider development of a clear evidence-based reunification strategy and guidance for staff. We are also piloting an RCT Parent Advocacy project to improve support for parents within the child protection system. Parent advocacy provides voice and choice to parents, by supporting parents to navigate the child protection system, and to be fully involved in the decision-making processes. The pilot will be evaluated in Autumn 2023.

In line with the Welsh Government ambition of removing profit from children's care, we are implementing our long-term Residential Transformation Strategy which was agreed by Cabinet in February 2023. We will develop new provision of Children's Homes that meets need and matches statutory sufficiency duty including identifying those providers who will collaborate / convert to not for profit. This is a long term project and work has commenced.

Our Participation strategy outlines Rhondda Cynon Taf Children's Services approach to supporting the rights of children, young people, parents, carers, and families in receipt of care and support, to have their voices heard and to actively participate in decisions about their life and help to shape

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

future service developments. Implementation of the strategy includes further developing accessible information for children and carers utilising a range of media e.g. website, digital text.

We are working with our schools to develop strategic approaches to supporting children and families in poverty. We continue to roll out universal free school meals in line with Welsh Government policy and we are promoting our breakfast clubs to increase the number of children accessing this provision. Following Covid, there has been an increase in the number of children attending breakfast clubs but we need to better understand if this increase is impacting on children in poverty. We will seek to implement a system to better understand the eFSM make up of those attending breakfast club.

We are delivering the Early Years Transformation agenda in RCT in order to ensure early years services are universally available and specialist services are targeted by need and not geographical location. This will also improve early intervention and prevention outcomes across the County Borough. We have established mechanisms to monitor referral and placement rates to ensure the Flying Start Expansion Programme remains on target and within budget. 198 applications were received in Q1.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 1

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PEOPLE		
Investment Area	Investment Value¹ £M	Quarter 1 Update
Extracare Housing	5.772	<p>This investment funding covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porth - agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3rd December 2020. Progress to date includes: the vacation of the building; site surveys and demolition works completed; and planning permission granted 16th December 2021. The development has been delayed due to the main contractor entering administration, noting that a re-tendering process has now been completed and a new contractor will be recommencing works on site. <p>(For information, previous projects delivered in this area include: the former Maesyffynnon Home for the Elderly site (Aberaman) and Pontypridd "Cwrt yr Orsaf" Extra Care Housing Scheme, opened in May 2020 and October 2021 respectively).</p> <p>Plans for a further three extra care facilities in Mountain Ash, Treorchy and Ferndale are being developed in line with the Council's residential care homes for older people strategy.</p>
Tackling Poverty Fund	0.300	<p>This investment funding is to help address areas where there are high levels of poverty (including fuel poverty) to increase the disposable income of households, for example, by supporting households to reduce energy bills, helping to overcome barriers to find employment. In parallel, funding has been secured via the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund, to deliver a local scheme for Heating Grants and Solar Panels, to further support this priority area.</p>
Total	6.072	

¹ Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.

o PLACES (Section 5b)

PLACES - Where people are proud to live, work and play
Summary of progress to 30th June 2023
<p>Keeping RCT clean through efficient street cleaning services, minimising the amount of waste we send to landfill, achieving our recycling targets through weekly recycling and regular refuse collections, and reducing our carbon footprint</p> <p>We continue to promote good recycling practices through campaigns and education. This quarter has focussed on the recycling of food waste and Easter Egg packaging to help the Council meet the 70% Welsh Government recycling target by 2024/25. We have also provided ideas for sustainable Royal Coronation parties that will have a positive impact on the environment and used these opportunities to advise residents that there are no changes to waste recycling over the associated bank holidays, and remind residents about the changes to the frequency of black back collections which start on 3rd July 2023.</p> <p>The Alun Maddox Education Centre at Bryn Pica continues to extend an invitation to Schools and Community Groups to take an interactive trip in to the world of recycling to discover how household items are collected from the kerbside, sorted in to waste types and turned in to new items. This quarter, 14 educational visits have been made to the centre. Online sessions have also been made available to those schools not able to physically visit the centre, and we continue to look at ways to help with transport costs for physical visits.</p> <p>The tonnage of recycled waste during quarter 1 is lower than the same period last year (20,415 tonnes compared to 20,970 tonnes in 2022/23) and our overall recycling percentage is just marginally lower i.e. 67.05% compared to 67.48% at quarter 1 2022/23. The tonnage of residual waste sent to landfill continues to positively decrease from 1,133 tonnes (3.65%) in Qtr 1 2022/23 compared to 331 tonnes (1.09%) this quarter.</p> <p>Work continues with landlords, agents and residents to encourage good recycling practices that will reduce municipal waste and have a positive effect on the environment. We continue to promote the changes in legislation regarding non-domestic waste collections i.e. the separation of residual and recyclable waste, in advance of the April 2024 implementation date. In addition, we continue to work with Caru Cymru (Keep Wales Tidy) to support community activity e.g. litter picks. In April 2023 at the Tidy Wales Awards 2023, 'Valley Veterans' won the 'Nature's Heroes Award', and the 'Outstanding Achievement Award' for their work in transforming a former colliery railway track into an accessible green space with a meadow, apple trees and raised beds designed to improve drainage and provide essential habitats for pollinators all of which is open to local residents to enjoy. In addition the 'Rhondda Litter Pickers and Environment' were presented with the Caru Cymru ('Love Wales') Community Award.</p> <p>The Council's Enforcement Team continues to monitor environmental offences; enforce off street parking restrictions and 'school keep clear zones' to ensure the safe passage of both residents and drivers. A Report was also presented and approved in principle by Cabinet in Jun-23 to extend the RCTs Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO). We also continue to take appropriate action to enforce the PSPO for dog controls.</p> <p>We continue to look at sustainable fleet transport options, attending seminars on alternative sustainable fuel options and trialling vehicles as and when the opportunities arise and continue to support the Council's decarbonisation agenda to reduce single use plastic across the Council.</p>

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

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

Our highways investment programme activity continues across the County Borough. This quarter, we have progressed bridge work schemes including the demolition of the damaged [Castle Inn Bridge in Treforest](#), [preserving its history](#) for future generations; undertaken preliminary work at the [Tyn Y Bryn Footbridge](#) in Tonyrefail, including [realigning](#) the river wall; Maintenance work at [Lanelly Bridge in Talbot Green](#) and continued to progress work at [Imperial Bridge in Porth](#) and [White Bridge in Pontypridd](#). Footbridge repairs have also been undertaken at [Trehafod](#) and [Gelligalad Park, Ystrad](#) in addition to [river wall](#) repairs both here and at [Hopkinstown Road](#). We have also obtained planning consent for the repair scheme at the [Iron Tram Bridge, Robertstown](#).

Road resurfacing works have been undertaken at [Porth](#), [Glyncoch](#) following [embankment](#) work and [Treforest](#). We have also promoted the best way to 'Report a Pothole' to the Council via an online [link](#) on our [webpages](#). Other work includes the rebuilding of a wall at [High Street Llantrisant](#) and inspecting the rock netting surrounding the [A4061 Rhigos Mountain Road](#) following the fire there in August 2022. Activity is also ongoing to ensure the safety of RCT's legacy Coal Tips, and in June the [First Minister visited the Tylorstown landslip](#) to see the progress that had been made to date to repair the damage following Storm Dennis.

We also continue to progress the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act and flood risk flood mitigation measures. A Report on the progress of the Authority's review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan was submitted to [Cabinet in May-23](#). Flood alleviation continues to be a priority for the Council and additional [funding from Welsh Government](#) will enable further targeted flood alleviation schemes to be progressed during 2023/24 including a [drainage scheme in Treorchy](#). We have also engaged with residents regarding the [future plans for the Pentre Flood Alleviation Scheme](#). Council members were also presented with an update report and presentation on '[Flood Risk and Infrastructure developments since Storm Dennis in Feb-20](#)' at the Council meeting in Jun-23.

We are also progressing active travel [schemes](#) across Rhondda Cynon Taf and have [secured funding](#) for further Active Travel Routes across RCT including the Rhondda Fach Active Travel Route, and the Cynon Trail Link and Enhancements.

'Safe Routes in the Community' activity has been progressed with the installation of [a new pedestrian crossing point at Grosfaen](#) and [upgrades to pedestrian crossing facilities at Llantwit Fardre](#), and further funding has been secured to progress schemes at Hirwaun and Church Village. We have also made [Bus Stop improvements](#) along the key bus routes between Porth, Tonyrefail and Gilfach Coch. Funded through Welsh Government's Local Transport Fund, 20 new bus shelters have been installed to improve the waiting environment for passengers and improved surfacing, lines and signage.

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

During the quarter, work to improve community cohesion has been progressed including extending Wi-Fi access to Recreation and Community Centres and extending the use of online booking systems and the use of social media. We have also progressed the 2023/24 RCT Community Support Grant Programme to support community groups in need with a financial resource (revenue and capital) through an application process. Small, Medium and High-level applications have been received and assessed, with small grants issued to eligible applicants.

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

Medium and High-level grant applications are considered by a panel that includes Cabinet Members and the Council Leader. We are also finalising the 'RCT Community Asset Transfer Policy' to be presented to Cabinet later this year.

Our work to prevent anti-social behaviour continues in partnership with South Wales Police. 10 additional PCSOs have been employed to work with Community Wardens and Community Safety Staff to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and increase public perception of feeling safe in RCT. We have also reviewed our organisational requirements including resources to meet the new Protect Duties and Serious Violence and other emerging Community safety priorities. A [Report](#) was presented to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee (Crime and Disorder) in Apr-23 outlining the work undertaken in the context of the new duties. Cabinet have also [approved](#) recommendations arising from the [review of the Community Safety Partnership arrangements for the Cwm Taf Region](#); this includes the transition to a new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safety Partnership that covers the areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend Local Authorities.

We continue our work to reach out to individuals with chronic substance misuse, mental health needs and offending backgrounds, with a focus on those requiring support because of their complex needs and issues with housing. We are also providing services to children and young people needing support through educational sessions in schools and youth clubs. [Barod](#), our integrated Substance Misuse Service provider, has also recruited extra resources this quarter. We continue to promote harm reduction interventions in the community e.g. the provision of 'Take home Naloxone Kits', blood borne virus (BBV) screening and needle and syringe provision.

Our domestic abuse support services are now integrated through the new 'One Front Door' domestic abuse support programme, operating out of the Oasis Centre in Pontypridd. We continue to progress our Outreach service with the securing of an RCT vehicle to take out into the community later this year to target parts of our society that are known to experience domestic abuse.

To keep people that live and work in RCT safe, we continue to provide information to raise awareness of fraudulent activity e.g. information to the taxi trade to make them aware of 'Courier Fraud' so that they can identify it and report suspected incidents to the police. We also continue to publish cases where rogue traders have been prosecuted on the Council's website including [a case in April](#) 2023, where a public house was prosecuted for selling substituted alternative vodka in branded bottles.

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

We continue to invest in our green spaces and increase biodiversity. Significant progress has been made in delivering major improvements at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. The construction of the new [Canolfan Calon Taf](#) is complete. The restoration of the old toilet block into a staff welfare facility is complete. The Bandstand and surrounding area have been restored, and work on the Sunken Garden area is ongoing. A Paper was presented to the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Cabinet Committee in [May-23](#) regarding the creation of additional event space through the transformation of the former 'Pitch and Putt' area at the Park. Public engagement sessions will be held in August to share [details](#) and speak to officers about the [new event space](#). We will also be undertaking the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Survey 2023, in August 2023, to invite residents to 'Have your say' on 'What we are doing well, what we can do to improve and how we can serve you better'. Our Playground Investment Programme is also progressing to deliver planned improvements during 2023/24.

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

We continue to progress activity in support of the [2024 National Eisteddfod for Wales](#) to promote, raise funds and support the delivery of the event.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 1

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value ² £M	Quarter 1 Update
Highways Infrastructure Repairs	3.380	The additional resources are being used in conjunction with existing resources to deliver a programme of highways infrastructure repairs between 2023/24 and 2025/26.
Unadopted Roads	0.591	To support a programme of work to private streets that the Council has identified as requiring specific improvements. Following completion of the necessary works, the streets will be adopted as highways maintainable at public expense. Of the 10 schemes that are included in the 2023/24 programme, 5 were completed by the end of Quarter 1, 3 are on-going and 2 will be progressed during the current year.
Play Areas	0.250	There are 12 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2023/24. As at quarter 1, 2 had been completed, 5 had been designed and costed, 2 are under construction and 3 are to be designed.
Skate Parks/Multi Use Games Areas	0.330	There are 4 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2023/24 and will be progressed during the year.
Structures: Brook Street Footbridge	0.951	This funding supported the replacement of the footbridge that is now completed and open for public use, noting that minor follow-up works are scheduled for quarter 2.
Structures	3.443	<p>The investment funding has been allocated to support structure projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Street Wall, Llantrisant – main works completed with minor follow-up works due for completion in quarter 2. • Other major retaining wall refurbishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dinas Road (Dinas) – contract awarded and works due to start in quarter 2. ○ Harcourt Terrace Wall (Penrhiwceiber) - works by Transport for Wales are now complete. ○ Llanharan Railway Footbridge – piling works are on-going. ○ Imperial Bridge – works are progressing as planned and the project is due for completion in quarter 3. ○ Rhigos Rock Anchors – works completed on-site and full maintenance programme to be developed for 2023/24. ○ Graig Las Bridge (Gilfach Goch / Tonyrefail) – some initial delays due to bird nesting; however works are progressing and due for completion in quarter 2. ○ Lanelay Bridge (Talbot Green) – project nearing completion with minor snagging works to be finalised.

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

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value ² £M	Quarter 1 Update
		In parallel with the above, various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
Parks Structures	1.359	<p>The investment funding has been allocated to support various footbridge repairs and replacements within Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gelli Isaf – Scheduled Monument Conservation Scheme – following completion of phase 1 in 2022/23, the phase 2 scheme is underway and is scheduled to be completed in quarter 3. • Rhondda Heritage Park Wall - works completed during quarter 1. • Colliery St Footbridge, Trehafod – works progressing, noting that minor additional steelwork repairs identified and being addressed. Project completion is scheduled for quarter 2. • Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
Parks and Green Spaces	0.750	This investment funding is supporting drainage, pavilion and infrastructure improvements to various parks sites. The 2023/24 programme comprises of 53 schemes, with 16 schemes completed during quarter 1.
Llanharan Bypass	5.363	This investment funding has been allocated to support various stages of development, preliminary design, ground investigations and ecology surveys. The Welsh Government published the findings of the Roads Review in February 2023 and recommended “Welsh Government should not provide further support to the A473 Llanharan Bypass because it would be likely to increase car use. Other interventions to improve active travel and public transport, coupled with demand management would provide a more sustainable basis for meeting future development aspirations”. Funding has been secured from Welsh Government to revisit the case for change in light of the Roads Review recommendation. This will be an on-going area of work.
A4119 Dualling (Stinkpot Hill)	7.035	This investment funding is supporting the dualling of the highway between the South Wales Fire Service Headquarters roundabout and Coed Ely roundabout. The south bound carriageway, including large culverts, will be complete except final surface course in quarter 2 and traffic will then be diverted to the new carriageway to enable construction of the northbound carriageway to commence. Works remain on programme to complete in 2024.

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value² £M	Quarter 1 Update
Gelli/Treorchy Link Road	0.386	This investment funding relates to investigatory works for a solution which will help alleviate congestion at Stag Square. Further work on this project has been put on hold due to the findings of the Welsh Government's Road Review on other road building projects.
Cynon Gateway (North), Aberdare Bypass	1.329	This investment funding relates to the preliminary design, planning application and tender preparation for a link road from A4059 Aberdare to join the A465 Heads Of the Valleys road. The Welsh Government published the findings of the Roads Review in February 2023. The report recommended that "Welsh Government should not provide further support for the Cynon Gateway North scheme because its construction would result in substantial increased emissions of Carbon; there would be impacts on sites that are protected for their environmental value; and it would facilitate a car-dependent approach to economic development". Funding has been secured from the Welsh Government to revisit the case for change in light of the Roads Review recommendation. This will be an on-going area of work.
Bryn Pica Eco Park	1.209	This investment funding was allocated to support enabling works, planning and ecology for the development of an Eco Park at the Bryn Pica Waste Management Facility. Further to discussions with partners, no viable funding options have been identified to enable the project to progress. As such, an operational decision has been taken to cease the on-going development of the project. Proposals to re-align the remaining investment funding will be considered during 2023/24.
Porth Interchange Metro + LTF	--	As set out in the Porth Regeneration Strategy, a new Transport Hub in the Town Centre is currently under construction, funded by UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, WG Local Transport Fund and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (total project costs £5.4M). During Quarter 1, works continued mainly on the external areas of the Transport Hub.
Leisure – Darran Park 3G Pitch	0.175	This investment funding is to develop the Astro Turf Pitch in Darran Park (Ferndale) into a 3G pitch. Progress to date includes: fencing has been installed, CCTV is in the process of being fitted and works to the pitch are ongoing and are due to be completed in quarter 2.
Total	26.551	

- PROSPERITY (Section 5c)

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

Summary of progress to 30th June 2023

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

A new package of support for local businesses was agreed by [Cabinet on 27th March](#), and is now being implemented. The [4 new grant programmes](#) utilise the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Placemaking Grant. Work is continuing with Business Wales and other agencies to provide joint support for individual businesses and we also continue to encourage businesses to work together through the Business Improvement Districts.

We continue to work with RCT visitor based businesses on the delivery of the RCT Tourism strategy. A proposal has been [presented to Cabinet on 17th July](#) for the repurposing of Rock Grounds from Council offices to a hotel and spa facility, in line with the aims of the Aberdare Town Centre Strategy and also the Council's accommodation strategy.

Commissioning documents have been prepared for the design development of active travel schemes within Aberdare and Pontypridd town centres.

Work is also continuing to improve the accessibility of Council tenders to local Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, including the continued development of the local business directory through a marketing campaign.

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

On 28th June, [Cabinet approved](#) a formal consultation on the draft Aberdare town centre strategy, which is [now underway](#). A grant award by Welsh Government will enable the redevelopment of the Rates Building.

Early draft proposals for the Tonypany Town Centre Strategy have been prepared which will form the basis for further development and agreement of the programme. In the interim, support for the private sector to deliver key projects is ongoing, with demolition works relating to the Big Shed now complete.

In Porth, the [Transport Hub](#), the anchor project of the [Town Centre Regeneration Strategy](#), is nearing the final stages of completion and work on the new extra care facility at Dan y Mynydd site is progressing.

The Pontypridd Placemaking Plan delivery is [progressing](#) with the next phase focusing on the implementation of the Southern Gateway projects. A detailed update on progress on the Southern Gateway Project was [reported to Cabinet on 15th May](#) and further information is available via the Council's [Lets Talk Southern Gateway](#) page. Also in Pontypridd, June saw the [opening of the YMA](#) following a major refurbishment of the former YMCA building.

Work to deliver the [A4119 Coed Ely dualling scheme](#) is progressing to programme, along with the construction of the traffic free community route from the South Wales Fire Service headquarters roundabout to the Coed Ely roundabout.

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Working with Cardiff Capital Region, we continue to progress [Housing viability gap funding](#) to remediate contaminated land conditions across 3 brownfield sites at the former Cwm Coking works, former Aberdare hospital site and Heol y Wenallt. Funding has been secured for the remediation of Cwm Coking works for development, although some technical issues are still under discussion. Planning consent has been granted for the former Aberdare hospital site and the Council is having pre-application discussions with the developer for the Hoel y Wenallt site.

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

Following the publication of the positive [Estyn inspection of local authority services in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council](#) at the end of March, work is continuing to address the three recommendations highlighted to sharpen approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning, strengthen approaches to Welsh medium education and build on existing work to further improve attendance and reduce exclusions.

Work is currently underway to review existing self evaluation processes and data reports and improved processes are being put in place where need is identified. A pupil and family voice strategy is also currently being developed.

Review of year one progress against the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan has been positive. This has not yet translated into an increase in learners accessing Welsh Medium Education, which has remained largely static in line with the picture across Wales, but many of the actions are long-term and will take time to demonstrate impact. Delivery of School organisation developments continue to strengthen Welsh Language provision (see below) and a specialist teacher has been recruited for Welsh language immersion.

An Attendance focus was taken in a shared Wellbeing Event with Neath Port Talbot, with over 60 school staff present. Best practice models were shared and will be developed into case studies. A second event for Education Welfare officers was co-hosted with NPT and attended by 18 Local Authorities and Welsh Government, and positive practice from this event will be more widely shared. A new attendance action plan for the 2023/24 academic year is being completed over the summer following evaluation of work in the previous academic year.

Two conferences to support whole school approaches to behaviour have been delivered across the Local authority, with positive evaluation from attendees. Following the positive [evaluation of Step 4 provision](#) presented to Cabinet on 27th March, Tranche 4 of Step 4 provision will be implemented in September and bi-annual progress reporting is in place to evaluate impact. However, significant challenges are being faced by schools in the post pandemic period with increasing numbers of learners experiencing challenges conforming to school rules and expectations. Further information on exclusions is available in the [report to Education and Inclusion Scrutiny committee on 27th April 23](#). This will continue to be an area of support and challenge for schools through the Team Around the School process.

To ensure alternative provision continues to meet the needs of learners across the local authority, a policy has been drafted which details school and governing body roles and responsibilities relating to alternative provision and a portal recording system has been created which will be launched with schools in the autumn term. However, due to ASOS industrial action, a survey of alternative provision by schools and sharing of alternative provision guidance has been delayed and will now be delivered in the autumn term.

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An evaluation of Year one of the Early years language project has shown a positive impact in pilot schools in terms of increasing capacity to deliver both universal and targeted approaches to develop early language skills in children, as well as a small increase in children achieving age related expectations. The project will now be rolled out more widely to a larger group of schools.

Work continues in partnership with Central South Consortium to regularly review the progress of all schools. This includes further embedding the Team Around the School protocol for schools requiring co-ordinated LA/CSC support. Schools have engaged well to date but it is too early to review the impact on the focussed areas identified. Strategies being developed for the Curriculum for Wales are due to be operational from the next academic year, and CSC has ensured that its work programme will enable updates on progress for this area to be captured appropriately.

Investment in our school buildings continues, to invest more in Welsh medium education, ensure improvements in special school provision, deliver improved 21st Century learning environments and create more community facilities. Construction work is underway and on track across the sustainable communities for learning programme. Work is well underway at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Awel Taf (Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin), Ysgol Bro Taf (3 – 16 school in Pontypridd) and Ysgol Afon Wen (3 – 16 school in Hawthorn), and has also commenced at YGG Llyn y Forwyn, with all projects on programme and due to open in September 2024. Work is also continuing at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive to deliver improved sports and sixth form facilities and at the [three MIM Primary Schools](#) (Pontyclun: Penygawsi; and Llanilltud Faerdref). However, there has been a delay in planning approval for the new Welsh Medium Primary school at Llanilltud as a consequence of drainage and ecology issues. Work is ongoing with partners to resolve the issues identified.

Capital improvement work is also planned for Trehopcyn Primary School, Porth Community School & Treorchy Primary School to provide facilities which will support the community focussed schools approach, enabling co-location of services and stronger engagement with the school community.

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

The Council is working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to meet local housing need and increase the supply of energy efficient, low carbon homes. £19M funding has been allocated to RCT for the current year and the Social Housing Grant programme development plan is currently being finalised and agreed. Hafod Housing's [Clos Heddfan and Lllys Ty Garth schemes](#), which have recently been completed, demonstrate successful delivery supported by previous social housing grants. SME housebuilders have also been engaged in the preparation of the new local development plan, putting forward sites for consideration and airing their views on the main issues for the LDP to address.

Work is currently underway to finalise the draft Local Housing Strategy and also to complete an inventory of housing and land assets, including strategic voids and unlettable properties, which will provide data for future potential land sharing and projects in partnership with Registered Social Landlords.

Recruitment of staff to the new Assessment and Support Team is underway, which will enable implementation of new pathways for prevention of homelessness, with the aim of ensuring more effective access to services. Welsh Government funding has also been approved to support the development of the [Social Letting Agency](#) to enhance housing options and provide affordable accommodation. A suitable property has been identified for accommodation for homeless single individuals and a planning application submitted. There has been a delay in evaluation of the

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operation of the Housing Allocations Policy due to resource issues, but this work commenced in August 2023.

The National Empty Homes Grant Scheme launched at the end of January, with RCT acting as lead administrator, and 15 local authorities across Wales are now participating, with a large percentage of schemes approved to date within RCT. The total number of empty properties continue to fall as a result of the proactive work being undertaken in line with the [Empty Homes Strategy 2022 - 2025](#). As at 1st April 2023, there were 2,634 empty properties compared to 2,892 the previous year. Since April 2018, there has been a near 25% reduction in the number of empty properties, reducing from 3,556. The number of interventions has also increased from 413 in 2021/22 to 646 in 2022/23.

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

Council services have been working together to identify and improve potential referral and progression pathways into employment support provision, for example through the Leisure GP referral scheme and Adult Community learning courses. Development of Adult Community Learning Partnership working in RCT also continued to progress, with additional partners engaged and Terms of Reference reviewed and agreed. 189 young people and 403 adults have been engaged on Welsh Government funded employment support programmes in quarter 1. Staff recruitment has been completed for key roles delivering the Shared Prosperity Fund. Mapping of existing provision has been undertaken, with the in-work skills programme transferred to the project, and additional provision is now under development.

11 graduates and 51 apprentices are due to commence employment with the Council on 4th September and will support staffing needs and succession planning across a variety of service areas. The Council also continues to support opportunities for vulnerable young people and those with specific needs to access employment support and work placements. A high level of referrals continue to be received into our programmes supporting Children Looked After, and in addition ten individuals with additional learning needs are due to start placements within the Council in October 2023.

Following a [successful collaboration with Treorchy Business Improvement District](#) last year, a Customer2Care Summer programme has commenced in Pontypridd in collaboration with Your Pontypridd BID. This will provide work placements for 11 young people in local businesses. Discussions have also commenced with Our Aberdare BID to potentially extend the programme into Aberdare in summer of 2024.

We continue to work with schools to support pupils to engage in careers. Training has been provided to 3 new careers leads and work undertaken to further develop the Gatsby Career benchmark criteria to provide a focus on careers using the Welsh language and link to the curriculum for Wales. An 'Inspire me' event, a programme of inspirational talks, activities and work experiences by people from the local community, will be held in Ysgol Nantgwyn in January 2024, with a focus on careers benefitting from Welsh language skills. The Green Light Project, which provides intensive careers guidance to vulnerable learners, was used by 15 of 16 eligible schools to support pupils in danger of becoming NEET. A review of outcomes and work experience will be undertaken to inform future work.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 1

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value ³ £M	Quarter 1 Update
Empty Property Grant	2.213	207 applications have been received and are progressing, of which, 28 have been approved and 93 are being supported by the Local Authority through to approval.
Schools	0.652	<p>This investment funding is supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YGG Llyn Y Forwyn Primary (transferring the school to a new building on a new site) - site investigation surveys have been undertaken; land has been purchased; project / cost managers have been appointed to support delivery of the scheme; a Design and Build contractor has been appointed to undertake the land reclamation works and construct a new Primary school; and Planning approval received December 2022. The investment funding allocated will support highways costs associated with the project (alongside Council and Welsh Government to deliver the overall project). • Y Pant – the investment funding will contribute to the delivery of a 2 storey extension and first floor fit out for 4 Classrooms. Construction works are progressing on-site.
Transport Infrastructure	1.357	<p>This investment funding is supporting a wider programme of highways capital works including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llanharan signal controlled pedestrian crossing is due to be constructed following the completion of the project to replace the footbridge. • A4059 / Bowls Club junction - feasibility study completed to investigate junction / traffic flow improvements along the A4059. • A4059 Quarter Mile junction - feasibility proposals have been developed and the next steps will be preliminary design including ground investigation work.
Park and Ride Programme	0.737	<p>This investment funding is supporting the development work needed to create additional and formalised 'park and ride' car parking spaces with new and improved facilities such as Access for All, improved CCTV coverage and Electric Vehicle charging points at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porth – phase 3 detailed design work has been completed. • Pontyclun – further feasibility work to be undertaken to investigate opportunities for additional car parking near Pontyclun station.

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

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value ³ £M	Quarter 1 Update
Drainage	0.500	This investment funding is supporting drainage and culvert network works by delivering, as match funding, 20 Welsh Government grant funded schemes across the County Borough.
Total	5.459	

Section 6 – THE COUNCIL’S WORK TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

In recent years there have been growing global, UK wide and national drives to reduce carbon emissions, keep global warming below 1.5%, protect nature and the environment and adapt to the current and projected changes in the climate and more frequent extreme weather events.

In 2019, Welsh Government declared a Climate Emergency and set out its approach in its strategy [Prosperity for All: A low Carbon Wales](#). Since then, the Welsh Government has put in place plans, strategies and targets for public bodies to meet. The latest UK Climate Change Committee’s ‘[Progress Report on Reducing emissions in Wales](#)’, published in June, indicated that ‘*while the First Carbon Budget (2016-2020) has been achieved, Wales is not yet on track to meet its targets for the second half of this decade and beyond*’. The report set out 58 recommendations across a number of areas, which are currently under consideration by the Minister.

More locally, the Council has progressed energy saving and other carbon reduction projects, further understanding the complexity, interconnections and differing geographic and sectoral boundaries surrounding the response to tackling climate change across all the services we provide, purchase or commission.

The Council’s Climate Change Strategy [agreed in June 2022](#), contains a series of actions which are being developed to mitigate and adapt to the impact of Climate Change and to take steps that will reduce our Carbon Footprint and enable the Council to meet its ambitious targets by 2030, i.e.:

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

Since June 2022, there have been a number of progress reports on climate and environment related projects presented to Cabinet, the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee and to Scrutiny Committees in accordance with agreed work programmes. Cabinet also agreed that the monitoring of the Climate Change Strategy is included in the Council’s quarterly Performance Reports, with updates reported during 2022/23.

This work has been developed further for 2023/24 by embedding Climate Change Strategy and carbon reduction actions into the Council’s 3 Corporate Plan priorities: Think Climate People; Think Climate Places; and Think Climate Prosperity. Section 6a provides an overview

of climate related progress for Quarter 1 across four areas of focus within the Climate Change Strategy: **Council Specific, Climate PEOPLE, Climate PLACES and Climate PROSPERITY** (noting that where projects overlap or do not have a clear 'home', these items are included in the areas of 'best fit'). A Summary of progress can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH SEPTEMBER 2023

STATUTORY SCHOOL ORGANISATION – PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

AUTHOR(S):

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services and
Andrea Richards, Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to:

- 1.1 Seek formal approval to begin the relevant and required statutory school organisation consultation to close Rhigos Primary School in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018); and
- 1.2 To extend the catchment area of Hirwaun Primary School to incorporate the current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report.
- 2.2 Give formal approval to commence a statutory consultation with relevant stakeholders on the proposal to close Rhigos Primary School and extend the catchment area of Hirwaun Primary School to incorporate the current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School.
- 2.3 Subject to 2.2 above, give formal approval to report back to Cabinet to consider the Consultation Report and determine whether to publish the Consultation Report and approve the publication of the proposal in the form of a Statutory Notice.

2.4 Subject to 2.2 and 2.3 above, give delegated authority to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services to make any minor changes required to the draft Consultation Document (attached at Appendix A) prior to its publication and the statutory consultation commencing.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Council has a statutory duty through its approach to the organisation and leadership arrangements of schools to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of provision to ensure that all schools are well placed to deliver high quality education that meets the needs of the community and makes best use of public funding.

3.2 The number of pupils joining Rhigos Primary School has been in steady decline and pupil numbers are forecast to continue to fall in the next five years.

3.3 Allowing surplus places to remain high through inaction would directly and negatively affect the future financial viability of the school and impact children's education in the future. The school budget with a diminishing income will have less money for staff salaries, curriculum activities, equipment, running costs and maintenance of the school estate and would therefore struggle to maintain their current good education offer.

3.4 To continue to effectively manage the education provision available in the Cynon Valley area of Rhondda Cynon Taf. This proposal will extend and expand upon the positive outcomes delivered through Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, enabling more pupils to benefit from this significant investment which has included the provision of the new Hirwaun Primary School building.

3.5 To continue to deliver on the objectives included within Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning rolling programme, specifically:

- Transforming learning environments and learner experience;
- Meeting demand for school places;
- Improving condition and suitability of the education estate;
- Developing sustainable learning environments;
- Supporting the community.

3.6 To continue to deliver the mission of the Education and Inclusion Service's Strategic Plan to ensure '*equity and excellence in Education and enhanced wellbeing for all*'.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Rhigos Primary School is an English medium primary school located at Heol-y-Graig, Rhigos with a capacity of 65 pupil places. It is the smallest school in Rhondda Cynon Taf, with just 3 classrooms at the school accommodating pupils from 8 year groups, from nursery up to year 6.

- 4.2 The school site includes the original school building, which is over 100 years old, two mid 1960s brick extensions for toilets, and a hall to the right of the original building that was built in the 1980s. There is also a 1950s prefabricated metal construction classroom block which accommodates the nursery children which has come to the end of its useful life.
- 4.3 The overall school site is graded as C for condition and C for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. The buildings are in poor condition with significant refurbishment work required. The backlog maintenance figure for the school is circa £184,790, however this figure does not include costs for further improvements to enable the school to meet 21st Century Schools standards or to become energy efficient.
- 4.4 The site itself and the school building does not comply with the Equality Act 2010 given the inaccessibility of the site. The location of the school, in a residential area, makes drop off and pick up times challenging, with inadequate parking and turning arrangements available for parents.
- 4.5 Currently there are 54 statutory age pupils at the school, and as the table below indicates, pupil numbers are projected to drop by 33% in the next 5 years. Of the 54 statutory aged pupils, 8 live out of catchment. There is very little house building planned in the school's community area to help grow the birth rate which means that in-area demand for places at the school will remain low.

Table 4.1							
Rhigos Primary School – Pupil Forecasts							
	Capacity	2023/24 Actual	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Statutory aged pupils	65	54	52	46	42	37	36
Nursery pupils	9	6	6	5	6	6	6

- 4.6 In 2019, Rhigos Primary School was judged by Estyn as Good in all inspection areas.

5. PROPOSAL

- 5.1 This consultation proposes that Rhigos Primary School closes with pupils from the school moving to Hirwaun Primary School, however in accordance with the School Admissions Code (005/2013) this will be subject to parental choice. To note Rhigos Primary School is also within the catchment of the Welsh medium provision at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Penderyn, and tailored and individual support is currently available from the Council's Welsh language Immersion Team for any pupils wishing to continue their education, at YGG Penderyn, through the medium of Welsh.

- 5.2 Hirwaun Primary School has recently benefitted from a £9.6M investment via the Welsh Government’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, delivering a brand new school with a high quality, 21st Century teaching and learning environment, enriching the teaching and learning experiences for both pupils and staff. The school opened its doors to the English medium pupils previously attending Penderyn Community Primary School in September 2021. It is a fully accessible school building which wholly complies with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.3 Hirwaun Primary School has a capacity of 394 pupil places, and the table below shows the current pupil numbers plus projections for the next 5 years. The following data shows that the pupils currently attending Rhigos Primary School can be easily accommodated within Hirwaun Primary School.

Table 5.1							
Hirwaun Primary School – Pupil Forecasts							
	Capacity	2023/24 Actual	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Statutory aged pupils	394	224	232	229	219	228	225
Nursery pupils	56	29	27	25	27	26	26

- 5.4 As well as a brand new school building, as a result of the significant investment successfully delivered, the wider site at Hirwaun Primary School has also been greatly improved. External teaching, learning, sports and recreation facilities are spacious and of a high standard and are well-used by both the school and community. In addition, as part of this investment there was a particular focus on enhancing the onsite and offsite traffic management arrangements. Onsite, the new school project included improved staff parking and the creation of a dedicated home to school transport drop off area; while offsite, a community car park was constructed providing additional parking spaces for parents and carers during busy periods.
- 5.5 In 2019, Hirwaun Primary School was judged by Estyn as needing Significant Improvement, however following a 12 month monitoring period Estyn deemed that the school had made significant progress and removed the school from the list of schools requiring Significant Improvement.
- 5.6 Rhigos Primary School is 2.8 miles from the new Hirwaun Primary School. Therefore, all pupils currently residing in the Rhigos Primary School catchment area will be eligible for home to school transport to Hirwaun Primary School. There will be a cost associated with this which will be met by the Council. Costs will be confirmed following a competitive tender process should the proposal go ahead.
- 5.7 Providing education for the pupils currently attending Rhigos Primary School in a larger, new, purpose built 21st Century English medium primary school at Hirwaun, amongst other benefits, would offer:

- Greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils within a modern, more enhanced educational environment in which they can learn and grow;
- Potential for financial savings in terms of services which accrue within a larger school which can be reinvested for the benefit of all pupils;
- More professional and progression opportunities for the teaching and support staff which are provided by a larger school;
- Less demand on staff as responsibilities for developing the Areas of Learning and Experience as part of the Curriculum for Wales, and ALN statutory obligations, will be shared;
- More opportunities and scope for extra-curricular activities;
- Pupils being taught, in the main, with their year group (all classes in Rhigos Primary School are currently mixed year groups, with some classes accommodating pupils over 3-year groups); and
- Greater opportunities for learners to socialise and interact with larger numbers of their year group peers.

5.8 The Council's school modernisation programme has been successfully making excellent progress in modernising its school estate, meeting and rationalising demand for school places, delivering efficiencies, and ensuring the education portfolio is in the best possible position to help the Council deliver on its carbon reduction targets. This proposal builds upon the successful progress already made.

5.9 Should the proposal go ahead, the Council recognises the important role that vibrant community facilities can play in maintaining strong communities and is conscious that the possible closure will be a loss to the village. However, if the proposal progresses the Council will actively explore with residents alternative community uses that could be developed. This would then be the subject of a further report to Cabinet. A separate consultation exercise will be undertaken to seek the views of the local community should developing this site become a viable option.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Council must satisfy its public sector duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations based on protected characteristics.

6.2 An Equality Impact Assessment is being prepared in respect of the proposal and will be published on the Council's website together with a Consultation Document that outlines the proposal in further detail in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#).

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment is being prepared in respect of the proposal and will be published on the Council's website together with a Consultation Document that outlines the proposal in further detail in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#).

8. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1 The consultation processes in respect of the proposal will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#). These arrangements stipulate that consultation must be undertaken when the proposals are at a formative stage and that Consultation Documents must be prepared and circulated to prescribed consultees, as well as being published on the Council website.
- 8.2 The draft Consultation Document for the proposal outlined in this report is attached at Appendix A, although it should be noted that this remains a working document which may be subject to some minor changes before the Consultation Document is formally published and the consultation process commences.
- 8.3 The proposed consultation period, if it is agreed to progress this matter, would run from Monday 2nd October 2023 until Friday 17th November 2023.
- 8.4 The proposed consultation timetable for completion of each action is set out in the table that follows:

Proposed Consultation Timeline		
Action	Detail	Dates
Cabinet Permission to Consult	Cabinet to consider the proposal and give approval to commence consultation	18 th September 2023
Public Consultation	A Consultation Document would be published on the Council's website for a minimum of six weeks	2 nd October 2023 to 17 th November 2023
Report back to Cabinet	Cabinet would consider the Consultation Response Report and determine whether to publish the Report and approve the publication of the proposal in the form of a Statutory Notice	December 2023
Publish Statutory Notice	The Statutory Notice must be published for a 28 day period (if approved by Cabinet)	January 2024
Decision by Cabinet	Report back to Cabinet on outcome of Statutory Notice period and details of (any) objections received, with an appropriate recommendation	February 2024
Implementation	In accordance with Cabinet decision either status quo or implementation of proposal	September 2024

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There will be no capital funding implications should the proposal go ahead and revenue savings accrued from the closure will be reinvested into supporting children's education in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 9.2 Additional revenue implications resulting as a consequence of the closure, including the increase in home to school transport costs, will be identified as the proposal is developed and incorporated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.
- 9.3 Financial projections show that progressing with the proposals will have a positive impact upon the budgetary position of Hirwaun Primary School. Further information on the current and projected budgetary positions of both schools affected by the proposals are included in the consultation document at appendix A.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Section 315 of the [Education Act 1996](#) requires Councils to ensure that ALN provision is kept under review. In addition, the [ALNET Act 2018](#) requires councils to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient.
- 10.2 Powers for councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the:
- The [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#);
 - The Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#).
- 10.3 Councils must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#), act in accordance with any relevant requirements contained in the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#) and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN, NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

- 11.1 There are links between Education's School Modernisation Programme and 'Making a Difference', the Council's Corporate Plan for the years between 2020 and 2024, specifically:
- **People:**
 - Encouraging all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing:
 - Delivering new indoor and outdoor sporting facilities and enhancing existing sporting facilities such as changing rooms and outdoor play areas.
 - Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do:

- Improving the social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the range of specialist services available.
 - **Places:**
 - Ensuring RCT is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion where residents feel safe:
 - Supporting the voluntary, community and faith sectors to help build active communities, creating the capacity for meeting the needs of residents within their communities.
 - **Prosperity:**
 - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education:
 - Helping people into work and better paid employment:
 - Offering employment schemes and apprenticeships in the Council, on the regeneration sites, and through other Council contractors.
- 11.2 There are links to the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services' Strategic Plan for the years between 2021 and 2024, specifically:
- **Strategic Priority 3:**
 - Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable pupils and their families.
 - **Strategic Priority 5:**
 - Delivering 21st century learning environments and innovative services for our pupils and communities.
- 11.3 The proposal in this report will lead to a more efficient use of the education estate supporting the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2022-25 'Think Climate RCT'. The closure of an energy inefficient school will contribute towards achieving the overarching objective of the Council's carbon reduction targets to become a net zero Council by 2030. It also aligns with Welsh Government's commitment for Wales to become a net zero carbon nation by 2050. The investment at Hirwaun Primary School has seen a number of sustainable technologies incorporated into the design including a rainwater harvesting system, photo-voltaic panels, electric vehicle charging facilities and biodiversity areas on the school site.
- 11.4 Due regard has been made to all seven wellbeing goals and the five ways of working, as contained within the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 11.5 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the seven wellbeing goals by:
- **A Healthier Wales** – Accommodation at Hirwaun Primary School consists of enhanced outdoor spaces and sports facilities. As well as supporting the full range of curriculum activities these facilities are also available for community use.

- **A More Equal Wales** – The wider catchment area for Hirwaun Primary School and the way the school is used will bring neutral or positive socio-economic impacts to all of the vulnerable groups over an extended area.
- **A Wales of More Cohesive Communities** – Hirwaun Primary School is a fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community can safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – Although Hirwaun Primary School is English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century (as is currently the case there is also the option to attend Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Penderyn and engage the support of the Welsh language Immersion Team to support transition, subject to parental choice).
- **A Globally Responsive Wales** – The new school at Hirwaun has been built to BREEAM excellent standards and the school can use sustainability features of the building, e.g. photo-voltaic panels, rainwater harvesting and biodiversity, to further develop extra-curricular activities which encourage healthy lifestyles for the school and wider community.

11.6 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the five ways of working by:

- **Long Term** – The proposal forms a part of the Council's wider 21st school organisation strategy and supports the better strategic management of the Council's education estate.
- **Prevention** – The Council believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement.
- **Integrations** – Hirwaun Primary School is a fully accessible and integrated community school. A dedicated area is provided within the school so that the local community and parents/carers can safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- **Collaboration** – The Council will continue to work effectively with internal and external partners to ensure the changes brought about by these proposals will meet the short and long term needs of pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community.
- **Involvement** – The proposal is made in accordance with the [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#) and seeks the views of a prescribed list of stakeholders including pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. As such face to face meetings will be arranged with the staff, school councils and governing bodies.

- 11.7 As stated in 6.2, an Equality Impact Assessment which further details the contribution of the proposal to the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) is being prepared.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 12.1 The proposal to close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School (subject to parental choice) is relevant to the specific wards covered by these catchment areas.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 The Council has a statutory duty through its approach to the organisation and leadership arrangements of schools to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of provision to ensure that all schools are well placed to deliver high quality education that meets the needs of the community and makes best use of public funding.
- 13.2 The number of pupils joining Rhigos Primary School has been in steady decline and pupil numbers are forecast to continue to fall in the next five years.
- 13.3 Allowing surplus places to remain high through inaction would directly and negatively affect the future financial viability of the school and could impact children's education in the future.
- 13.4 This proposal seeks to provide the opportunity for more pupils to benefit from the significant investment delivered via Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme in the Cynon Valley.
- 13.5 This consultation proposes that Rhigos Primary School closes and pupils from the school move to Hirwaun Primary School (subject to parental choice). To note, this school is also within the catchment of the Welsh medium provision at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Penderyn, and pupils will be supported by the Council's Welsh Language Immersion team should they wish to transfer from English medium to Welsh medium to continue their education.
- 13.6 It is recommended therefore, that Members give approval to officers to commence the consultation processes necessary, in accordance with the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#), to achieve the proposal outlined in this report.

Other Information:

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer(s):

Andrea Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH SEPTEMBER 2023

**Item: STATUTORY SCHOOL ORGANISATION – PROPOSAL TO CLOSE
RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO
HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Background Papers
Appendix A – Consultation Document**

Officer to contact(s):

Andrea Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager

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Of 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Consultation Document and Appendices are also available on the 'Get Involved' page on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's website.

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg / This document is available in Welsh.



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Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) wishes to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposal to close Rhigos Primary School. The pupils of Rhigos Primary School will instead attend Hirwaun Primary School.

It is proposed that Rhigos Primary School will close with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School by no later than September 2024.

The proposal is made in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018). Section 2.1 of the School Organisation Code 2018 refers to elements of school organisation that require the publication of proposals, including:

- The closing of a maintained school.

Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Bodies of:
 - Rhigos Primary School.
 - Hirwaun Primary School.
- Parents/carers, prospective parents/carers (where possible), and staff members of:
 - Rhigos Primary School.
 - Hirwaun Primary School.
- Pupils of:
 - Rhigos Primary School.
 - Hirwaun Primary School.
- Neighbouring local authorities.
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan authorities.
- Welsh Ministers.
- Members of the Senedd for the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf constituencies and regional Members of the Senedd for the area.
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Cynon, and Taf constituencies
- Estyn.
- Teaching and staff trade unions.
- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.
- Police and Crime Commissioner for the area.
- Childcare providers.
- Mudiad Meithrin.
- Menter Iaith.
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.
- Children and Young People's Partnership.
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.
- Welsh Language Commissioner.

What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on 2nd October 2023 and will be completed at 17:00 on 17th November 2023. Feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a Consultation Report presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet during December 2023. This Consultation Report will be available for all persons to view on RCTCBC's website and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 4.

RCTCBC's Cabinet will consider the Consultation Report and decide, based on the feedback, whether to proceed with the proposal, amend the proposal or not proceed with the proposal. If RCTCBC's Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of the proposal.

If RCTCBC's Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal can do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to RCTCBC within 28 days of the date on which the Statutory Notice was published.

RCTCBC's Cabinet will consider the outcome of the Statutory Notice at the next available Cabinet meeting and determine the proposal.

If there are objections, RCTCBC's Director of Education and Inclusion Services will publish an Objection Report providing a summary of the objections and the response to them within seven days of the determination of the proposal. This Objection Report will also be available for all persons to view on RCTCBC's website and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 4.

If RCTCBC's Cabinet approve the proposal, it will be implemented in accordance with the date stated in the Statutory Notice or any subsequently modified date.

What do you have to consider?

The remainder of this Consultation Document sets out the rationale for the proposal. We would like you to consider the information and to hear your views as to whether you support the proposal.

How do you make your views known?

Face to face meetings will be arranged with School Councils, Governing Bodies and staff as set out in the table that follows:

School(s) Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
School Council			
Rhigos Primary School	School Council	TBC	Rhigos Primary School
Hirwaun Primary School	School Council	TBC	Hirwaun Primary School

Governing Body and Staff			
Rhigos Primary School	Governing Body and Staff	TBC	Rhigos Primary School
Hirwaun Primary School	Governing Body and Staff	TBC	Hirwaun Primary School
Public Drop in Session			
Parents/carers and members of the local community		TBC	TBC

A Consultation Response Form is attached on page 32. The Consultation Response Form will also be available at the meetings detailed in the previous table and on RCTCBC's website on the 'Get Involved' page.

The Consultation Response Form enables consultees to indicate if they wish to be notified of the publication of the Consultation Report, once presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet.

Consultees are also welcomed to put their views, comments, and any questions in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services 21 st Century Schools Ty Trevithick Abercynon CF45 4UQ	OR	schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk
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All correspondence should be received no later than 17:00 on 17th November 2023.

Please note that responses to the consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal unless expressly requested. Objections can only be forwarded following the publication of the Statutory Notice.

The views of children and young people

RCTCBC has acknowledged that the voice of children and young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management, and improvement of their educational experience.

Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and considered in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve children and young people as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process.

RCTCBC will consult with the children and young people who attend:

- Rhigos Primary School.
- Hirwaun Primary School.

This will be done by producing a children and young people's version of the Consultation Document and Consultation Response Form. As detailed on page 3, RCTCBC will hold a meeting with the School Councils of:

- Rhigos Primary School.
- Hirwaun Primary School.

To discuss the proposal and guide the School Council through the children and young people's version of the Consultation Response Form. These consultation sessions will have the support of school-based specialist staff to support pupils and assist with the engagement process. Feedback from these meetings will be collated and summarised, and a Consultation Report will be presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet for consideration once the consultation period has ended.

Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

As set out in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018), it is a requirement to publish Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments. These have been produced and are appendices to this Consultation Document and are also available on RCTCBC's website:

- Appendix A – Community Impact Assessment.
- Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment.
- Appendix C – Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

Section One – Background to the Proposal

Where we are now...Rhigos Primary School

Rhigos Primary School is a 3 to 11 English medium primary school located at Heol-y-Graig, Rhigos with a capacity of 65 pupil places. The school site includes the original school building, which is approximately 115 years old, two brick extensions that were added in the 1960's which accommodate two toilet blocks and a steel framed, brick built hall that was added in the 1980's. There is also a 1950's prefabricated metal classroom block which houses the early years' pupils at the school. This building has profiled metal walls and a felt low-pitched roof, this building has single-glazed steel windows and timber doors which has come to the end of its useful life. The school is in an enclosed area, surrounded by boundaries consisting of natural vegetation, fencing and brick walls.

According to the condition survey of the school carried out by RCTCBC in 2019, Rhigos Primary School is graded C for condition and C for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building, respectively. The buildings are in poor condition with refurbishment work required to the walls, roof, doors and windows. Mechanical systems also need to be upgraded to comply with current building standards.

The backlog maintenance figure for the school is circa £184,790. This figure represents the total cost of all maintenance work identified as being required at the school. It does not include costs of further improvements to enable the school to meet 21st century schools' standards to enable the school to deliver the new curriculum for Wales or to become energy efficient.

The site itself and the school building does not fully comply with the Equality Act 2010. The low-level perimeter fence bordering the play area at the front of the school site is insufficient to stop individuals accessing the school grounds out of school hours. The location of the school, on a main road, makes drop off and pick up times challenging, with inadequate parking and turning arrangements available for parents/carers.

Rhigos Primary School currently has just three classes, all of which are made up of mixed year groups.



External view of Rhigos Primary School.



External view of the metal prefabricated building



External view of the hall and canteen building

The table that follows outlines the pupil numbers at Rhigos Primary School over the previous five academic years. They were obtained from the statutory Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The number of nursery age pupils for each academic year is shown separately, as required by the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018).

Pupil Numbers at Rhigos Primary School Over the Previous Five Academic Years (PLASC)					
Pupils	Academic Year				
	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023
Statutory School Aged Pupils	56	59	63	59	58
Nursery Aged Pupils	12	15	8	8	4
Total	68	74	71	67	62

The data demonstrates the pupil numbers over the last few years at Rhigos Primary have steadily reduced. To note, there are currently 7 statutory aged pupils attending the school that are out of catchment.

The table that follows outlines the projected pupil numbers at Rhigos Primary School over the future five academic years. They are calculated in accordance with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government and are based on live birth data for the area.

Projected Pupil Numbers at Rhigos Primary School Over the Future Five Academic Years									
Pupils	Capacity	Academic Year						Surplus Capacity in 2028 / 2029	
		2023 / 2024 (Actual)	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2028	2028 / 2029	Number	%
Statutory School Aged Pupils	65	54	52	46	42	37	36	29	45%
Nursery Aged Pupils	9	6	6	5	6	6	6	3	33%
Total	74	60	58	51	48	43	42	32	43%

The data demonstrates that the number of pupils on roll at the school will decrease significantly over the next 5 years. Projections indicate that there will only be 36 pupils, of statutory school age, in Rhigos Primary in 2028.

Where we are now...Hirwaun Primary School

Hirwaun Primary School is a 3 to 11 English medium primary school located at Glannant Street, Hirwaun with a pupil capacity of 394. The school has recently received investment of over £9 million as part of the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. The build followed the successful consultation on the 2019 proposal to construct a new English medium 3 to 11 primary school at Hirwaun Primary School, accommodating both pupils attending Hirwaun Primary and the English medium pupils from Penderyn Primary School. Successfully delivering this proposal has allowed Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Penderyn to become a fully Welsh medium 3 to 11 primary school. The investment at Hirwaun Primary School, delivered a brand new primary school building and extensive external areas, including new play areas, an outdoor classroom and sporting facilities. There is a two-court Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) as well as cycle storage, and secure fencing around the perimeter of the site to ensure the safety of all pupils.

As this is a new school, Hirwaun Primary School is graded A for condition and A for suitability. The building has been built to meet the required standards and regulations, allowing pupils of Hirwaun Primary School to benefit from a learning environment fit for 21st century education. Hirwaun Primary School also has facilities that are regularly used by the local community ensuring that others are benefitting from the new resources available.

The site and the school building is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. A 'pick-up and drop-off' area for parents/carers has been installed as part of the new build to help with traffic management issues, as well as a separate car park which is available for parents/carers to use. There is also a dedicated on-site drop-off/pick-up area for home to school transport, which currently caters for the pupils attending from Penderyn.



External view of Hirwaun Primary School.

The table that follows outlines the pupil numbers at Hirwaun Primary School over the previous five academic years.

Pupil Numbers at Hirwaun Primary School Over the Previous Five Academic Years (PLASC)					
Pupils	Academic Year				
	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023
Statutory School Aged Pupils	216	211	217	237	233
Nursery Aged Pupils	42	37	47	35	39
Total	258	248	264	272	272

The data above reflects the increase in the numbers of pupils on roll in 2021 as a result of the English medium pupils from Penderyn Primary School moving to Hirwaun as detailed above.

The table that follows outlines the projected pupil numbers at Hirwaun Primary School over the future five academic years. They are calculated in accordance with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government and are based on live birth data for the area.

Projected Pupil Numbers at Hirwaun Primary School Over the Future Five Academic Years									
Pupils	Capacity	Academic Year						Surplus Capacity in 2028 / 2029	
		2023 / 2024 (Actual)	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2028	2028 / 2029	Number	%
Statutory School Aged Pupils	394	224	232	229	219	228	225	169	43
Nursery Aged Pupils	56	29	27	25	27	26	26	30	54
Total	450	253	259	254	246	254	251	199	44

The data demonstrates that over the next 5 years pupil numbers are projected to remain largely stagnant.

What is the basis for the proposal?

Surplus Capacity

Reducing surplus places is one of a number of key priorities for RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services, as we focus on becoming a more sustainable and economically viable service area. The projected pupil numbers at Rhigos Primary School over the next five academic years for statutory school aged pupils falls consistently year on year, from 54 pupils in 2023 to a projected 36 pupils in 2028. By the 2028 academic year Rhigos Primary School will have an estimated statutory age surplus capacity of 45%. The projected pupil numbers at Hirwaun Primary School over the next five academic years for statutory school aged pupils remains consistent year on year, from 224 pupils in 2023 to a projected 225 pupils in 2028. By the 2028 academic year, Hirwaun Primary School will have an estimated statutory age surplus capacity of 43%.

The table that follows outlines the combined projected pupil numbers at Hirwaun Primary School and Rhigos Primary School over the future five academic years should the proposals go ahead. They are calculated in accordance with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government.

Combined Projected Pupil Numbers at Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School Over the Future Five Academic Years									
Pupils	Capacity (Hirwaun Primary School)	Academic Year						Surplus Capacity in 2028 / 2029	
		2023 / 2024 (Actual)	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2028	2028 / 2029	Number	%
Statutory School Aged Pupils	394	278	284	275	261	265	261	133	34%

Combined Projected Pupil Numbers at Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School Over the Future Five Academic Years									
Pupils	Capacity (Hirwaun Primary School)	Academic Year						Surplus Capacity in 2028 / 2029	
		2023 / 2024 (Actual)	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2028	2028 / 2029	Number	%
Nursery Aged Pupils	56	35	33	30	33	32	32	24	43%
Total	450	313	317	305	294	297	293	157	39%

The data demonstrates that there is capacity at Hirwaun Primary School for all current and future pupils of Rhigos Primary School to attend, continuing to meet the local demand for English medium primary education.

Site Constraints

The existing school buildings at Rhigos Primary School require significant repairs and are no longer fit-for-purpose, with a backlog maintenance figure of circa £184,790. The age and construction of the buildings prevent Rhigos Primary School from receiving any significant upgrades which would allow it to be deemed as a 21st Century Schools' provision. We acknowledge that teachers at Rhigos are providing pupils with a great education despite the building challenges however neither the building nor the wider site is conducive to assisting the delivery of the new curriculum for Wales.

The site and buildings are largely inaccessible and as such are not compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

It is the view of RCTCBC, that moving pupils of Rhigos Primary School to a purpose-built 21st century school building could help them benefit from a learning environment which nurtures and supports pupils, while enabling them to benefit from being taught in larger year groups of pupils of the same age.

RCTCBC believes that this proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard educational standards for the future and make the most of significant investment in permanent and fit-for-purpose facilities. The investment at Hirwaun Primary School provides a stimulating teaching and learning environment with 21st century facilities including improved Information and Communication Technology (ICT) provision, creative outdoor play areas and access to community facilities.

Class Sizes

Rhigos Primary School has only three classes that are vertically streamed, and currently there are three year groups being taught in two of the three classes. Having to organise classes in this way creates significant challenges for teaching and learning, and more information on this is included within the 'Educational Case for Change' section on page 24. As such, RCTCBC considers that providing education for the pupils currently attending Rhigos Primary School in a larger, new, purpose built 21st Century English medium primary school at Hirwaun, amongst other benefits, would offer:

- Greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils within a modern, more enhanced educational environment in which they can learn and grow;
- Potential for financial savings in terms of services which accrue within a larger school which can be reinvested for the benefit of all pupils;
- More professional and progression opportunities for the teaching and support staff which are provided by a larger school;
- Less demand on staff as responsibilities for developing the Areas of Learning and Experience as part of the Curriculum for Wales, and ALN statutory obligations, will be shared;
- More opportunities for extra-curricular activities;
- Pupils being taught, in the main, with their year group. All classes in Rhigos Primary School are currently mixed year groups, with some classes accommodating pupils over 3-year groups; and,
- Greater opportunities for learners to socialise and interact with larger number of their own year group peers.

Finance

All schools are allocated funding based on the number of pupils they have on roll, as a result small schools have far less financial flexibility. As Rhigos Primary is a small school, it will also face additional pressures as they are not able to benefit from the economies in scale that larger schools can e.g. a greater number of teachers to share the wide range of roles required i.e. ALNCO, curriculum leads, attendance and behaviour leads, and safeguarding.

At the end of the 2022/23 financial year the outturn budget set by the respective Governors at both schools means that Rhigos Primary School will have a balance of £21,013 and Hirwaun Primary School £80,120.

Schools are facing increased pressure from pay awards for both teaching and non-teaching staff which are significantly in excess of the estimated budget uplift to be provided to Local Government, as well as increased energy costs and other inflationary financial challenges. As a result, for the financial year 2024/25, if no action is taken, it is estimated that Rhigos will end 2024/25 with a deficit of £78,855 and Hirwaun with a deficit of £50,422.

However, if the proposals are progressed Hirwaun Primary School will receive an increase on their funding formula as a result of the additional pupils on roll. In addition, the modern building design and fabric at Hirwaun Primary School is more energy efficient which also has a positive impact upon the running costs of the school as a whole, as well as delivering benefits in terms of sustainability and reducing carbon emissions.

What alternative options have been considered?

Given the limitations of the site of Rhigos Primary School, and the challenging topography of the catchment area, the number of alternative options available for consideration were limited. In accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018), alternative options were identified and consciously considered. Some of the benefits and disadvantages of each of the discounted options are listed in the table that follows.

Option	Benefit	Disadvantages
Retain the status quo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning investment required. • No RCTCBC investment required. • No disruption to the pupils, parents/carers and staff. • No impact on home to school transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of the Rhigos Primary School buildings have reached the end of their usable life and are now beyond economic repair. • Rhigos Primary School's buildings are not of a 21st century schools standard. As such, delivering the New Curriculum for Wales would be a challenge. • Rhigos Primary School would continue to not be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. • The backlog maintenance figure of circa £184,790 at Rhigos Primary School would remain. • Parking issues at Rhigos Primary School would continue to not be resolved. • Surplus places at Rhigos Primary School would not be addressed. • The benefits of moving to a larger more educationally and financially viable primary school would not be realised. • School budgets could not be protected sufficiently, and deficit budget positions would directly contribute to the school's lack of viability.
Build a new primary school on the site of Rhigos Primary School.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No long-term change for pupils, parents/ carers and staff. • No impact on home to school transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning investment required – there is currently no funding allocated for this. • Temporary classrooms would need to be utilised for the duration of the construction and given the site restrictions, may need to be located elsewhere.

Option	Benefit	Disadvantages
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location of the site would restrict the ability to build a fully accessible school fit for the 21st century, with appropriate outdoor facilities. • Access to the site, on a main road, is unsatisfactory. • Existing parking issues would be exacerbated. • The benefits of moving to a larger more educationally viable primary school would not be realised.
Refurbish Rhigos Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No long-term change for pupils, parents/ carers and staff. • No impact on home to school transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning investment required – there is currently no funding allocated for this. • Temporary classrooms would need to be utilised for the duration of the construction and given the site restrictions, may need to be located elsewhere. • The location of the site would restrict the ability to build a fully accessible school fit for the 21st century, with appropriate outdoor facilities. • Access to the site, on a main road, is unsatisfactory. • Existing parking issues would be exacerbated. • The benefits of moving to a larger more educationally viable primary school would not be realised.
Federate both schools under one head teacher and one governing body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning investment required. • No RCTCBC investment required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of the Rhigos Primary School buildings have reached the end of their usable life and are now beyond economic repair.

Option	Benefit	Disadvantages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No disruption to the pupils, parents/carers and staff. No impact on home to school transport Would realise some financial savings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rhigos Primary School's buildings are not of a 21st century schools standard. As such, delivering the New Curriculum for Wales would be a challenge. Rhigos Primary School would continue to not be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The backlog maintenance figure of circa £184,790 at Rhigos Primary School would remain. Parking issues at Rhigos Primary School would continue to not be resolved. Surplus places at Rhigos Primary School would not be addressed. The wider benefits of moving to a larger more educationally and financially viable primary school would not be realised. School budgets could not be protected sufficiently, and deficit budget positions would directly contribute to the school's lack of viability.

Benefits and disadvantages, risks and mitigation factors

It is proposed that Rhigos Primary School will close with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School by no later than September 2024.

Any proposals involving school reorganisation will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty, although experience shows that this can be kept to a minimum through meaningful engagement throughout the consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress with the proposal, during the implementation phase.

The benefits and disadvantages of the proposal are highlighted in the table that follows, as is information as to how any identified risks can be managed.

Benefits
Rhigos Primary School does not form part of RCTCBC's and the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme. This means that no investment to create 21 st century facilities at the site will happen in the near

Benefits			
future, and there is no budget to make significant improvements in the meantime. Attending a new 21 st century standard school will result in significant improvement to the quality of the educational provision for the pupils of Rhigos Primary School, having a significant positive impact upon their educational performance.			
Rhigos Primary School was not built to be energy efficient, unlike the new building at Hirwaun Primary School. Hirwaun Primary School has also been built to BREEAM Excellent standards, and has an EPC rating of A, and has EV chargers on site, contributing to the delivery of RCTCBC's Tackling Climate Change Strategy: 2022 to 2025 – Think Climate Rhondda Cynon Taf and as close as possible to being carbon neutral as a County Borough by 2030. This proposal will also support the Welsh Government's Delivery Plan for a Low Carbon Wales and its 'Route Map' to decarbonise the public sector in Wales.			
A dedicated area at Hirwaun Primary School has been included within the school, enabling the local community to safely utilise the facilities at the school, both during and after the school day. Current pupils and parents / carers of Rhigos Primary School will benefit from this.			
Hirwaun Primary School has a secure perimeter boundary for the safety of all pupils on site and prevents unauthorised individuals from accessing the site out of school hours which has been constructed to 'Secure by Design' industry standards.			
Access to 21 st century schools' external facilities, including an outdoor classroom and a MUGA, will allow staff, pupils, and the community to benefit from a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences.			
Pupils of Rhigos Primary School will not have to wait for a new school to be built. The construction of the new school at Hirwaun Primary School is complete and ready for the current pupils of Rhigos Primary School to move into.			
Traffic arrangements for current Rhigos Primary School pupils will improve, as all pupils will be entitled to free home to school transport.			
There will be greater financial stability with a larger school with more pupils on roll.			
Disadvantages			
Some current Rhigos Primary School pupils and staff will inevitably live further from the new school site.			
There will be an increase in home to school transport costs which will be met by RCTCBC.			
Moving to a new school site could cause some anxiety for some pupils, staff, and parents/carers.			
There will be staffing implications for those employed at Rhigos Primary School. For example, there will be certain roles that are currently replicated in Hirwaun Primary School's staffing structure. Staff will be concerned about the security of their jobs which is why these concerns will be addressed as soon as possible during this statutory process.			
There will be a community impact of removing a much valued school. In a small community the loss of a school will be felt proportionately more than in a larger community.			
Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action(s)
Approval – Parent/carers choose to send their children to	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools

Benefits			
another primary school.			Team will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve parents/carers and children and young people as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process.
Home to School Transport – Increased home to school transport costs.	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any revenue implications that arise as a result of home to school transport will fall to RCTCBC. Neither the school nor the parents/carers of pupils who will require home to school transport as a result of the proposal will be impacted.
Increased Traffic	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is capacity in the locality for an increase in traffic movements. As part of the significant investment at Hirwaun Primary there was a particular focus on enhancing the onsite and offsite traffic management arrangements including improved staff parking and the creation of a dedicated home to school transport drop off area, while offsite, a community car park was constructed

Benefits			
			<p>providing additional parking spaces for parents and carers during busy periods.</p>
<p>Staff – Existing Rhigos Primary School Staff may not be retained following implementation of the proposal.</p>	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCTCBC is committed to retaining staff and will, as has been the case with the delivery of other 21st century schools previously throughout RCT, work with staff and Trade Unions to ensure the change process is dealt with sympathetically and supportively and that there will be opportunities to engage with staff as the proposal progresses. • Staff will be kept informed of any updates or decisions made, as will any relevant Trade Unions. RCTCBC has well established Human Resource policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change.
<p>Community Impact</p>	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerations and options of any potential future use of the school site will be consulted upon separately. • It is recognised that the local community may be impacted by the proposal however this cannot be the

Benefits			
			<p>overriding factor in determining this proposal. Falling numbers on roll, sustainability, financial viability and the quality of the education must be the prime consideration in determining the future of the school.</p>

Where we'd like to be...

It is being proposed that Rhigos Primary School closes and for its pupils to attend Hirwaun Primary School. Hirwaun Primary School caters for children aged between 3 and 11 years of age who require English medium education and has a capacity of 394 pupils (plus nursery).

The current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School sits within the larger catchment area of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Penderyn (YGG Penderyn), and as is already the case, pupils of Rhigos Primary School have the option to attend YGG Penderyn, the local Welsh medium primary school. The Welsh Language Immersion Team provides support for pupils who choose to move to Welsh medium education from the English sector, and this provision will continue to be available for any pupils that wish to utilise it. There is capacity at YGG Penderyn for any pupils of Rhigos Primary School who wish to attend Welsh medium primary education instead of continuing with English medium at Hirwaun Primary School.

Hirwaun Primary School was built in accordance with Building Bulletin 99 and is fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The provision at Hirwaun Primary School consists of:

- Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a large hall / dining area, a multi-purpose learning resource area and fully accessible facilities.
- Flexible spaces to allow delivery of the areas of learning and experience in accordance with the new curriculum for Wales.
- Internal and external areas for use by the local community.
- Some additional space for additional learning needs interventions.
- Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities, including an outdoor classroom and a 'forest schools' area.
- Improved traffic management.

Hirwaun Primary School was built in accordance with Building Bulletin 99 which requires new primary schools to include provision for team sports, including changing rooms, a playing field area suitable for team games for pupils aged 8 and over and a MUGA for sports such as football, basketball and netball. New primary schools are also required to include soft play areas, commonly made up of grassed space for

pupils to sit and socialise, outdoor classrooms, and a forest schools area alongside hard surfaced playgrounds and sheltered space to complement the soft play areas around the school site. Pupils who fall under the catchment area of Rhigos Primary School will have access to all of these facilities and will gain valuable experiences from the 21st century resources available to them.

Hirwaun Primary is a community school with a private childcare provision located on the school site. Rachael's Playhouse, the childcare provider, offers Flying Start, private childcare, childcare offer, and a wraparound service for children up to the age of 5.

They are registered with Care Inspectorate Wales for 30 places and they currently have a few places remaining.

Photos of Hirwaun Primary



A multi-purpose learning resource area or 'heart space' at Hirwaun Primary School.



Foundation phase classroom in Hirwaun Primary School.

Additional Learning Needs Provision

There are currently no Additional Learning Needs Support Classes at Rhigos Primary School or Hirwaun Primary School. Support for pupils currently provided by Inclusion Services will continue and this proposal will not affect this provision in any way.

Hirwaun Primary School is fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010, including having provisions such as hygiene rooms for those that may need to use them. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 requires Councils to keep the arrangements for supporting pupils with additional learning needs within their area under review and consider whether they are sufficient. As such, the need for additional learning needs provision at Hirwaun Primary School will continue to be reviewed, and there is sufficient capacity at the Hirwaun Primary School for further resources should there be a need for it in the future.

Hirwaun Primary School has been designed with flexible spaces to allow opportunities for teaching and learning in smaller groups, intervention spaces, and to provide one to one support where required. More information on this can be found in the Equality Impact Assessment attached at Appendix B.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

All Local Authorities in Wales must produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WESP is a long-term language planning tool which sets the direction for the strategic planning, delivery and growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. Through the WESP, and effective strategic planning and investment, the RCTCBC aims to contribute significantly to achieving the vision of one million people

in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050. RCTCBC's current WESP can be viewed and downloaded from RCTCBC's website via the following link:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/WelshinEducationStrategicPlan201720.pdf>

There are seven outcomes within RCTCBC's WESP which will help RCTCBC to archive the targets set, one of which is:

- More opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in different contexts in school.

RCTCBC aims to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside school. Rhigos Primary School currently supports this aim by employing initiatives such as 'Ciw Cymraeg,' and both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School encourage pupils to use incidental Welsh wherever possible. Pupils currently attending Rhigos Primary School will continue to be encouraged to use the Welsh language when they move to Hirwaun Primary School.

Pupils of Rhigos Primary School already have the opportunity to attend YGG Penderyn should they wish, the local Welsh medium primary school. Support from the Welsh Language Immersion Team is available for any pupil who chooses to move to Welsh medium education as is currently the case. There is capacity at YGG Penderyn for any pupils of Rhigos Primary School who wish to attend Welsh medium primary education instead of continuing with English medium at Hirwaun Primary School.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment for this proposal has been written and is included within the consultation documentation. This is available on the Council's website.

Admission Arrangements

The catchment area of Hirwaun Primary School will extend to include the current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School.

In the case of oversubscription at any school, published admissions criteria are applied to all applications received for places, to determine which pupils are successful in obtaining the places available. These criteria, which are outlined in RCTCBC's school admission policy booklet entitled 'Starting School' are listed in priority order below:

1. Category One – 'Looked after' children (children in public care) and previously 'looked after' children.
2. Category Two – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger sibling.

3. Category Three – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.
4. Category Four – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger sibling.
5. Category Five – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.

The term 'home' in the categories above refers to the actual location of the residential dwelling in which the child lives.

Children will be admitted up to the Published Admission Number in the order of priority as outlined above. If, within any one of the priority categories listed, all applicants cannot be offered a place, preference will be given to children living nearest to the school. Distance will be measured using the shortest, safe walking route between the home address and the nearest open school gate. In areas where no safe walking route has been identified, the shortest driving route between the home address and the nearest open school gate will be used. This distance will be measured using the 'MapInfo System' only. Measurements calculated by any other system will not be considered. The home address in instances where parents / carers have shared responsibility for children, will be the address to which Child Benefit is paid.

The admission application period for a September 2024 start has already commenced and runs until 10th November 2023. Any applications for Rhigos Primary School will automatically transfer to Hirwaun Primary School or parents/carers are able to apply for another school.

Section Two – The Likely Impact of the Proposal

The educational case for the proposal

School organisational proposals should highlight the educational benefits that any change could offer, particularly in relation to overall improvements in standards, but also in terms of the social and emotional development of children, which could usually impact beneficially on their overall achievement and outcomes.

It is RCTCBC's view that closing Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School could improve educational outcomes and provision for current pupils of Rhigos Primary School. A fit-for-purpose school building helps to provide a balanced curriculum in all year groups in line with the Welsh Government's Curriculum for Wales – 2022. Smaller schools may find it more difficult to deliver all 'Areas of Learning and Experience' of the Welsh Government's Curriculum for Wales – 2022 as they have fewer staff to specialise and to lead on curriculum and strategic developments. Smaller schools with fewer staff require staff to take on multiple roles, which can lead to greater workloads and less opportunities to specialise. A 21st century learning environment could also provide greater flexibility, a more adaptable learning environment and greater choice and variety in pupils' learning experiences.

Larger schools can provide greater flexibility for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced educational environment in which to learn and develop. There is more opportunity for staff to develop specialisms and more bespoke interventions in a larger school which is important for learner progression and the achievement of good educational outcomes for all. In larger schools there is also often the opportunity for pupils to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. If this proposal is successful, more pupils will be taught in a purpose-built school building that is fit for the purpose of providing education in the 21st century.

In smaller schools, there are limited opportunities for distributed models of leadership which can in turn result in workload pressures and capacity issues.

Currently Rhigos Primary School has three classes that are vertically streamed, with two of the three classes teaching pupils across three year groups. Given the projected reduction in pupil numbers at the school, this situation will become even more challenging in time.

There are significant challenges to teaching vertically grouped pupils. In what is considered to be a standard size class of pupils there will always be a range of abilities that need to be catered for through effective differentiation to ensure that the work meets the pupils' needs to ensure that they make strong progress in their learning and are suitably challenged. In a small school where you have vertical groups and a wide range of abilities it can prove to be challenging for the teaching and support staff to meet the wide range of academic, as well as the social and emotional needs, of all the learners. It is acknowledged that Rhigos Primary School offers learners positive learning experiences, nevertheless the teaching of multiple year groups within one classroom environment can be a significant challenge in educational settings.

Being a teacher in a vertically streamed class provides added pressure to an already challenging role, as in effect the teacher is required to constantly effectively differentiate in all areas of learning to ensure the individualised needs of all pupils are met. If this does not happen and pupils are set identical or very similar tasks to complete which do not meet their wide ranging needs effectively, this can result in pupils displaying poor motivation, disengagement and poor academic progress.

In a vertically streamed class it can become the norm that the teaching and subsequent work provided is pitched to meet the abilities of the average pupils in the class and as a result there is a potential that more able pupils are not effectively challenged in their learning and those pupils who require additional support may fall further behind in their learning as their needs are not met. The impact of such a style of teaching can potentially result in underachievement of high ability and low ability pupils. Clearly, this can be tackled through highly effective teaching and learning and extensive differentiation but this can be challenging when you have up to 3 year groups within one classroom.

In all classes pupils will have a perception as themselves as the learner and where they are positioned in terms the learning in the classroom. In these circumstances it is pupils' self-esteem that can also influence how they see themselves as learners and how they learn. In a vertically grouped class it will be inevitable due to the wide age range of pupils there can again be potential challenges with pupils' self-esteem particularly if older pupils are undertaking work which is either the same or similar to younger pupils in the same class. This can be addressed through highly effective differentiation but nevertheless this can be challenging from a teaching and learning perspective when there are a wide ranging year groups involved.

Another challenge of the small school is that a pupil may be taught by the same teacher for a number of years, or possibly the whole of the time if that teacher moves classes regularly. It may be considered that being taught by the same person is an advantage as they get to know that pupil really well. However, the converse can be true in that they might become too familiar and then do not provide the level of challenge that the pupil requires. It is also beneficial for pupils to have access to wide ranging staff with a range of specialisms and expertise so that they realise their potential across the full range of the curriculum. Additionally, the pupil/ teacher relationship is an important one and the quality of that relationship can vary from teacher to teacher. When there is little exposure to wide ranging staff, this can also be potentially challenging in the minority of cases where perhaps a relationship is less positive.

Small schools, by their very nature, have a limited choice for after-school activities, traditional clubs for football, rugby and netball are possibly not provided as there are not enough pupils of that age range to create the teams. Similarly, if teachers or support staff are providing the after-school activities if there are small numbers of staff inevitably there will be small numbers of clubs. As a result, there are few opportunities afforded to pupils to engage in a wide range of activities to enhance their social and emotional skills and this means that as they progress to secondary education, they, in comparison to their peers from larger schools, could potentially be less developed in certain areas. The same again can be said for pupil voice in school as the small numbers could mean that there are not enough available pupils to be involved in the various committee structures or that the committees are made

up of the same pupils in each resulting in a lack of varying views and perspectives, and a potential for repetition of ideas and action plans for each committee.

Finally, the demands of the Curriculum for Wales (CfW) are significant for a small school. The six areas of learning and experience (AoLE) could result in each teacher having to lead on two areas each. This has significant workload implications on top of the other responsibilities that the teacher would also have to undertake. The CfW expects the creation of a bespoke curriculum that has authentic contexts and is relevant to the community it serves, meaning that it is a fluid concept that changes and adapts to meet the needs of the learners.

The CfW places a heavy expectation on staff to trial, develop and create this new bespoke curriculum, and there would be a need for staff to be out of class on professional learning sessions as well as creating resources and materials. This by design would mean that a teacher's class could, as a result, end up having a significant number of supply teachers covering their class over a long period of time, which would mean that pupils would not be being taught regularly by their class teacher and these supply teachers may not have the knowledge and skills to teach the class effectively and this negatively impacts on the education attainment of pupils in this class. This heavy workload could be further exacerbated if one member of staff is absent from work, this could lead to two members of staff leading on three AoLEs, this workload would be significant and potentially the resulting curriculum created and delivered may not be the best that it can be and would not provide the very best curriculum offer that the pupils need.

A small school inevitably provides less opportunities for learners to interact with a wide range of children of the same age and to develop extended friendship groups. Furthermore, due to the smaller budgets associated with smaller schools, there are less opportunities for employing wide ranging support staff and to release staff from their classrooms to lead on specialist roles. Resilience can also be a significant factor in smaller schools when staff are absent from the workplace.

Estyn Information

Rhigos Primary School was inspected by Estyn in February 2019.

Rhigos Primary School's performance in the five inspection areas was as follows:

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning	Good
Teaching and Learning Experiences	Good
Care, Support and Guidance	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Estyn also set out recommendations for Rhigos Primary School to implement in order to make improvements to the quality of education provision on offer. Estyn's recommendations were as follows:

1. Recommendation One – Give pupils in key stage two more opportunities to make independent choices and decisions about how to apply their literacy and numeracy skills within lessons.
2. Recommendation Two – Develop pupils’ speaking and listening skills in Welsh in key stage two.
3. Recommendation Three – Provide further opportunities for pupils in key stage two to use their extended writing skills across the curriculum.

Hirwaun Primary School was inspected by Estyn in 2018.

Hirwaun Primary School’s performance in the five inspection areas was as follows:

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning	Adequate and needs improvement
Teaching and Learning Experiences	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Care, Support and Guidance	Good
Leadership and Management	Adequate and needs improvement

Estyn set out recommendations for the school to implement in order to make improvements to the quality of education provision on offer. Estyn’s recommendations were as follows:

1. Recommendation One – Improve the quality of teaching and feedback to pupils.
2. Recommendation Two – Improve standards of pupils’ reading, writing and presentation of work.
3. Recommendation Three – Improve pupils’ standards in ICT.
4. Recommendation Four – Ensure that the curriculum meets requirements and develops pupils’ skills progressively.
5. Recommendation Five – Improve pupils’ independent learning skills.
6. Recommendation Six – Correctly identify and address important areas of teaching and learning that need to improve and hold all members of staff to account robustly.

As a result of the inspection in 2018, Estyn placed Hirwaun Primary School in the reported category of ‘Significant Improvement.’ In response to the outcome of the core inspection, Hirwaun Primary School was required to draw up an action plan to address the recommendations, subject to review by Estyn. In July 2019, a follow up visit was undertaken which judged that sufficient progress had been made in relation to the recommendations. As a result, Estyn removed Hirwaun Primary School from the list of schools requiring ‘Significant Improvement’.

Since its latest inspection, Hirwaun Primary School has received a brand new 21st century building and facilities as part of the Welsh government Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

It is RCTCBC’s view that closing Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to a new, purpose-built school fit for the 21st century at Hirwaun Primary School could have a major positive impact on all five Estyn inspection areas, as detailed below:

1. Standards (Learning) – More pupils will have access to a new school building fit for the 21st century that provides enhanced teaching spaces, dedicated resource areas, stimulating learning environments and state-of-the-art ICT equipment, all of which will support to continue to raise standards, and make progress against Estyn’s recommendations. Larger schools have more potential for economies of school and financial efficiencies which can accrue and be reinvested for the benefit of all pupils.
2. Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning – Moving pupils from Rhigos Primary School to Hirwaun Primary School, a site with brand new facilities should have a positive impact on pupil wellbeing. Flexible internal spaces are available to deliver additional support to pupils. Extensive outdoor space will provide a diverse and engaging environment for pupils to learn and play in. There could also be greater flexibility for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced educational environment in which to learn and grow and there will be greater opportunities for learners to socialise and interact with large numbers of their year group peers.
3. Teaching and Learning Experiences – Moving pupils of Rhigos Primary School, a small school, to the larger Hirwaun Primary School will increase opportunities for interaction, coordination and the sharing of expertise and experience. Pupils of Rhigos Primary School, who are currently in small classes of two and three year groups, will be able to benefit from being taught in classes of their own age group. A fit-for-purpose school building helps to provide a balanced curriculum across all age groups in line with the Welsh Government’s Curriculum for Wales – 2022. Smaller schools may find it more difficult to deliver all ‘Areas of Learning and Experience’ of the Welsh Government’s Curriculum for Wales as they have fewer staff to specialise and to lead on curriculum and strategic developments. A 21st century learning environment could also provide greater flexibility and therefore greater choice and variety in pupils’ learning experiences.
4. Care, Support and Guidance – The 21st century environment at Hirwaun Primary School will provide opportunities for pupils of Rhigos Primary School to further develop a wide range of extra-curricular activities to encourage healthy lifestyles and nurture pupils. A fully accessible building and the provision of flexible spaces allows the Hirwaun Primary School to extend its good practice and facilitate further interventions and engagement with families and the local community. The new school site has been designed to ensure that safeguarding is not compromised, with the school achieving ‘secure by design’ accreditation.
5. Leadership (and Management) – It is important that leadership in schools is supported by fit for purpose resources that are appropriate for education in the 21st century. Hirwaun Primary School has made progress against the Estyn recommendations in this regard. The new resources and facilities at Hirwaun Primary School provide effective and supportive learning environments for pupils. Pupils can benefit from suitable and stimulating outdoor areas to play and learn, and the appropriate resources and equipment of a 21st century school ensure that the Welsh Government’s Curriculum for Wales can be delivered to the required standards. A larger school will provide more professional and progression opportunities for the teaching and support staff and greater scope for distributed models of leadership.

What is the likely impact of the proposals on pupils?

It is anticipated that the proposed changes will not adversely impact upon pupils. Some pupils may initially be daunted at the prospect of moving to a new, larger school on a new site, however the headteacher and staff team will ensure they are appropriately supported through this transition period.

The proposed changes could have many benefits for pupils. Being taught in a new, state of the art, purpose-built school building with first class facilities could have a significant impact on the quality and variety of the learning experience and the educational performance of pupils.

Moving pupils of Rhigos Primary School, a small school, to the larger Hirwaun Primary School will increase opportunities for interaction, coordination and the sharing of expertise and experience. Pupils of Rhigos Primary School, who are currently in classes of mixed year groups, will be able to benefit from being taught in classes of their own age group. There could also be greater flexibility for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced educational environment in which to learn and grow and there will be greater opportunities for learners to socialise and interact with large numbers of their year group peers.

The catchment area of Hirwaun Primary School will extend to also include the catchment area of Rhigos Primary School. Whilst inevitably some pupils who currently attend Rhigos Primary School will live further away from the new site, some may, in fact, live closer to it. All pupils in the current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School will be entitled to free home to school transport, as such the impact on pupil travel arrangements is considered to be minimal.

The Welsh Government and RCTCBC has adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which is expressed in seven core aims that all children and young people:

1. Have a flying start in life.
2. Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities.
3. Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation, and exploitation.
4. Have access to play, leisure, sporting, and cultural activities.
5. Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised.
6. Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing.
7. Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

RCTCBC considers that the proposal benefits the children and young people accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

Further information relating to the impact of the proposal on pupils, including how the proposal contributes to all seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015 and an assessment of the proposal on the five ways of working, can be found in the Equality Impact Assessment which is at Appendix B and available on the Council's website.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on staff?

It is our intention to recommend to the Governing Body of Hirwaun Primary School that they ringfence any additional positions they need to appoint as a result of increased pupil numbers, below senior leadership level, to the existing staff currently employed at Rhigos Primary School in the first instance. This process means that the Rhigos Primary School staff will be given the first opportunity to apply for additional posts in Hirwaun Primary School prior to any being advertised externally. If they are successful, they will then simply transfer to the Hirwaun Primary School when the proposal is implemented. RCTCBC has well established Human Resource policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change.

Staff who transfer to Hirwaun Primary School could have the opportunity to specialise in specific areas of the curriculum. The CfW places a heavy expectation on staff to trial, develop and create this new bespoke curriculum which is very challenging in a smaller school such as Rhigos Primary School. Being a much larger school, Hirwaun Primary School has more staff to allow for such specialism with the ability to share workload more effectively and therefore gives staff more opportunities for progression and professional development.

Financial implications of the proposal

There will be no capital funding implications should this proposal go ahead. The new building and facilities at Hirwaun Primary School were completed in 2021 and there is capacity at the school for pupils who fall under the current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School.

There will be other revenue implications resulting from the proposal, including an increase in home to school transport costs which will be determined once pupil numbers seeking transport are confirmed. These will be identified as the proposal is developed and detailed revenue implications will be incorporated into RCTCBC's Medium Term Financial arrangements.

At present the cost per pupil for Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School is £6,426.01 and £4,406.37 respectively. If the proposals were to go ahead the estimated cost per pupil for Hirwaun Primary School is £4,031.89.

More detailed financial information in relation to this proposal can be found on page 13 of this document.

Home to School Transport provision

There is a statutory duty placed upon all local authorities in Wales to provide pupils with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe 'walking distance' to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided mainstream primary school, secondary school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe 'walking distance' is defined as two miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

RCTCBC has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make a more generous provision to pupils. The relevant information in relation to Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School is set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for pupils receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles as required by the Measure.
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to pupils who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than from the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday) as required by the Measure.
- The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

Further information in relation to the RCTCBC's Home to School transport provision can be viewed and downloaded from RCTCBC's website via:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ParkingRoadsandTravel/Travel/SchoolandCollegeTransport/SchoolandCollegeTransport.aspx>

There is approximately 2.8 miles between Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School which is over the 1.5 mile distance allowed within the home to school transport eligibility criteria listed above. In addition, there is no safe walking route for the current pupils of Rhigos Primary School to walk to Hirwaun Primary School should the proposal be successful. As such, **all** pupils in the current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School will be entitled to free home to school transport. All costs associated with this increased service will be wholly met by RCTCBC.

Land and buildings information

If the proposals outlined in this document are implemented, the existing Rhigos Primary School site will become redundant. As this is an initial consultation process no decisions have yet been made in respect of the future of this site and building, however one option, if the site does become surplus, is to consult with the local community to ascertain whether there is a sustainable community need locally that can be successfully delivered and met from this site.

This process will be managed in accordance with RCTCBC's Policy on Surplus Land and Buildings.

Consultation Response Form

To comply with its legal duty under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, and help RCTCBC reach a decision on the proposal, it would be helpful if you could answer the following questions. Please note, any personal information given will not be shared and will only be used to provide you with feedback, should you request it. Any comments that could identify you will be anonymised in the Consultation Report produced. Completed Consultation Report Forms should be returned to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services 21 st Century Schools Ty Trevithick Abercynon CF45 4UQ	OR	schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk
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The proposal:

To close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School.

Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No Not Sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice.

- 2 Do you think the proposal could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive or Negative)?
- Do you think the proposal in any way treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language?
- How positive effects on the Welsh Language could be increased, or negative effects be decreased?
- Please state any alternative views or points which you would like to be considered (attach additional sheets if necessary).
- Please indicate who you are (e.g., parent/carer of a pupil at named school(s), Governor at named school(s), etc.).
- Name (optional):



Please provide contact details if you wish to be notified of the publication of the Consultation Report.

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than no later than 17:00 on 17th November 2023.

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<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/DataProtectionandFreedomofInformation/DataProtection/serviceprivacynotices/ChiefExecutives/ConsultationPrivacyNotice.aspx>

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH SEPTEMBER 2023

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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

AUTHOR: Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the attached consultation report, which includes a summary of items of correspondence received during the consultation exercise and notes of the various meetings held.
- 2.2 Agree to progress the following proposals to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) by issuing the appropriate statutory notices.
 - 2.2.1 **Proposal 1 (amended):** To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from September 2024. *(Amended from April 2024).*
 - 2.2.2 **Proposal 2 (amended):** To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from September 2024. *(Amended from April 2024).*

- 2.2.3 **Proposal 3:** To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
- 2.2.4 **Proposal 4:** To establish two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN taking effect from September 2024.
- 2.2.5 **Proposal 5:** To establish one LSC for pupils in years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.
- 2.3 To note the comments, observations and/or recommendations of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, following its pre-scrutiny of the above recommendations at the meeting held on 14th September 2023.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) so that an improved continuum of ALN provision can be achieved in RCT.
- 3.2 To ensure that the Council undertakes its statutory duties in relation to the ALNET Act (2018) that requires local authorities to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient, including a statutory requirement to take all reasonable steps to create a bilingual system of support for pupils with ALN.
- 3.3 To support the Council's delivery of its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the Education Directorate Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of Cabinet held on 3rd May 2023, approval was given to begin a process of formal consultation on a proposal to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).
- 4.2 For pupils with more significant needs for whom it is challenging to make appropriate learning provision within mainstream education, more specialist placements are required. RCT has a range of specialist provisions which includes: 45 LSCs, 2 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and 4 Special Schools. RCT has an excellent range of LSC provisions attached to mainstream schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that the range of LSC provisions currently available is disproportionate to the level of need in some areas.
- 4.3 Data analysis confirms that:
- there is currently insufficient provision in the secondary sector for pupils with ASD;

- the absence of cross phase specialist provision on some school sites means that some learners experience unnecessary transitions;
- one LSC would benefit from relocation to fully accessible schools that have benefited from the Sustainable Communities for Learning investment;
- there is insufficient provision to meet the needs of learners in the early years.

In light of these findings, the proposals for change seek to achieve the following aims:

- developing a robust continuum of provision that effectively addresses a wide range of need across all year groups;
- avoiding unnecessary transition across schools by establishing cross phase specialist provisions within individual schools where possible;
- establishing LSC provisions in fully accessible settings that provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.

- 4.4 Implementing this proposal will be of benefit to Welsh medium pupils with significant ALN across RCT and will ensure greater equality and access to specialist provision. The priority for the Education and Inclusion Service Directorate is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people. In light of the Welsh Government ALN Transformation Agenda and the Council's vision to increase the number of Welsh medium learners in its schools by responding proactively to both national and local strategies, such as the Welsh Government Welsh Language Strategy: Cymraeg 2050, Rhondda Cynon Taf's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the current 21st Century Schools plan to increase and improve Welsh medium provision RCT, it is essential to enhance current Welsh medium ALN provision within RCT.
- 4.5 There is a clear need to expand our Early Years and Key Stage 3/4 ASD provisions. In addition, the current location of the Penrhiwceiber LSC is felt to be no longer suitable to meet the needs of the new curriculum within a fully accessible environment. The proposed relocation of Penrhiwceiber LSC will ensure that pupils have access to premises which are more accessible and better equipped to meet a range of needs. The proposal will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and access to significantly improved premises which have benefited from the Council's School Modernisation Programme and investment.
- 4.6 The relocation of the LSC for pupils with ASD from Abercynon Community Primary to Perthcelyn Community Primary will eliminate unnecessary transition for pupils needing specialist LSC provision throughout the primary phase, providing equity for them to remain in one setting until transition to secondary provision in line with mainstream peers.
- 4.7 In Abercynon LSC, the number of pupils attending the LSCs in September 2023 that will be affected by the proposed relocation is very low: 6 pupils (1 x year 6, 5 x year 4). This age profile of these learners by September 2024, the proposed implementation date of these proposals, will be 5 x Year 5 learners. In the event of parental opposition to a relocation of their children's provision to the proposed Perthcelyn LSC, supported mainstream placements in the existing

settings can be explored in partnership with the school and Access and Inclusion Service staff.

In Penrhiwceibr LSC there are currently 9 pupils (1 x year 1, 4 x reception, 4 x nursery). However, placements at Penrhiwceibr Observation and Assessment Class are intended to be short-term and it is highly likely that the majority of the 9 pupils referenced above will have moved on to their long-term educational placement before the proposed implementation date of September 2024.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The consultation in respect of these proposals was undertaken between 5th June and 14th July 2023 under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. These arrangements stipulate that a Consultation Report must be prepared prior to the publication of any statutory notices which will progress the proposal. It further states that this Report must be published within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation period, which is 12th January 2024 in this instance.
- 5.2 The Consultation Report in respect of this particular proposal is attached at Appendix 1. A number of key issues that were raised in the consultation feedback have been identified as recurring themes to which the LA has provided a collective response in section 6 of the Consultation Report. For details of correspondence received please refer to Appendix 1a. Information in respect of meetings held to discuss the proposals, with copies of the notes taken at these meetings that outline the main areas of discussion are included at Appendix 1b.
- 5.3 It is noted that there has been a good response to this consultation which consisted of 127 completed questionnaires in relation to all proposals, 12 letters/emails and 3 petitions were received in relation to Proposal 2 (the relocation of the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Learning Support Class at Abercynon Community Primary School to Perthcelyn Primary School). A further online petition in relation to Proposal 2 was submitted after the deadline and has not been accounted for. 53 Pupil School Council representatives attended meetings with Access and Inclusion Service staff and approximately 20 parents attended open evenings held to provide further information.
- 5.4 Responses to the consultation are summarised below. All responses have been shared with Cabinet for full disclosure and transparency. For further detail refer to the Consultation Response Report:
- **Proposal 1** - To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceibr Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School of the 126 submissions received in relation to this proposal: 28 responders agreed to the proposal, 85 disagreed and 13 were unsure how to respond.
 - **Proposal 2** - To transfer the LSC for pupils in years 3-6 with ASD at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School of the 127 submissions received in relation to this proposal: 45 responders agreed to the proposal, 88 disagreed and 9 were unsure how to respond.

- **Proposal 3** - To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School of the 121 submissions received in relation to this proposal 45 responders agreed to the proposal, 52 disagreed and 24 were unsure how to respond.
- **Proposal 4** - To establish two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN of 120 submissions received in relation to this proposal 54 responders agreed to the proposal, 36 disagreed and 30 were unsure how to respond.
- **Proposal 5** - To establish one LSC for pupils in years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site of the 119 submissions received in relation to this proposal 54 responders agreed to the proposal, 37 disagreed and 28 were unsure how to respond.

5.5 The following key themes emerged from the consultation for further detail and responses refer to the Consultation Response Report:

- **Proposal 1:** Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to relocate to Abercynon Community Primary School.
 - The proposal was seen as positive with the proposed move providing access to enhanced facilities and resources for pupils in the LSC;
 - Concerns were raised regarding the number of transitions pupils need to undertake. However, it is highly likely that existing learners placed in short-term placements in the Penrhiwceiber LSC will have secured long term placements by the proposed implementation date.
- **Proposal 2:** LSC for pupils in years 3-6 with ASD at Abercynon Primary Community School to relocate to Perthcelyn Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision.
 - Parents felt that pupils attending the LSC in Abercynon Community Primary School had access to a variety of community resources that would be lost should the proposal be progressed;
 - Much praise has been given to the current provision and support within both Abercynon and Perthcelyn Learning Support Classes;
 - Through provision for pupils with ASD provision were widely welcomed however the location of the class was questioned. Parents of pupils currently attending the LSC in Abercynon wish for the LSC to remain and to relocate Perthcelyn LSC to Abercynon. Parents of pupils currently attending the LSC at Perthcelyn are in support of the proposal to relocate the ASD provision from Abercynon to Perthcelyn to ensure through primary phase provision is available to their children without the need to transition further.
- **Proposal 3:** One Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School:

- Positive responses were received regarding the increased capacity the LSC would provide although responders queried whether further capacity was needed;
- Mixed feedback was received regarding the location of the proposed new LSC provision some responses were in support of the Early Years LSC being established at Abercynon whilst other responses suggested the LSC should be established at a different location.
- **Proposal 4:** Two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN:
 - Welsh medium LSCs are welcomed but concerns were raised relating to the LSC not having a specific ALN designation.
- **Proposal 5:** One ASD LSC provision for pupils in years 7–11 at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site:
 - The increase in Key Stage 3/4 provision was seen as positive, however responders felt further LSCs are needed.

6. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

6.1 The statutory notices for this proposal will refer to the:

- **Proposal 1:** Relocation of the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from September 2024.
- **Proposal 2:** Transfer of the LSC for pupils in years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from September 2024.
- **Proposal 3:** Establishment of one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.
- **Proposal 4:** Establishment of two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.
- **Proposal 5:** Establishment of one LSC for pupils in years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.

6.2 The Statutory Notices will, if agreed, be published on 9th October 2023 and will allow for a 28 day period for objections, ending on 5th November 2023. If any objections are received, in accordance with the aforementioned Code an Objections Report will be prepared. This matter will then be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet, possibly in December 2023, for Members to receive and consider the Objections Report and to make a final decision on this proposal.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The relevant Equality Impact Assessment and Community Impact Assessment were published on the Council's website together with the consultation document that outlined the proposal in detail. The assessments have been updated following the consultation. Copies of the updated assessments are attached as Appendix 2 and 3 to this report.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared in respect of this proposal and published on the Council's website as a part of the Consultation Documentation in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) (the "Code"). A copy of the updated assessment is attached as Appendix 4.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 If the proposal to realign LSC provision within RCT is authorised to proceed, resources will be directed to address the identified gaps in existing provision.
- 9.2 The proposals will address capacity pressures in relation to pupils with significant ALN in the Early Years and years 7–11 (formerly Key Stage 3/4), reduce the number of transitions necessary for pupils accessing Primary Phase LSC provision and ensure a higher number of LSCs are situated within 21st Century School environments. The proposals also seek to address the need to create additional Welsh medium specialist LSC provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) to develop a bilingual Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system.
- 9.3 Secondary schools hosting LSCs for pupils with ASD are funded via the Council for one specialist teacher and two learning support assistants at an approximate cost of £131,500k per annum per class. Primary schools hosting Early Years LSC's are funded for one teacher and one learning support assistant at an approximate cost of £97,600k per annum. Primary phase Welsh provisions will be funded for one teacher and one learning support assistant at an approximate cost of £97,600k each per annum. To ensure the LA is able to meet the needs of its ALN pupils, funding of approximately £424k is required annually and will be incorporated in the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.
- 9.4 The creation and relocation of the LSCs will incur a transportation cost in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy, however this increase in cost is seen as a necessity in order to enhance provision for RCT's most vulnerable pupils. Costs cannot be quantified at this time as placements are pupil led however given that there will be a net increase in the number of LSC provisions additional funding is likely to be required and will be incorporated in the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Section 316A of the Education Act 1996 specifies that children with SEN/ALN should normally be educated in mainstream schools if this is compatible with them receiving the special educational/additional learning provision that their learning difficulty requires; the efficient education of other children, and the efficient use of resources.
- 10.2 Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 also requires local authorities to ensure that SEN/ALN provision is kept under review. The ALN Code for Wales (2021) places a statutory duty upon the LA to keep under review the overall Additional Learning Provision (ALP) available in its area and supporting arrangements, to ensure provision is sufficient to meet the overall needs of its population of learners with ALN and that provision is available in Welsh.

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

- 11.1 The proposals will ensure that two of the Council's three key priorities will be met. These include:
- Economy: Building a strong economy.
 - People: Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
- 11.2 There are links to RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: '*To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all*'. The proposal will also support delivery against the five strategic priorities, most notably:
- Strategic Priority 2: Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
 - Strategic Priority 3: Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families.
 - Strategic Priority 5: Delivering 21st Century Learning Environments and innovative services for our learners and communities.
- 11.3 The proposals will ensure there is renewed capacity to focus on prevention which is a key statutory requirement of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and a key element of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 11.4 Due regard has been made to all seven wellbeing goals and the five ways of working, as contained within the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 11.5 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the seven wellbeing goals by:
- **A Healthier Wales** – Accommodation at the proposed host schools will continue to support opportunities for enhanced outdoor spaces. As well as supporting the full range of curriculum activities these facilities are also available for community use.

- **A More Equal Wales** – Providing enhanced opportunities for pupils to access specialist provision.
- **A Wales of More Cohesive Communities** – All host schools are fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community can safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – establishing new primary phase Welsh medium LSC provision will support of the Council's WESP.
- **A Globally Responsive Wales** – pupils will have access to extra-curricular activities which encourage healthy lifestyles for the school and wider community.

11.6 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the five ways of working by:

- **Long Term** – To ensure that the Council undertakes its statutory duties in relation to the ALNET Act (2018) that requires local authorities to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient, including a statutory requirement to take all reasonable steps to create a bilingual system of support for pupils with ALN.
- **Prevention** – The Council believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement.
- **Integrations** – Host schools are fully accessible and integrated community schools.
- **Collaboration** – The Council will continue to work effectively with internal and external partners to ensure the changes brought about by these proposals will meet the short and long term needs of pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community.
- **Involvement** –The proposal is made in accordance with the [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#) and seeks the views of a prescribed list of stakeholders including pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. As such face to face meetings will be arranged with the staff, school councils and governing bodies.

11.7 As stated in 7.1, an Equality Impact Assessment which further details the contribution of the proposal to the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) is being prepared.

11.8 The information in the report contributes to the priorities within RCTCBC's Corporate Plan, 'Making a Difference'.

11.9 The proposals will also assist the directorate in achieving Outcome 6 of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which is to increase the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with ALN.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

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

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 The proposals to realign LSC provision will ensure that RCT has undertaken its statutory duty under the ALNET Act (2018) to review arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within the county borough and has identified necessary steps to ensure the sufficiency of its provision for pupils with significant ALN who require specialist placement.

13.2 The proposals support the delivery of the RCT WESP and one of the core aims of the ALNET Act by working towards the development of a fully bilingual ALN system within the county borough.

13.3 The proposals will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and access to significantly improved premises which have benefited from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme and investment.

13.4 Following consideration of the responses to the consultation, it is recommended that Members agree to the immediate publication of the attached Consultation Report and agree to give officers approval to publish the appropriate Statutory Notices to progress with the proposals, noting the modification made to the implementation dates of Proposals 1 and 2.

Other Information:

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer:

Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET
18TH SEPTEMBER 2023

**Item: CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL
LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS
PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**Background Papers
Appendix 1 – Consultation Report**

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



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**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN
ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM
LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN
RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

JULY 2023

Consultation Report

Proposal: to re-align Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf

1. Purpose of the Consultation Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. Its purpose is to inform the outcome of the consultation held during the period 7th June and 14th July 2023 between all stakeholders and interested parties listed below.

2. Who did we consult?

A copy of a consultation document which fully outlined and explained our proposal was sent to the following stakeholders. The document was also published on the Council website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Abercynon Community Primary School, Penrhiwceiber Primary School, Perthcelyn Primary School
- The Temporary Governing Body of the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High site and the new Welsh medium through school.
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- School Councils of Abercynon Community Primary, Perthcelyn Primary, Penrhiwceiber Primary, Heol-Y-Celyn, Hawthorn Primary, Hawthorn High
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- The Governing Body of the University of South Wales
- Welsh Minister for Education and Skills
- Assembly Members for all constituencies and regional areas serving Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Pontypridd and Cynon Valley
- Estyn
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- Teaching and Support staff trade unions
- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- South East Wales Transport Association
- The local Communities First Partnerships
- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- Neighbouring local authorities

3. What did we consult on?

The proposals consulted on included:

Relocating key LSC provisions to ensure cross phase provisions in single sited, accessible school buildings. It was proposed that the following relocations take effect from April 2024:

- **Proposal 1:** Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to relocate to Abercynon Community Primary School.
- **Proposal 2:** LSC for pupils Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Primary Community School to relocate to Perthcelyn Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision.

Developing new LSC provisions. It was proposed that the new LSCs established from September 2024:

- **Proposal 3: One** Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School.
- **Proposal 4:** Two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN.
- **Proposal 5:** One ASD LSC provision for pupils in Years 7–11 at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site.

4. The consultation process

All stakeholders identified in section 2 were sent electronic copies of the consultation documentation with the consultation proforma link and those that requested paper copies received them. All feedback received are detailed in Appendix 1a. Consultation meetings were held for the staff, parents and pupils of the affected schools, the details and dates of these meetings are attached as Appendix 1b. Summary notes taken during a range of consultation events are detailed in Appendix 1c. These provide a record of questions raised, comments and statements made, with responses provided where appropriate.

5. Summary of responses to consultation

It is noted that there has been a good response to this statutory consultation process; 127 completed questionnaires, 12 letters/emails and 3 petitions. A further online petition was submitted by the Perthcelyn Community, however it has not been considered as it was received after the deadline.

Table 1 below reports the number of responses received to each element of the proposal, please note that the number of disagree responses relating to the LSC for Key Stage 3/4 ASD pupils, the 2 proposed Welsh medium provisions and the relocation of

Penrhiwceiber LSC could potentially be distorted as nearly all comments received relate to the proposed changes to the LSCs at Abercynon Community Primary and Perthcelyn Primary Schools and not the proposed addition of Welsh medium and a Key Stage 3/4 ASD provision.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. So as part of seeking views on the school organisation proposals, the consultation also included a question in compliance with the Council's statutory obligations asking 'how would the Council's proposal affect you? All those that responded to this question stated that there would be a positive or no impact on them as a result of implementing the proposals.

In addition, the consultation survey, in accordance with the Welsh Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, also included further questions in compliance with the Council's statutory obligations which asked could the proposals impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive or Negative) and if in any way, they treat the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language? Also asked were how positive effects could be increased, or negative effects be decreased? All those that responded to these questions stated that there would be a positive or no impact on the Welsh Language as a result of implementing the proposals.

Table1: Responses to the proposed realignment of LSC provision within RCT

Proposal	Communication Received			Nature of Responses		
	Online Questionnaire	Letter/ Email	Petition	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to relocate to Abercynon Community Primary School.	126	0	0	28	85	13
LSC for pupils Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Primary Community School to relocate to Perthcelyn Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision.	127	12	3	45	88	9
One Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School.	121	0	0	45	52	24
Two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN.	120	0	0	54	36	30
One Autistic Spectrum Disorder LSC provision for pupils in Years 7-11 at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site.	119	0	0	54	37	28

The table below reports the number and type of responses received for each individual proposal within the consultation document:

6. Summary of Key Themes Raised and LA Responses

In accordance with the Code, a summary of the responses received are detailed in the table below and where issues have been raised, these have been responded to, where applicable, by means of clarification with supporting reasons. The key themes emerging from this analysis are detailed as follows:

- **Proposal 1:** Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to relocate to Abercynon Community Primary School

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
Suggested the LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School is moved to Perthcelyn Primary School.	This was considered however not all pupils in the Observation and Assessment class would require long term placement in an ASD LSC and would therefore not transition into the ASD LSC in Perthcelyn. In addition, this would mean that pupils in Perthcelyn ASD LSC would still need to transition from Perthcelyn to the ASD LSC at Abercynon Primary School. One of the underpinning aims of the proposal is to reduce the number of transitions incurred by pupils in ASD LSCs.
Positive proposal to move the LSC from Penrhiwceiber to Abercynon due to the availability of enhanced facilities and resources for pupils in the LSC.	Positive comments are noted and reflect the rationale for the proposed relocation.
Suggested that the relocation is not undertaken.	The facilities at Penrhiwceiber LSC are not appropriate to meet the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales and are not sited within a 21 st Century learning environment.
Number of transitions pupils are required to make.	Concerns have been raised that the proposals will have a negative impact on pupils and may require some pupils to undertake additional transitions to another setting. However, it is important to highlight that all learners accessing Observation and Assessment placements do so on a short term basis whilst their needs are being assessed and identified to inform a longer term placement. Robust transition plans will be put in place for any pupils directly affected by the proposals, which will be planned collaboratively with parents and staff and involve additional support

	from specialist members of staff from Access and Inclusion.
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- **Proposal 2:** LSC for pupils Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Primary Community School to relocate to Perthcelyn Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision.

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
Impact of proposals upon pupils due to transfer in September 2023 to the LSC currently based at Abercynon Community Primary School in September.	The proposed change in provision has some implications for a small number of pupils (currently 3 pupils) who currently attend an affected LSC but were due to transfer to Abercynon LSC in September 2023. To minimise any potential negative impact upon individual pupils, parents have been provided with the option to move to Abercynon LSC or to remain in Perthcelyn with additional support provided within the current Perthcelyn ASD LSC in September 2023. These arrangements will remain in place until a decision regarding the proposal has been reached, parents have been made fully aware of the implications of the option they have chosen.
Positive provision and support within both Abercynon and Perthcelyn Learning Support Classes.	The LA has been delighted to receive such positive feedback on the LSC provisions at Abercynon Community School and Perthcelyn Primary School. It is evident that both classes are an integral part of the school community, staff and pupils are valued and that parents are delighted with the progress pupils are making.
Community resources available within Abercynon Community Primary School.	Significant emphasis has been raised in relation to the perceived advantages of one community to another. All schools are required within the new Curriculum for Wales to develop their individual curriculum building on the opportunities available in the school's locality. Due to this requirement each curriculum will be unique to each setting but there is an expected consistency in the range of learning opportunities and the specialist provision available in LSCs. It must be noted that both LSCs are thriving and as noted above it has been pleasing to receive such positive feedback regarding both provisions during this consultation.
Perception within community that the proposals are as a result of letter submitted to the LA.	The proposals have been undertaken in line with the Welsh Government requirement for each LA to review the sufficiency of its ALN provision and whilst feedback from the community is always welcomed and

	considered the proposals have not been unfairly influenced by specific community representations. A balanced and measured approach has been adopted with full transparency.
Concerns regarding the quality of relocated LSC provision where LSC provision has currently been considered to be effective.	The LA has no evidence to suggest that the mainstream school to which the LSCs is proposed to relocate will not be able to provide high quality, inclusive educational and extra-curricular opportunities to the pupils in the LSC. The school currently successfully hosts a LSC and the proposed relocation would merely enhance their LSC provision. The proposed mainstream host school has a strong leadership team with established quality assurance processes within RCT and the wider Central South Consortium. Access and Inclusion also has well established Quality Assurance processes for monitoring and challenging the performance of all of its individual LSCs and this process would continue following the proposed relocation of provision.
Through provision for pupils with ASD provision were widely welcomed however the location of the class was questioned.	The proposed relocation will ensure that pupils will be able to have cross phase provisions within a setting that has well established LSC provision. The proposal will also create enhanced opportunities for collaborative working between the LSCs within different phases which will benefit both pupils and staff in sharing expertise.
Specific questions were raised in one consultation response: 1. How will their children continue to have the same opportunities that they enjoy now? Such as weekly library visits, trips to the local shops, time at the organics garden, swimming once a week, horse riding attended through use of private minibus. 2. What plans do the authority have to support children who have had negative experiences of Perthcelyn school in the past?	In line with new curriculum for Wales, the curriculum is designed by the school to build on the opportunities available in the school's locality. This will be unique to each setting but there is an expected consistency in the range of learning opportunities and the specialist provision available in LSCs and beyond. As the current LSC staff will be moving with the pupils they will work with Access & Inclusion to ensure a robust transition process will be put in place. This will ensure there is continuity in staffing and support for pupils to support both their educational provision and wellbeing. The LSC will continue to be monitored collaboratively by school and the LA through its

<p>3. What impact assessment has been done on the children with ASD who would be expected to move from their current school? (This is a small group of children who will be negatively impacted by the proposed changes and the parents felt very passionately that the proposals will have a devastating effect on this small group of children.)</p> <p>4. What provision for 7-11 year olds will be made at the new provision in Perthcelyn school?</p> <p>5. Will the children have the same yard opportunities and space and open access to outdoors?</p> <p>6. Will the children still have open access to a Sensory room?</p> <p>7. How are the local authority consulting children and young people's views?</p>	<p>quality assurance protocol. No issues have been raised with the LA regarding negative experiences of pupils. Perthcelyn is recognised as a good school by the LA and Central South Consortium.</p> <p>All the required impact assessments have been undertaken, LSC re-alignment will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for parents and pupils for a period of time, although experience from previous LSC realignments has been positive. Access & Inclusion will provide support to eradicate or minimise any potential negative impact. This will involve collaboration between current LSC staff, Access and Inclusion staff, pupils and their families to ensure a person-centred approach is taken to meeting the educational and wellbeing needs of pupils.</p> <p>The new LSC will be established and resourced in line with other LSC provisions within RCT. A broad and balanced curriculum together with specialist additional learning provision will be provided to pupils in line with the requirements of the new Curriculum for Wales and ALN legislation and a consistent approach to LSC provision across the County Borough.</p> <p>There is a quality assurance process in place to ensure there is equity between the different LSCs although this is delivered in different ways in line with the characteristics of the school the class is placed in. Pupils will have the same opportunities to access yard and outdoor learning environments. Perthcelyn has the capacity to accommodate another LSC provision.</p> <p>Yes, there is a sensory room in Perthcelyn Primary School that can be utilised by all LSC pupils as required.</p> <p>7 sessions were held with the relevant School Councils throughout the consultation process. 4 parents also submitted their child's views (included in appendix 1a)</p>
<p>Feedback regarding this proposal has been mixed.</p>	<p>All possible connotations of the proposal were considered prior to publication of the consultation report. The option presented are</p>

<p>Parents of pupils currently attending the LSC in Abercynon wish for the KS2 LSC to remain and to relocate Perthcelyn FP LSC to Abercynon.</p> <p>Parents of pupils currently attending the LSC at Perthcelyn are in support of the proposal to relocate the ASD provision from Abercynon to Perthcelyn to ensure through primary phase provision is available to their children without the need to transition further.</p>	<p>believed by officers to be the most appropriate use of resources to realign LSC provision within RCT.</p>
<p>Number of transitions pupils are required to make.</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised that the proposals will have a negative impact on pupils and may require some pupils to undertake additional transitions to another setting. This has been acknowledged as a potential negative impact but has been mitigated with the very small numbers the proposals will impact (see note above). At the time of the proposed implementation date in September 2024, based on the current intake, a total of 5 year 5 pupils will be potentially affected by the move. To mitigate risks, a person centred approach will be adopted to support the transition. Parents/carers can also opt to keep their children in the same school but within a supported mainstream placement should they wish to do so.</p> <p>However, is important that a longer term view is adopted and a change considered due to the obvious benefits for future generations of learners. In the longer term the proposals will minimise unnecessary transition for pupils with significant needs, provide continuity in their educational placements and ensure that a higher number of specialist LSC provisions provide equity for pupils in LSCs so that they remain in one setting until transition to secondary provision in line with their mainstream peers.</p> <p>Robust transition plans will be put in place for any pupils directly affected by the proposals, which will be planned collaboratively with parents and staff and involve additional support from specialist members of staff from Access and Inclusion.</p>

- **Proposal 3: One** Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School.

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
Positive responses were received regarding the increased capacity the LSC would provide although responders queried as to if further capacity was needed.	Positive comments are noted and reflect the rationale for the proposed enhancement of provision.
Mixed feedback regarding the location of the proposed new LSC provision. Responses were received in support of the Early Years LSC being established at Abercynon. Feedback was also received regarding the LSC being established at different location.	All possible connotations of the proposals were considered prior to publication of the consultation report. The option presented is believed by officers to be the most appropriate use of resources to realign LSC provision within RCT.
Additional transition of pupils was noted as a concern.	Unfortunately, there appears to have been some confusion with the proposed additional LSC at Abercynon. This is establishing a new LSC so therefore no pupils will be impacted by the proposal.

- **Proposal 4:** Two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN.

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
General agreement with need for Welsh medium LSC provision.	In general responses recognised the need for additional LCS provisions within RCT, although it was evident that some responses confused the different elements of the proposals
Welsh medium LSCs are welcomed but concerns were raised relating to the LSC not having a specific ALN designation.	<p>Comment is noted.</p> <p>The LA is required by Welsh Government and the ALNET Act 2018 to continuously review both the sufficiency of its Additional Learning Provision for both English and Welsh medium learners and work proactively towards developing a fully bilingual ALN system over time.</p> <p>The proposed LSC will support pupils with significant additional learning needs. There will be agreed Placement Criteria which will be written in consultation with the school. It is recognised that the LSC may need more than 1 classroom area for interventions to help support each learner and sufficient support</p>

	and expertise to support pupils with a range of needs. The needs of the pupils attending the provision will be closely monitored by the LA in collaboration with the school.
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- **Proposal 5:** One ASD LSC provision for pupils in Years 7–11 at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site.

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
The increase in Key Stage 3/4 provision was seen as positive, however responders felt further LSCs are needed.	In line with the ALN Code 2021, the LA has a statutory duty to review the sufficiency of its provision. Therefore, further reviews will be undertaken to ensure LSC provision within RCT meets the demands of pupils with ALN.

The following general themes were raised across all proposals:

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
Rationale for change.	<p>This is based on:</p> <p>Data analysis of current and projected pupil need to ensure that the number of LSCs meet identified needs.</p> <p>The opportunity to enhance the number of specialist LSC provisions within mainstream settings to minimise unnecessary transition for pupils between specialist settings in different schools which would provide equity for pupils in need of specialist provision to remain in one school setting as is generally available to mainstream peers.</p> <p>To ensure that a larger number of LSCs and their pupils access specialist provision in school settings that have benefited from significant investment from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme.</p>
Proposals are not in the pupil's best interests.	The LA considers that reducing the number of schools transitions is in the pupil's best interests and the enhanced capacity gained from the additional LSCs will ensure more children that require specialist placements can access this in a timely manner. However, we acknowledge there will be some short-term disruption to a small number of pupils during the transition period.

8. Estyn’s response to the proposal from Rhondda Cynon Taf regarding LSCs which will take affect from April 2024.

In compliance with the School Standards and Organisation 2018 School Organisation Code the Estyn’s response to the consultation has been provided in full in Appendix 2. Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and have produced a response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal. The response reports the following as a summary ***‘Estyn welcomes the local authority's move to improve provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and recognises the merit of many of the strategies in the consultation. This includes increasing full-time specialist provision for pupils with significant ALN in Welsh medium schools which was an aspect identified in the recent local government education services inspection. Overall, it is Estyn's view that the information provided suggests that proposals are likely to improve the provision for learners in the local authority. However, there are a few aspects of the proposals that need strengthening and these are identified in our response.***

Additionally, an in accordance with the Code, the areas of the response that require clarification are documented in the table below:

Estyn’s comment
<i>It is unclear whether there are any proposed interim arrangements, which might be necessary for their implementation.</i>
Clarification
Perthcelyn LSC – 3 pupils currently placed in Perthcelyn and due to transition to Abercynon in September 2023 are impacted directly by the proposals. Parents were given the option to either stay at Perthcelyn until the outcome of the consultation is known or move to the LSC at Abercynon in September 2023. All 3 parents have opted to remain at the LSC in Perthcelyn, as a result an additional full time Learning Support Assistant (LSA) will be in place to enhance the staffing capacity of the LSC on an interim basis.
Estyn’s comment
<i>There are five separate proposals in the consultation and the document makes only general statements about disadvantages, such as 'The relocation of the named LSCs could potentially cause some limited disruption to the proposed host schools.' The consultation is not clear enough about potential risks associated with specific proposals or how the local authority will deal with them. The proposal does not set out clearly how the local authority will ensure that the disruption to learners is minimised,</i>

for example how it will support those pupils currently in any of the settings who are moved to a different provision.

Clarification

General risks are identified in the Consultation documentation and accompanying impact assessments. Overall, the proposal to open/relocate LSCs would deliver a significant improvement in the quality of educational provision for learners with ALN, having a significant positive impact upon the educational performance of pupils and staff morale. The proposals will ensure that all the LSCs will be compliant with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010 in fully integrated community schools.

In response to the queries raised, specific potential risks to each proposal are detailed:

Enhancing Welsh medium provision (opening of 2 primary phase Welsh medium LSCs at Rhydyfelin):

- Difficulty in the recruitment of Welsh medium specialist staff to work in the LSC. The Council is committed to retaining staff and there is a commitment with the Council's WESP to enhance the specialist Welsh medium workforce to meet the needs of ALN learners bi-lingually.
- If the proposal is not progressed RCT will not comply with the statutory duty to provide support for ALN learners through the medium of Welsh
- Potential disruption for pupils who currently access Welsh medium peripatetic service who meet eligibility criteria for placement at LSC who may wish to attend the designated LSC provisions. To minimise this the LA will involve parents/carers and relevant pupils as active participant in discussions regarding change of placement and transition if the proposals are progressed.

Enhancing ASD KS3/4 (opening a LSC at the new Hawthorn Primary/High school site)

- If the proposal is not progressed there will be insufficient ASD KS3/4 provision to meet the needs of learners

Enhancing Early Years Provision (establishing Early Years Assessment LSC for pupils under statutory school age)

- If the proposal is not progressed there will be insufficient Early Years specialist provision to meet the needs of learners

Relocation of Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber:

- Placement in this LSC is designed to be short term, therefore pupils currently accessing the provision are highly likely to have naturally moved on to their long term educational placement by the implementation date. For those that remain in the LSC at the point of implementation, it is recognised that there may be disruption to the pupils moving to the new location. However, to mitigate this, the current staff will be relocating with the class and pupils to provide continuity of care and support and a robust planned enhanced transition process will be implemented. This will also ensure continuity in educational provision
- If the proposal does not progress pupils will be unable to access an appropriate 21st Century environment due to the limitations of the current physical environment

Creation of through ASD primary phase LSC provision (relocation of LSC at Abercynon to Perthcelyn LSC):

- If the proposal does not progress then pupils will continue to have to undertake additional transitions compared to mainstream peers.
- It is recognised that there will be disruption to the pupils moving to the new location. However, to mitigate this the current staff will be relocating with the class and pupils to provide continuity of care and support and a robust planned enhanced transition process will be implemented. This will also ensure continuity in educational provision.
- Alternative arrangements could be considered for individual pupils, including learners remaining in their existing school but in a supported mainstream context – please refer to the conclusion below.
- For pupils who currently attend Abercynon LSC and may need to travel further to Perthcelyn transport will be provided in line with the Learner Travel Policy, it is noted for some pupils the move to the new LSC will be closer to their home address.

Robust transition plans will be put in place for any pupils directly affected by the proposals, which will be planned collaboratively with parents and staff and involve additional support from specialist members of staff from Access and Inclusion.

Estyn's comment

The proposer only states that alternatives have been considered, without giving clear information as to what, or why they were discounted.

Clarification

In light of the requirements of the ALNET Act maintaining the status quo would mean that RCT would not be meeting its statutory duty to review the sufficiency of its ALN provision. This would result in the Council not meeting the needs of children and young people with ALN, increased pressure on parents/carers, increase in ALN tribunals and increase in cost in placing pupils in specialist out of county provisions.

There is clearly identified need for this provision within RCT and it would be in children and young people's best interest to address this. Some consideration was given to re-directing resources to further enhance the capacity of mainstream schools to meet need in local community schools. However, in light of the severity and complexity of pupils' identified needs this was not considered appropriate as the pupils are deemed to require bespoke specialist provision.

Consideration was given to expanding provision within established LSCs, however this was discounted due to a lack of physical capacity.

Consideration was also given to exploring out of county Welsh medium provision however this would incur a significant increase in cost of placements and transport and would not provide a long time solution to the Council meeting its statutory duty to deliver a bi-lingual system.

Historically as an alternative to a Welsh medium LSC the LA has implemented a virtual Welsh medium LSC whereby pupils are supported by peripatetic specialist staff within their mainstream school. In light of feedback from the Welsh medium sector and the

requirement of ALNET to develop a fully bilingual system it is now considered appropriate to establish primary phase Welsh medium LSCs to provide a more equitable provision in line with English medium provision.

The LA implements an Early Years Enhanced Transition Service for pre statutory school aged pupils entering mainstream nursery provision. Whilst acknowledging the success of this approach in building the capacity of mainstream settings to support pupils with emerging ALN many EY pupils have been identified as requiring higher level of Additional Learning Provision (ALP) that can be provided in mainstream. Since the inception of the Early Years Forum in September 2021 to comply with the new statutory requirements of the ALNET Act for children aged 0-3 years data as at 30th January 2023 demonstrates that 294 pupils have been discussed by the Forum. Of these pupils, 40 have been allocated placements within specialist settings and an additional 14 pupils have changed placement from mainstream to specialist provision following a period of assessment.

No alternatives were considered to opening the additional LSC provision at the new Hawthorn site due to the significant demand, severity of needs of pupils and the current capacity issues for specialist ASD placements in the Taf district in comparison to the Rhondda and Cynon districts.

Abercynon was considered the best location to host 2 Early Years LSCs due to its geographical location in relation to other Early Years provisions within the County Borough together with its 21st Century environment. This in turn determined that a through ASD provision would also be proposed on the Perthcelyn school site.

Estyn's comment

There are no projections or estimates for numbers of future pupils with ALN. For example, the local authority is proposing to create 18 Welsh medium places for pupils with ALN at Rhydyfelin but have not identified the demand for those places. Similarly, two of the schools in the proposal are currently being built, but the proposer has not provided an estimate of projected pupil numbers.

Clarification

During the academic year 2022/23, the Welsh Complex Needs Team supported 12 pupils with an age range of Year 2 to Year 11. Pupils currently accessing the Welsh medium virtual class model will be offered a placement within the Welsh medium class, there is evidence of an increase in requests for involvement of Access & Inclusion Staff. 7% of pupils currently accessing English medium LSC provision moved from a Welsh medium school. It is difficult to identify potential demand for a Welsh medium LSC provision as this is a newly established provision, and as such we don't have historical trend data.

Since the inception of the Early Years Forum in September 2021 to comply with the new statutory requirements of the ALNET Act for children aged 0-3 years data as at 30th January 2023 demonstrates that 294 pupils have been discussed by the Forum. Of these pupils, 40 have been allocated placements within specialist settings and an additional 14 pupils have changed placement from mainstream to specialist provision

following a period of assessment. It is important to note that this data related to both English and Welsh medium learners.

Estyn's comment

However, the consultation document does not provide clear enough information on a range of educational aspects of the proposals as identified in the School Organisation Code, such as the impact of the proposals on the quality of teaching, the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum, and leadership and management.

Clarification

The LSCs are collaboratively line managed by the host headteacher and central Access & Inclusion staff. Roles and responsibilities of the above are clearly defined in the LA School Learning Support Class Agreement, this includes matters relating to the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. There is a robust quality assurance process in place to ensure both the school and LSC staff are well supported and that LSC provision meets all necessary statutory requirements.

Standards

The LSCs will be located in modern flexible learning environments and have access to enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. In addition, increasing the number of LSCs will ensure that a greater number of learners with significant and complex ALN have access to additional learning provision that enhances their progress in relation to their individual targets and starting points. This is monitored through the LSC Quality Assurance process in collaboration with the head teacher.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Access to specialist learning provisions where the individual needs of learners with complex ALN can be met through individualised additional learning provision within 21st century environments will have a positive impact upon learner and staff wellbeing. Increasing the specialist provision hosted by mainstream schools will enable learners with ALN to play a full part in the life and work of the school alongside their mainstream peers.

LSC provision designed to provide specialist additional learning provision will ensure increased participation and engagement of learners in their learning and promote resilience. This will be achieved by detailed bespoke planning in line with the identified needs of pupils.

Teaching and learning experience

The LSCs will provide a balanced curriculum at all stages in line with the new Curriculum for Wales – 2022. A 21st century learning environment would also provide pupils with greater flexibility and therefore greater choice and opportunities in their learning experience. The LSCs will provide a range of strategies and interventions to meet the needs of individual learners with significant difficulties with access to a wide range of multi-sensory and digital resources to enhance their learning. Bespoke assessment and planning to meet individual needs for example through LA maintained Individual Development Plans (IDPs) will ensure that pupils make progress from individual starting points.

Care, support and guidance

LSCs will have a strong focus upon supporting learners' emotional and social needs and opportunities to work collaboratively with mainstream peers in their host mainstream schools. This will include opportunities to access activities within their local community.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of LSCs is undertaken collaboratively by the hosting Headteacher and Learner Support Service Co-ordinators in the Access & Inclusion Service to ensure high expectations for learners are achieved. This is supported by a comprehensive quality assurance process and a LA / School LSC agreement that details respective roles and responsibilities of the LA, host schools and LSC staff.

8. Assessment of Consultation

In view of the responses and comments received during the consultation period the proposals have been revisited and the following matters have been reassessed:

- The likely impact of the proposals on the quality and standards of education;
- The likely impact on the community; and
- The likely effect of differing travelling arrangements.

After further consideration, the proposals remain to be the most appropriate and as such minor modifications to Proposal 1 and 2 have been made. The implementation date for both proposals has been amended to September 2024.

9. Conclusion

The proposals to realign LSC provision will ensure that RCT has undertaken its statutory duty under the ALNET Act (2018) to review arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within the county borough and has identified necessary steps to ensure the sufficiency of its provision for pupils with significant ALN who require specialist placement.

The proposals support the delivery of the RCT WESP and one of the core aims of the ALNET Act by working towards the development of a fully bilingual ALN system within the county borough.

The proposals will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and access to significantly improved premises which have benefited from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme and investment.

Following consideration of the responses to the consultation, it is recommended that Members agree to the immediate publication of the attached Consultation Report and agree to give officers approval to publish the appropriate Statutory Notices to progress with Proposals 1 & 2 with amendments as follows:

Proposal 1 (amended): To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from September 2024. *(Amended from April 2024)*

Proposal 2 (amended): To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from September 2024. *(Amended from April 2024)*

This will reduce the number of pupils affected by the proposals.

It is recommended that Members also agree to the publication of Statutory Notices to progress with Proposals 3, 4 & 5 without modifications as follows:

Proposal 3: To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School taking effect from April 2024.

Proposal 4: To establish two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at Ysgol Awel Taf the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN taking effect from September 2024.

Proposal 5: To establish one LSC for pupils in Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site, Ysgol Afon Wen taking effect from September 2024.

**Scanned consultation responses (letters/emails), petitions,
on-line proforma responses**

Timetable of Consultation Events

School Affected	Group-Pupils/ Staff/Parents	Date
Abercynon Primary Community School	School Council	12th June 2023
	Staff	
	Parents	
Perthcelyn Primary School	School Council	13th June 2023
	Staff	
	Parents	
Penrhiwceiber Primary School	School Council	14th June 2023
	Staff	
	Parents	
New 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site	Staff/Temporary Governing Body	15th June 2023
		16th June 2023
New Welsh medium School	Parents	
Heol-y-Celyn Primary School	School Council	15th June 2023
YGG Pontsion Norton	School Council	22nd June 2023
Hawthorn Primary School	School Council	15th June 2023
Hawthorn High School	School Council	15th June 2023

Notes of Consultation Events

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Abercynon Community Primary School		
Venue:	Abercynon Community Primary School		
Date	12/06/2023	Number of School Staff:	23
Number of Pupils	13	Number of Parents:	14
Type of meeting:	School Council, Staff/Governing Body, Parents	Number of Governors:	8
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Ceri Jones, Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>Ceri and Lisa provided an overview of the proposals for Abercynon. Below is a summary of the comments made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pupil raised concerns that the LSC pupils had spent their school life in Abercynon so doesn't know if they would like a new school. They also said that the LSC pupils could have issues getting to school because of the move. Kate explained the effects of transition on ASD pupils and talked about the importance of reducing transitions and that the pupils may have access to transport under the LA Home School Transport Policy. • All members of the school council thought the proposals were a good idea although they had some concerns. • The pupils talked about friendships with pupils from the ASD class and believed that they might not be able to see them again. • A member of the school council thought the ASD pupils might have problems with settling with new friends and that could mean they won't learn anything. Friends can also support the ASD pupils' education. • The school council said that the ASD pupils show other staff/class their work. • The school council said that ASD pupils also take part in school activities to feel included as well as completing work in classrooms. • The pupils raised concerns around "Comfort teachers" potentially not moving with the children. Kate confirmed that the ASD teachers will be moving with the pupils. • One pupil questioned around "split-placement". Kate talked again about reducing transitions and how a split-placement could disrupt and upset ASD pupils. • The school council mentioned that ASD pupils use the outdoor equipment such as tennis courts and the yards with pupils from the other classes. • The school council feel that opening younger classes is good as they can make friends and keep them across their time in the school. • Including mainstream classes with the ASD pupils is seen as positive as the pupils are a benefit to the school. 			

- Hazel pupils are “very funny” and are characters around the school. All the pupils have particular interests.
- The class pupils are included in gymnastics, meaning they could learn alongside other pupils.
- Pupils from Hazel enjoy activities such as acting/dancing.

Staff/Governing Body

Ceri provided an overview of the proposals. Below is a summary of the comments made.

- A question was raised regarding what will happen to the teachers if the proposals are accepted. Ceri confirmed that permanent LSC staff would be relocating alongside pupils to reduce stress and disruption of pupils transition.
- Has an alternative for Penrhiwceiber been considered? Ceri responded that due to the outdoor environment restrictions then the preferred option is to re-locate the provision to 21st Century School environment.
- Concerns were raised regarding the transition of older pupils currently in the class from Abercynon as there would be an extra transition and the potential negative impact of this. The staff mentioned that pupils will experience anxiety and stress as a consequence of the proposed move.
- There was dialogue around the new Assessment and Observation Foundation Phase LSC, acknowledging placement in this LSC is short-term and that the pupil would be transitioning further once suitable placement had been identified.
- Why can't the class go from Penrhiwceiber to Perthcelyn? Ceri responded that placing the class in Abercynon would result in an increased geographical catchment area to include lower Rhondda, Cynon and Taf. The classroom identified within Perthcelyn is more suited for Key Stage 2 pupils as opposed to Early Years.
- Concerns were raised regarding the transport of pupils, Ceri advised that transport would be provided in line with the LA's Home to School Transport Policy.
- The staff felt that there is an underestimation of how much the Hazel class pupils are included in the school. They feel the LSC is being treated by the LA as a separate entity. The pupils from the LSC benefit from the inclusive practices of the school. A&I officers reiterated that classes are considered as part of the school and bring benefits to mainstream provision.
- The group highlighted the importance and benefits that community-based activities have on Hazel class pupils. The group felt that the community facilities are better in Abercynon than Perthcelyn. Kate responded that in line with new curriculum for Wales, the curriculum is designed by the school to build on the opportunities available in the school's locality. This will be unique to each setting but there is an expected consistency in the range learning opportunities and the specialist provision available in LSCs.
- The staff believe there will be gaps in staff expertise at Abercynon if the LSC staff move. It was highlighted that LSC staff are centrally employed and can be relocated to any LSC as required.
- The group felt that inclusion opportunities for the proposed Early Years Observation class would be different to those currently in place for Hazel class.
- A member of the governing body asked whether the previous relocations been successful? Ceri confirmed they were.
- The group felt that older students are better placed in larger schools as there is the potential for wider opportunities. Kate explained there is a quality assurance process in place to ensure there is equity between the different LSCs although

this is delivered in different way in line with the characteristics of the school the class is placed in. Ceri responded that there is no evidence of school size being detrimental to pupil's learning. It is dependent on the leadership and management of the school working in partnership with the service.

- A teacher felt that Perthcelyn has less to offer to the pupils. A&I officers explained that the expectation of the provision is the same just different classes have different opportunities and experiences in order to meet the pupil's needs. Ceri further expanded that pupils would be developing on the same pathway but there will be a range of opportunities dependent on what is available in the host school.
- LA officers were questioned why the decision has been made to relocate the classes. It was stated that there is an emphasis on through provision, also looking to modernise the classes by moving to modern and appropriate buildings.
- Questions were raised regarding costs of relocating classes as well as making classes fit for purpose. A&I officers replied that the cost of any developments to the classroom or playground of Perthcelyn Community Primary School would be centrally funded.
- Geographical aspect was addressed in relation to placements.
- Staff questioned if the school would be able to have the classroom back if their numbers increased. They commented the spare classroom is being used for a range of activities. Ceri confirmed that research had been undertaken regarding projected pupil numbers and this had been taken into account when considering this proposal.
- Staff commented that they believed that Perthcelyn has a spare classroom that isn't used. Kate advised that the Perthcelyn classroom would be more suitable for Key Stage 2 provision hence the proposal.
- LA officers were questioned if RCT would be considering opening additional classes in the future. It was confirmed that the service has as statutory duty to review the sufficiency of its ALN provision on a regular basis and further reviews would be undertaken.
- A member of the group asked why the proposed move was April and if the proposed move should be in September as a clean start. Staff felt that the changes will cause upheaval for children, staff – and cause anxiety. Officers reiterated that this was a consultation and that their opinions would be considered when developing the final proposals.
- Feels that the cost to the community is not being considered.
- Concerns were raised regarding the increase in traffic should the proposals go ahead with a second LSC at the school.

Parents

Ceri provided an overview of the proposals. Below is a summary of the comments made.

- The parents raised that pupil's needs change across a year. Ceri responded that a pupil's IDP would ensure that their needs and suitable provision were clearly identified and reviewed.
- A parent raised their concern that their child had only been attending LSC for a year and would need to be moved again.
- A parent asked why Abercynon is the only class being moved. Ceri explained that LSC provision is continuously reviewed in line with our statutory duty and further reviews will be undertaken in the future. A continuous aim of the service is to reduce the number of transitions. Ceri also explained the proposed changes to the LSCs were phased over several terms to ensure appropriate support could be provided.

- Parents expressed the pupils benefit from having access to the community and facilities – Perthcelyn has not got a community like Abercynon. They also stressed that being part of the community is important as it can lead to improved social, emotional and communication skills.
- A parent raised a concern that home life can be affected by transitions.
- It was stated by the parents that the inclusion of pupils in mainstream benefits Hazel class pupils.
- Parents believe that Abercynon Community Primary School has better facilities and are more accommodating than Perthcelyn Community Primary School. Parents stressed the importance of the community and friendship aspect. Parents stated that Perthcelyn did not have the facilities in the community to facilitate ASD children development – e.g. café, parks, library.
- The parents stated that children who are younger are less likely to be affected by transition. They felt that older children would be adversely affected and the proposal focuses on the younger pupils. “Children who are older are in their own ways and unlikely to adapt”.
- Parents questioned why the school could not accommodate the 2 ASD classes + the Early Years. Officers explained that there were only 2 classes available to host LSCs.
- Parents asked if the LA had considered moving the quieter Early Years Observation and Assessment LSC to a quieter school. Ceri advised the group that the proposal to host the Early Years Assessment and Observation LSC at Abercynon had been made due to the geographical area which would allow pupils from lower Rhondda, Taf and Cynon to access the provision. Additionally, by hosting both an Early Years Assessment and an Observation and Assessment LSCs it would provide additional opportunities and for pupils to access both provisions in the same setting.
- Parents were concerned that historically that the pupils had not been well supported during transition and what support will be put in place now. LA officers advised by parents that pupils will be supported by the LSC staff as they will be moving with the pupils.
- A parent questioned why the changes are being made in April 2024. Officers reiterated that this was a consultation and that their opinions would be considered when developing the final proposals.
- A parent raised concerns that they felt their private information had been shared inappropriately. Officers encouraged the parent to submit any supporting evidence of their concerns.
- A parent stated they felt the proposal had been influenced by a parent from Perthcelyn. Lisa reassured that the proposals were written by LA officers following of their existing provision.
- Parents feel that the process has not been followed and will raise it. Officers encouraged the parent to submit any supporting evidence of their concerns.

Ceri & Lisa described in detail the process of the consultation

- Parents feel that the outdoor facilities are a reason for the children to remain in current provision.
- Parents feel that as the pupils are more established here, they should remain here and the new classes should be placed elsewhere.
- Parents described the massive benefits in Abercynon Community Primary School compared to being placed in other units.
- Parents feel that disruption is not short term but long term.

- Parents raised concerns that they would not be able to access transport to the proposed school as they would be in the catchment area based off transport policy and how this would affect their child. Ceri described the gatekeeping process and reiterated that transport was provided in line with the LA Home to School Transport Policy. Parents feel that there are financial winners and losers – (if you are outside of X miles you cannot claim amount).
- Accessibility issues raised in terms of walking to proposed school due to hills.
- Parents reiterate that there is no benefit to their children from this proposed change.
- Asked if Education Psychology have reviewed these proposed changes – Could a medical professional make a judgment/have input on these changes? Ceri advised the group that no medical professional could impact on the education placement of a pupil.
- Parents feel that LA is taking children with communication and social disorders and moving them out to the “wilderness”.
- Parents felt that the school has everything here, praised staff, facilities and space. Parents can see the benefits of attending the current class in developing their children.
- Parents felt that there was no reason for pupils to move from Abercynon to the proposed school

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Perthcelyn Primary School		
Venue:	Perthcelyn Primary School		
Date	13/06/2023	Number of School Staff:	4
Number of Pupils:	9	Number of Parents:	6
Type of meeting:	School Council, Staff/Governing Body, Parents	Number of Governors	4
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>School Council were provided with an overview of the proposals, officers sought their opinions. The following is a summary of their comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils believed the proposals were a good idea. • School council said that the younger ASD pupils can stay in the same school and maintain friendships as well as make new friends across classes. • It was identified that Dosbath Pinc do not go into junior classes but work alongside other infant age classes. Junior pupils enjoy helping Dosbarth Pinc pupils. • Dosbarth Pinc is integrated within the school and included in activities – Sports Day, Eisteddfod, assembly, lunchtimes mix with other pupils in the yard. • It was highlighted that a former pupil of Dosbarth Pinc transitioned to mainstream. • Pupils in the ASD LSC in Abercynon Primary will be reunited with old friends if they move to Perthcelyn. • Pupils queried where the classroom would be placed. It was clarified that it will be joining the classroom which adjoins the Foundation Phase LSC. • Including another class will help them understand what life is like for pupils with ASD as they get older. Including more ASD pupils will teach others that people are different, will add more tolerance to people who are different in the school. • It was suggested that older ASD pupils could help out with younger ASD pupils. • Pupils in the class could access local resources such as the park, community centre (clubs) and the fields. Perthcelyn has lots of countryside surrounding the school and is located close to the local village. A lot of community activities are available including using the paddling pool/pool committee and the church. ASD Rainbows is situated nearby. Pool has recently undergone huge developmental works and has opened. • It was suggested there might be holiday activities and after school at ASD Rainbows • Pupils in the class will also be able join in with school trips such as theme parks, Techniquet, folly farm. • The children look forward to having a new class, they had no concerns. • Questioned who would be in the class. Kate mentioned the ASD class will transition alongside the staff. 			

Staff/Governing Body

Lisa provided an overview of the consultation process.

- A question was raised regarding surveys and feedback, how does this affect the proposals? The answer was provided that Cabinet will review all documentation received during the consultation process. The Access & Inclusion Service have a duty to provide a response to all comments and include them in the consultation response document.
- The general consensus was that there was fear that there would be an imbalance of influence of the petitions due to the different sizes of the impacted communities as Abercynon has a larger community and school population than Perthcelyn. Fears that all changes could be overturned if enough noise is made. Concerns were raised it would set a precedent if proposals can be overturned with no rationale, just a large number of names on a petition.

Kate provided an overview of the consultation proposals.

- Consensus is agreement with the proposals.
- A&I staff encouraged attendees to utilise the survey and provide further correspondence to express their views.
- A&I staff emphasized that anybody who wants to provide feedback can.
- It was identified that considerations need to be made for pupils mentioned in parent meeting who may need to transition to Abercynon then back to Perthcelyn if the proposal is accepted.
- The staff were of the viewpoint that children from a younger age are less likely to deal with transition, one attendee believed that change is easier when older.
- All members believe that the proposed changes are all positive for the younger pupils.
- Staff felt parents prefer to attend the school in general due to the facilities.
- Kate explained the location rationale and adapted classrooms as to part of the rationale for the accessibility aspect of the proposals.
- School is reputable for being inclusive and staff work collectively to incorporate inclusion across the school.
- Some pupils from Abercynon are former pupils so will have experienced the school beforehand.
- Discussion around the importance of variety of provision to meet the demand of different needs across the LA.

Parents

Lisa provided an overview of the consultation process and Kate provided an overview of the consultation proposals.

- Concerns were raised that children are likely to suffer due to transition. Parents felt pupils would be moved from Perthcelyn to Abercynon and then back to Perthcelyn. Parent cited long-term disruption to education and personal development. Could the pupils due to transition in September stay at Perthcelyn if the class is to be moved. Parents discussed the preparation and the negative effect of transitioning. Kate answered that the individual pupil needs would be considered and discussed with parents in preparation for year 3.
- Parents stated that they feel their children are thriving emotionally, academically, and socially and would not want any disruption to impact on progress.
- Parents discussed their children and feel that transitioning will have negative impact on child's learning. Fear of regression and long-term effects of transitioning.

- Parents have raised funding personally to develop the facilities at Perthcelyn and want their children to continue to benefit from it.

Lisa expanded on the consultation process as questions were asked regarding whether the decision has been made already.

- A parent asked about the geographical location of the Early Years LSC. Kate provided explanation as to why the classes have been selected from a geographical perspective as well as a fully accessible environment in a 21st century school.
- A parent raised concerns that the transition between foundation phase and Key Stage 2 had a detrimental effect on the pupil's access to education and therefore supported the case for through provision.
- Parents stated they accepted the place in the LSC as the school is smaller and quieter. The parents believe the pupils have thrived in the current setting and were concerned that moving to a much larger school would have a negative impact.
- A parent questioned if Estyn reports would be taken into consideration. Access & Inclusion staff confirmed that we are required to seek feedback from Estyn and this will be detailed in the consultation response report.
- The parent was pleased with the recognition by Estyn of the work undertaken in Perthcelyn in relation to pupil wellbeing. The parent felt this was the most important factor for her.
- Parents talked about how different community facilities can benefit different children. Kate explained how the new curriculum for Wales should be adapted to build on local available resource. There is an expectation that a commensurate provision is made across all learning support classes of the same designation however this is adapted and developed to capitalise on the resources of the local community.
- Parents raised concerns around public response to the proposed changes and they felt they were experiencing hostility from those objecting to the move from Abercynon. Parents felt that Abercynon are shouting the loudest and causing large disruption which could impact the outcome of the consultation. Parents felt that people could sign petition with no link or understanding of the proposals and influence the decision.

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Penrhiwceiber Primary School		
Venue:	Penrhiwceiber Primary School		
Date	14/06/2023	Number of School Staff:	4
Number of Pupils:	6	Number of Parents:	0
Type of meeting:	School Council, Staff/Governing Body, Parents	Number of Governors	3
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>Lisa provided overview of the proposal effecting Penrhiwceiber. The following is the summary of the comments made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions were held regarding the current outdoor play area and classroom size for the Penrhiwceiber LSC pupils. A pupil thought the outdoor area is too small and that sometimes Dosbarth Chestnut goes on the main yard. A member of the school council thought it would be better for Dosbarth Chestnut to have more space to learn outside. • One pupil believes the pupils should move due to larger space to move around for play. They spoke about a particular pupil who needs additional space. • The school council felt that it would be a big change for Dosbarth Chestnut. • The school council felt that the children may initially find it tricky to settle as they are not used to it. • It was identified that Dosbarth Chestnut pupils do not stay for long but when pupils are in the younger years, they play with Dosbarth Chestnut at break and lunch time. • The school council felt it would be emotional for Dosbarth Chestnut to leave. Lisa confirmed that the current teacher and permanent assistants would move alongside the class to help settle them. • A member said Dosbarth Chestnut could make more friends in a different school. • A suggestion was made by the school council that they could visit the children. • Discussions were held around how the school could use the space freed up from moving the class. Ideas included a reading corner, a homework station or making “the burrow” bigger. • One member asked if we could make the classroom bigger or rearrange other classrooms. The headteacher explained that there would not be enough space for all the current classes and that making the classroom bigger would be difficult due to the slope and the different height of ground outside of the classroom. • All members of the council said they would feel sad if Dosbarth Chestnut moved although they believe the proposal is a good idea. 			
Staff/Governing Body			

Lisa provided an overview of the process; Kate provided an overview of the proposals. The following is a summary of the comments made.

- A Staff member mentioned their concerns regarding school accessibility in the morning. Currently, there are severe disruption to pupils trying to access the school on foot due to taxi's dropping off the LSC pupils and the parent's cars. Alternatives have been previously explored although it is not possible to adapt the drop-off area due to the geography of the site. Particularly, the steep, narrow streets surrounding the school.
- Accessibility issues were raised as current LSC pupils need guidance up and down multiple sets of steps. A&I staff informed the school's staff that more children are being identified with mobility issues. An aim of the proposal is address this by placing the LSC in a 21st century school which is accessible by design.
- Staff said that it will be sad for the class to leave although there is a need for a space for outdoor learning and want what is best for the children.
- Staff pointed out to the credit of the school's pupils that they have been very inclusive to Dosbarth Chestnut.
- Following the school council, on returning to class, the pupils fed back to staff that they will feel sad but recognise the children's needs need to be met.
- Staff raised questions regarding whether the LSC pupils will adapt and if a larger volume of pupils will affect the LSC pupils. The staff report that some pupils currently do not go out if there is too much noise and so a small school is seen as a benefit.
- A member identified the financial impact as the school is centrally funded and the school will lose a percentage of funding which helps cover site costs. This led to a member questioning if developments can be made on the site. Another member addressed this and provided rationale as to why changes could not be made using the same reasons as detailed above.
- A&I staff were questioned as to what would happen to staff working in the LSC. It was highlighted that permanent staff in that class will move alongside the pupils. Staff felt that 3 members are needed to manage the class and talked regarding the Enhanced Capacity Funding currently being received.
- A member believed that it's a struggle to cater for the needs of 7 LSC pupils in their current classroom due to the restriction in size and lack of outdoor space.
- A member identified additional staffing would be needed for larger Early Years classes. A&I officers clarified that pupil numbers would stay the same and the new proposed class would have its own allocated staff. A member questioned if there may be job opportunities for non-permanent staff as a new class is opened. A&I officers confirmed that the new class was increased capacity and would require new staff.
- A member talked about how valuable non-permanent the staff member is as they understand the children's needs.
- The staff felt that the changing room developments made LSC classroom smaller in Penrhawceiber Community Primary School.
- The same staff member identified that the furniture is not suitable for the current pupil's needs.
- The consensus was that the move is difficult for staff and could be for children in transition although the children's needs are the priority.
- It was asked if staff could visit Abercynon to check the facilities. They also asked if the secure outdoor area needs to be split if multiple classes have access. A&I

staff informed the staff that they could visit the provision with prior arrangement with A&I.

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023

School Name:	Heol y Celyn Primary School
Venue:	Heol y Celyn Primary School
Date	15/06/2023
Number of Pupils	6
Type of meeting:	School Council, Staff/Governing Body, Parents
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths

School Council

Lisa gave an overview of the proposals.

- School council believe that the proposals were a good idea.
- When asked for opinions on the proposal, one pupil said that having the classes would mean there are new and more resources for the LSC pupils and themselves.
- The school council also believe adding new classes will help them and other pupils understand different additional learning needs and how they can help.
- The school council looked forward to the opening of new classes, no concerns were raised.

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Hawthorn Primary School		
Venue:	Hawthorn Primary School		
Date	15/06/2023	Number of School Council:	6
Type of meeting:	School Council		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>Kate provided an overview of the proposals, the following is a summary of the comments they made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the pupils thought it was a good idea, they felt the new class would help pupils learn and support those that need it. • The group were asked what they knew about Autism, one pupil told us about a club that she attends where her friend has autism and how they do things differently to include her. • The pupils felt it would help themselves understand older pupils with Autism and they could help the pupils in the class learn. • Kate was asked where would the class be? Kate explained it will have its own class within the school but that the pupils will come into their classes, and may join them during playtimes and lunch breaks • A pupil asked Kate what do you do to help the pupils? Kate explained that there are teachers and learning support assistants that help the pupils with their learning, providing extra support to those pupils that struggle with change for example, they have lessons on how to learn to read emotions. The smaller classes gives pupils with ASD a safe place to learn, as some prefer small classes rather than in a mainstream class but others learn better in a larger class • Will it be in the new school? Yes it will open once the new school opens 			

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	YGG Pontsion Norton		
Venue:	YGG Pontsion Norton		
Date	22/06/2023	Number of Pupils:	7
Type of meeting:	School Council		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Iwan Griffiths, Ailsa Reynolds		
School Council			
<p>Ailsa and Lisa provided an overview of the proposals. Below is a summary of the school council's comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of the school council asked whether it's been decided on how many pupils will be in the new classes? Lisa provided an explanation around the number of teachers and LSA's in the class. A member of the school council asked what kind of needs the class will have. Ailsa informed the student council that the class is for children with significant learning needs in the medium of Welsh and that pupils with different needs can access the class. Ailsa described that the pupils would come from across RCT and will be transported by taxis. • The student council have no issues with the new classes proposed and feel the changes are a good idea. One pupil discussed how a smaller class would be good for pupils that struggle in larger classes. • A member of the school council asked would the other boys and girls be able to play with the LSC pupils. Lisa advised that the school will encourage inclusion in all areas including, playtime, celebrations, assemblies, school trips and shared class lessons. • A member of the school council asked if the LSC pupils will do the same work but slower than the mainstream classes. Ailsa advised that it's dependent on the pupil's needs of the class. The LSC pupils will follow the same topics in school but their learning will incorporate what works best for the LSC pupils based off their needs. • A member of the school council asked if there are too many pupils in the new LSC class, what will happen? Lisa discussed class size as mentioned earlier by Ailsa. Lisa also said that if there are too many pupils, Access & Inclusion would look to open a new LSC in a different school. 			

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Hawthorn High School		
Venue:	Hawthorn High School		
Date	15/06/2023	Number of School Council:	6
Type of meeting:	School Council		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>Iwan provided an overview of the proposal in relation to LSC provision within the New Hawthorn School, the following is a summary of the comments the council raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers were asked why was it designated KS3/4 and not primary as well? Kate explained that we have sufficient primary provision at the moment, pupils thought we should consider opening provision for younger pupils. • Good idea to provide help to pupils who would be struggling, a pupil believes the mainstream pupils of the schools will be accepting of pupils with autism. The pupil spoke fondly of a pupil with additional learning needs and how everyone had included them. • The pupils felt the class would allow specific support to be provided in a dedicated environment and would be beneficial all round to both pupils and staff. • They are used to pupils coming into their class and then leaving to go back to their base from the speech and language LSC. • A pupil explained that the Hive is used to support pupils at the moment, those that need to chill out or for help with English, Maths, or if they are stressed, the staff do activities that can help pupils. Pupils thought that the Hive could help pupils in the LSC and questioned if the Hive could be expanded for the LSC pupils. • A pupil questioned if the LSC would be accessible for pupils not diagnosed with autism? Kate explained due to the wait list for a diagnosis following Covid, we look at the needs of the pupils and the support the individual requires to learn, equally some pupils with a diagnosis can access mainstream provision. • A pupil questioned if the pupils would have extra transition days. Officers responded that yes additional transition opportunities or days would be planned to meet individual pupil needs. • One pupil had a LSC in their primary school so they are used to having a class. • The group discussed the benefits of having ASD specialist within the school environment and how this would help all staff. 			

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	New Hawthorn School & New Rhydyfelin School		
Venue:	Teams		
Date	15/06/2023	Number of Participants:	2 – Members of Staff from Hawthorn High and 1 Councillor
Type of meeting:	Temporary Governing Bodies of the new Hawthorn 3-16 School and New Welsh Medium School		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
Temp Gov Body			
<p>Lisa provided overview of the consultation process. Kate provided overview of the proposals. The following is a summary of the comments made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member asked if the proposals would affect the provision of the current Speech and Language LSC in Hawthorn High. A&I staff responded by clarifying that the 2 LSCs are independent and so the proposal will increase provision and staffing. • A member of staff questioned how the class would be organised within the school. Kate referred to practise in the existing ASD LSCs where pupils access approximately 60% of their provision in mainstream. Integration into mainstream will be encouraged alongside specialist interventions focused on social communication skills. • It was asked how many new staff will be employed for the new LSC on the Hawthorn primary/high site. Kate informed the member that a LSC teacher and LSC assistants will be centrally funded and provided to schools. • It was asked if an IDP could contain 1-to-1 support. Kate discussed in detail the different support available for pupils with an IDP and confirmed that 1-to-1 is not allocated in an IDP. • Discussions were held around the building design of the new 3-16 school in Hawthorn. Lisa informed the members that the proposed LSC classroom had been identified when plans were drawn up, therefore the school does have capacity for this proposal. A member talked about the importance of making sure the school is fit for purpose. A&I staff discussed how provision discussions were held during the planning stage and so factors such as noise level and space were considered. • A member questioned whether LSC pupils will be required to sit exams. Kate clarified that students will sit exams. • A member questioned how the LA will support the school in setting up the class. A&I staff informed the member that once the consultation was complete and 			

agreed on, the SEN Coordinator will work to develop the provision alongside the school. Resources, provision and training opportunities will be made available.

- A member asked if the LSC posts are identified in the staffing structure of the school. Lisa clarified that the LSC posts are not included in the structure of the school. LSC staff are centrally funded and appointed in collaboration with the school.
- A member identified that the emphasis of the consultation is to reduce transition and highlighted that the new 3-16 school in Hawthorn is an excellent example of where through provision could be placed. A&I staff fed back that currently there is sufficient primary ASD provision however, there is insufficient secondary provision. A&I officers noted the suggestion. It was accepted by the member that not all changes can be made at the same time and suggested that this could be looked at in the future.
- A member felt that the current proposals were focused on reducing transitions of younger pupils and not older pupils. A&I staff talked about Porth Community School that currently hosts LSCs at all age group levels and that in the future this approach may be incorporated into more schools.
- A member praised the concept of converting the Council Offices in the Pavilions to a special school to increase provision.
- The structure of the consultation response proforma was queried. Lisa clarified this had been rectified on the online proforma which breaks down each proposal.
- Kate stated that the proposals are still in consultation phase and feedback is valued. Kate encouraged contribution from members.
- A member was unsure why the temporary governing body and pupils were met with of the affected schools in the catchment area although not the existing staff and school governors. Member would have preferred school governors to have given formal input to the consultation. Lisa encouraged the member to share the consultation response proforma with the school governors.
- It was asked where would the class be situated on campus? At this moment in time, Lisa had only seen the classroom location on a development map. The classroom has been allocated by 21st century in the new building. It is unclear if the proposed LSC will be in the same area of the school as the Hawthorn Speech and Language LSC.

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	New Hawthorn School & New Rhydyfelin School		
Venue:	Hawthorn Leisure Centre		
Date	16/06/2023	Number of Participants:	0
Type of meeting:	Parents of pupils that could attend the new Hawthorn 3-16 School and New Welsh Medium School		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths, Ailsa Reynolds		
Temp Gov Body			
No parents attended.			

Estyn Report

Proposal to reconfigure mainstream learning support class provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals. Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

The proposal is to:

- To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School with effect from April 2024.
- To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3- 6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
- To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.
- To establish two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.
- To establish one LSC for pupils in Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.

Summary/ Conclusion

Estyn welcomes the local authority's move to improve provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and recognises the merit of many of the strategies in the consultation. This includes increasing full-time specialist provision for pupils with significant ALN in Welsh medium schools which was an aspect identified in the recent local government education services inspection. Overall, it is Estyn's view that the information provided suggests that proposals are likely to improve

the provision for learners in the local authority. However, there are a few aspects of the proposals that need strengthening and these are identified in our response.

Description and benefits

The local authority has given a clear rationale for the overall proposal. It aims to realign ALN provision to meet the needs of pupils, to establish additional Welsh medium learning support classes (LSCs) to enable pupils with significant ALN to access full-time specialist Welsh medium provision, to reduce the number of transitions between placements for vulnerable pupils and to meet the demand for early intervention.

The consultation document contains a projected timetable for statutory procedures and clear end dates for each of the five proposals, for example identifying when new provision will open. It is unclear whether there are any proposed interim arrangements, which might be necessary for their implementation.

The local authority has identified well the expected benefits of the proposal but has not set out clearly potential disadvantages. It recognises advantages fairly, such as improving the range of facilities and learning resources available to pupils. However, there are five separate proposals in the consultation and the document makes only general statements about disadvantages, such as 'The relocation of the named LSCs could potentially cause some limited disruption to the proposed host schools.' The consultation is not clear enough about potential risks associated with specific proposals or how the local authority will deal with them. The proposal does not set out clearly how the local authority will ensure that the disruption to learners is minimised, for example how it will support those pupils currently in any of the settings who are moved to a different provision.

The proposal document identifies appropriately that doing nothing would mean that the local authority would not be meeting its statutory duty and that there is an identified need for this provision. However, the proposer only states that alternatives have been considered, without giving clear information as to what, or why they were discounted.

The local authority has considered adequately the impact of the changes on learner travel arrangements and on accessibility of provision. The proposal identifies that transportation would be provided in line with the council's policy and placement made in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting. It notes that if pupils are placed within a LSC they may be required to travel out of catchment, although they will endeavour to place pupils in the nearest appropriate LSC to their home address.

The proposer identifies the number of pupils currently at each school and an estimate of future numbers. However, there are no projections or estimates for numbers of future pupils with ALN. For example, the local authority is

proposing to create 18 Welsh medium places for pupils with ALN at Rhydyfelin but have not identified the demand for those places. Similarly, two of the schools in the proposal are currently being built, but the proposer has not provided an estimate of projected pupil numbers.

The proposal takes good account of the impact of the proposals on Welsh medium provision within the local authority and the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Educational aspects of the proposal

The local authority identifies fairly a range of benefits of the proposal and the potential impact on vulnerable pupils. The proposer identifies that

- The relocation of the LSC provision to Abercynon Primary School should provide a more coordinated approach and improved continuum of ASD provision for pupils in the Cynon Valley.
- Relocating the LSC currently hosted at Penrhiwceiber Primary School will ensure the pupils have access to suitable outdoor play areas which is fundamental to Early Years learning.
- The proposals to create an enhanced through provision at Perthcelyn should ensure that pupils are not required to undertake any additional transitions and will allow those pupils who meet the criteria for the LSC to remain at the provision until the end of Year 6.
- The creation of Welsh language ALN provision at Rhydyfelin will ensure that the local authority addressed the current gap in primary-age Welsh medium LSC provision.

However, the consultation document does not provide clear enough information on a range of educational aspects of the proposals as identified in the School Organisation Code, such as the impact of the proposals on the quality of teaching, the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum, and leadership and management.

The proposal provides information from the most recent Estyn reports for each school likely to be affected.

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Community Impact Assessment

This Community Impact Assessment is prepared in accordance with the School Organisation Code – 2018 (011/2018). It is to be read alongside the Consultation Document, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and the Equality Impact Assessment as the information in all documents is related and the themes within them are cross-cutting.

Section 2.3 of the School Organisation Code – 2018 refers to regulated alterations to a school which includes:

- The introduction or removal of SEN/ALN provision or any change in the type of such provision. This is where the provision is in a mainstream school but the pupils who are admitted are in addition to admission number of the school. The provision **must** also be recognised by the local authority as reserved for pupils with SEN/ALN;

The proposals include:

- To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
- To transfer the LSC for Years 3-6 pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
- To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.
- To establish two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.
- To establish one LSC for pupils Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.

The proposals are to be consulted on between 5th June and 14th July 2023. A detailed Consultation Document has been circulated to all prescribed stakeholders and the Community Impact Assessment is an appendix of this main document. Copies will be forwarded to the Welsh Government in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines.

Proposal:

- 1. To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from April 2024.**

RCT is proposing to relocate its Observation and Assessment class from Penrhiwceiber to Abercynon. This proposal will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and relocation to significantly improved premises which

have benefited from 21st Century Schools Modernisation and Investment Programme. The provision will continue to accommodate 8 pupils aged 3-7 years old and placements within the LSC will be agreed in the Access and Inclusion ALN panels.

- 2. To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision at the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024.**

The proposal to relocate the class at Abercynon to Perthcelyn will minimise unnecessary transition for pupils with ASD, provide continuity in their educational placements and ensure that a higher number of specialist LSC provisions provide equity for pupils in LSCs so that they remain in one setting until transition to secondary provision in line with their mainstream peers. The provision will continue to accommodate 10 pupils and placements within the LSC will be agreed in the Access and Inclusion ALN panels.

- 3. To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.**

RCT is proposing to enhance the Early Years Assessment and Intervention provision within the County Borough by creating an additional LSC to support pre-statutory school age pupils with significant presenting needs. The class will support 8 pre-statutory school aged pupils.

- 4. To establish two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.**

The proposal is to enhance the Welsh medium Additional Learning Needs provision within the County Borough by creating LSC provision for pupils in Reception Years 6 currently at the school, therefore creating specialist Welsh medium provision for pupils with significant ALN from Reception – Year 11. The classes will support 8 pupils within reception to Year 2 and 10 pupils in Years 3-6.

- 5. To establish one LSC for pupils in academic Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.**

To address the current capacity issues, it is proposed RCT opens an additional LSC for pupils in Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site. This is to ensure the LA meets the demands for specialist ASD provision in its secondary phase.

Community Impact

The reasons for consideration of these proposals are fully outlined in the consultation document that will be widely distributed; this document clearly outlines the background to the proposals and why it has been necessary to bring it forward at this point in time.

The creation of the new provisions is seen as positive. The proposals will not have any significant impact on local communities as more local pupils will be able to access specialist provision within their local community. However, where it is proposed to relocate existing LSCs it is acknowledged that there will be short term impact upon the immediate local communities as they will lose their current inclusive specialist provision. The LSCs will make effective use of any surplus space within the school and develop a resource that will be of benefit to vulnerable pupils and their parents/carers. The proposed establishment of the LSCs will enhance the overall ability of the host schools to meet a diverse range of needs as there will be further specialist ALN expertise within the school.

Impact on Health and Wellbeing

It is anticipated that the proposals will have a significantly positive impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils with significant ALN attending Welsh medium provision as it will enhance the current inclusive model provided by the specialist Welsh medium Peripatetic Team and address the current gap in full time specialist Welsh medium ALN provision. The relocation of classes will allow pupils to access buildings that have benefited from the modernisation programme and the creation of additional Early Years and ASD provision will meet the rising demand for specialist provision in these specific areas of need in RCT. For the few pupils currently attending the two LSCs proposed to relocate to new host schools, there will be some short term disruption. Impact upon pupils and their families will be mitigated through the relocation of the same staff to the new host schools, thus providing consistency and continuity to support pupils and families through the transition process. Central Access and Inclusion staff will also provide enhanced support to the affected LSCs during this period.

Current 'Out of hours' Usage

Any services currently provided by the schools to parents, pupils and the communities will remain unaltered for example; breakfast and afterschool clubs.

Community Safety

The host schools will be a fully accessible and within fully integrated community schools. No concerns regarding community safety are anticipated.

Transport and Travel Implications

There is a statutory duty placed upon all Local Authorities in Wales to provide pupils with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond 'safe walking distance' to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided mainstream primary school,

secondary school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe 'walking distance' is defined as two miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving secondary education. If placed within the LSC pupils may be required to travel out of catchment.

Further information in relation to the Council's Home to School transport provision can be viewed and downloaded from the council website via:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ParkingRoadsandTravel/Travel/SchoolandCollegeTransport/SchoolandCollegeTransport.aspx>

Community Engagement

Members of the public wishing to find out more information on the proposed changes can view the proposal documents under the 'Get Involved' section of the RCT corporate website. Members of the public are also encouraged to provide feedback on the consultation using the online proforma (<https://RCTCBC.welcomesyourfeedback.net/r9g1ao>). Parents/Carers, School Council, School Staff and the School Governing Bodies directly affected by these changes are invited to a consultation event where they can discuss the proposals with Officers from the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services. Below is a timetable of the stakeholder events including the time, date and location of each event.

School Affected	Group-Pupils/ Staff/Parents	Time	Date	Venue
Abercynon Primary Community School	School Council	13:15 – 14:00pm	12 th June 2023	Abercynon Primary Community School
	Parents	14:00 – 15:00pm		
	Staff/Governing Body	16:00 – 16:45pm		
Perthcelyn Primary School	School Council	14:15 – 15:00pm	13 th June 2023	Perthcelyn Primary School
	Parents	15:15 – 16:00pm		
	Staff/Governing Body	16:00 – 16:45pm		
Penrhiwceiber Primary School	School Council	14:15 – 15:00pm	14 th June 2023	Penrhiwceiber Primary School
	Parents	15:15 – 16:00pm		
	Staff/Governing Body	16:00 – 16:45pm		

New 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site New Welsh medium School	School Council Heol-y-Celyn Primary School	9:15 – 10:00am	15th June 2023	Heol-y-Celyn Primary School
	School Council YGG Pontsion Norton	10:15 – 11:00am	15th June 2023	YGG Pontsion Norton
	School Council Hawthorn Primary School	11:30 – 12:15pm	15th June 2023	Hawthorn Primary School
	School Council Hawthorn High School	12:30 – 13:15pm	15th June 2023	Hawthorn High School
	Staff/Temporary Governing Bodies	16:00 – 16:45pm	15th June 2023	Via Teams: Click here to join the meeting
	Parents	15:15 – 16:00pm	16th June 2023	Hawthorn Leisure Centre

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Lisa Carter

Director: Gaynor Davies

Service Area: Education and Inclusion Services, Access & Inclusion

Date: 15/03/2023

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

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

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

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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

Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 requires LAs to regularly review arrangements for supporting pupils with SEN/ALN and to ensure that provision is sufficient and meets the needs of its communities. The priority for the Education and Inclusion Service Directorate is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people. In light of the Welsh Government ALNET Act and the Council's vision to increase the number of Welsh medium learners in its schools by responding proactively to both national and local strategies, such as the Welsh Government Welsh Language Strategy: Cymraeg 2050, Rhondda Cynon Taf's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the current 21st Century Schools Programme to increase and improve Welsh medium provision RCT, it is essential to enhance ALN provision within RCT.

The proposals will address surplus capacity issues and a lack of capacity in key provisions allowing resources to be directed to enhance capacity for mainstream inclusion, early intervention and preventative approaches. In addition, the proposals will address the current imbalance between the number of primary and secondary provisions, transition and accessibility issues. The proposals also seeks to address the need to create additional Welsh medium specialist LSC provision, in line with the

requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) to provide a bilingual Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system.

The proposals seek to achieve the following aims:

- Reducing unnecessary transition across schools by establishing cross phase specialist provisions within individual schools where possible.
- Developing a robust continuum of provision that effectively addresses a wide range of need across all year groups and builds upon effective early intervention and prevention approaches.
- Establishing LSC provisions in fully accessible settings that provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.
- Establish Welsh-medium provision to facilitate the learning of pupils with significant ALN in the Primary Phase.

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

In developing the proposal, consideration has been given to the following:

- Section 315 of the **Education Act 1996** requires Councils to ensure that ALN provision is kept under review.
- The **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018** (The ALNET Act 2018) requires Councils to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient. The ALNET Act 2018 is supported by the statutory **Additional Learning Needs Code 2021**.
- Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the **School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013** which is supported by a statutory **School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018)**.

1.e) **Please outline who this proposal affects:**

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

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

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

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

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

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)</p> <p>Reception – Yr2 (formerly Foundation Phase) Yr 3 – 6 (formerly Key Stage 2) Yr 7 – 11 (formerly Key Stage 3&4)</p>	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate placements which are well matched to pupils’ primary needs. • Improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement due to meeting identified pupil needs more effectively. • Greater opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools. • Improved continuum of learning provision which improves life chances for our most vulnerable learners. • Bilingual opportunity of LSC through provision for pupils with ALN. • Proposed additional classes will enhance LSC capacity across all age ranges. 	<p>Since the inception of the Early Years Forum in September as at 30th January 2023, 294 pupils have been discussed by the Forum. Of these pupils, 40 have been allocated placements within specialist settings and an additional 14 pupils have changed placement from mainstream to specialist provision following a period of assessment.</p> <p>During the academic year 2022/23, the Welsh Complex Needs Team supported 12 pupils with an age range of Year 2 to Year 11.</p> <p>It has been identified through data analysis that as of 30th January 2023, the potential number of pupils transitioning in 2023/24 (Year 6 to Year 7) without a Year 7 placement is 14.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>+</p> <p>Negative</p>	<p>The review of LSC provision will allow the LA to better meet the needs of its ALN pupils. The proposed mainstream schools hosting the LSC will be fully compliant with all disability legislation. The increase of classes will enable more students to access fully accessible LSC provision while reducing unnecessary transition.</p> <p>LSC re-alignment will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for parents and pupils for a period of time, although experience shows that this can be kept to a minimum and the children's education and wellbeing does not suffer. Access & Inclusion will provide support to eradicate or minimise any potential negative impact.</p> <p>All the required impact assessments have been undertaken, LSC re-alignment will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for parents and pupils for a period of time, although experience from previous LSC realignments has</p>	<p>Delivery of new LSC provision enhances the educational opportunities for pupils with significant additional learning needs and will provide the required additional LSC provision.</p> <p>The positive impact that the proposal will have far outweighs the short-term negative impact.</p>

		<p>been positive. Access & Inclusion will provide support to eradicate or minimise any potential negative impact. This will involve collaboration between current LSC staff, Access and Inclusion staff, pupils and their families to ensure a person-centred approach is taken to meeting the educational and wellbeing needs of pupils.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised that the proposals will have a negative impact on pupils and may require some pupils to undertake additional transitions to another setting. However, it is important to highlight that all learners accessing Observation and Assessment placements do so on a short term basis whilst their needs are being assessed and identified to inform a longer term placement. Concerns were also raised regarding the transition of older pupils currently in the class from Abercynon as there would be an extra transition and the potential negative impact of this. The staff mentioned that pupils will experience anxiety and stress as a consequence of the proposed move.</p> <p>Robust transition plans will be put in place for any pupils directly affected by the proposals, which will be planned collaboratively with parents and staff and involve additional</p>	
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		support from specialist members of staff from Access and Inclusion.	
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Gender Reassignment. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Gender Reassignment, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Marriage or Civil Partnership. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Marriage or Civil Partnership, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Pregnancy or Maternity. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Pregnancy or Maternity, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Positive	The proposal will have a positive impact on children and young people between the ages of 3 to 19 with ALN. As a result of the proposal, the Council is expected to deliver increased ALN provision.	When looking at ethnicity data, 2022 PLASC data shows 93.9% of statutory school aged pupils were white British, 5.9% were classified as any other ethnic background whilst 0.2% were unknown.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Religion or Belief. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Religion or Belief, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Sex. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Religion or Belief, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to sexual orientation. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to sexual orientation, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.</p> <p>Where a potential impact arises Access & Inclusion Service will ensure the host schools and LSCs follow Council guidance on support pupils with LGBTQ+ community.</p>

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
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Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Positive	The increase in LSC provision will provide greater opportunity for pupils with significant ALN to access specialist provision.	Increased numbers of LSC places will result in the ability to accommodate more children with significant ALN
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Positive	Increased potential to access appropriate specialist provision. Increase opportunity for parents/carers to choose appropriate Welsh medium specialist provision.	The establishment of more LSC provision will result in the ability to support more children with significant ALN.

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

No negative impacts have been identified for protected groups. All impacts on protected groups will be either neutral or positive.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision? Yes No

Name: Lisa Carter

Position: Inclusion Co-ordinator

Date: 15/03/2023

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals. Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a ‘strategic nature’ is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance](#).

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

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Low Income/Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i></p>	Neutral	<p>The advantages of implementing the proposed change includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An enhanced focus on improved mainstream LSC provision which provides improved life chances for our most vulnerable learners. • Appropriate continuum of provision which is well matched to pupils' primary needs. • Improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement due to effectively meeting pupil needs. • Greater opportunities for mainstream inclusion in a local community school. <p>A disadvantage could potentially include additional travel for some pupils. However, transport would be provided in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy and placement made in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting. If placed within a LSC pupils may be required to travel out of catchment although Access & Inclusion will endeavour to place pupils in the nearest appropriate LSC to their home address. ITU also have a Gatekeeping process to consider requests for transport that fall outside of the policy where it is felt that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in the capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.

		it would be reasonable for parents to provide home school transport.	
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<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i></p>	Neutral	<p>The advantages of implementing the proposed change includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that LSC provision is situated within an education setting that is accessible and appropriate for pupils with wide ranging needs, including physical and medical need. • Improving the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils. • Compliance with a core aim of ALNET Act to create a bilingual ALN system. • The new LSC provisions will be hosted by schools that have the capacity for the development of an additional class due to surplus spaces and can accommodate the additional pupils who will be placed in the school. <p>A disadvantage could potentially include additional travel for some pupils. However, transport would be provided in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy and placement made in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting. If placed within a LSC pupils may be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.

		required to travel out of catchment although Access & Inclusion will endeavour to place pupils in the nearest appropriate LSC to their home address.	
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<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p><u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The advantages of implementing the proposed change includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An enhanced focus on improved mainstream LSC provision which provides improved life chances for our most vulnerable learners. • Appropriate continuum of provision which is well matched to pupils' primary needs. • Compliance with one of the underpinning principles of the ALNET Act that all pupils should access mainstream education where possible. • Improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement through effectively meeting pupils' needs. • Ensuring that LSC provisions are situated within education settings that are accessible and appropriate for pupils with wide ranging needs, including physical and medical needs. • Improving the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available for the benefit of all pupils. • Compliance with a core aim of ALNET Act to create a bilingual ALN system. • The new LSC provision will be hosted by schools that have the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.

		capacity for the development of an additional class due to surplus spaces and can accommodate the additional pupils who will be placed in the school.	
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		<p>provision available in LSCs.</p> <p>During the consultation the following question was asked: How will their children continue to have the same opportunities that they enjoy now? Such as weekly library visits, trips to the local shops, time at the organics garden, swimming once a week, horse riding attended through use of private minibus.</p> <p>School Council at Perthcelyn Community Primary School noted that pupils in the LSC could access local resources such as the park, community centre (clubs) and the fields. Perthcelyn has lots of countryside surrounded the school and is located close to the local village. A lot of community activities are available including using the paddling pool and the church.</p>	<p>In line with new curriculum for Wales, the curriculum is designed by the school to build on the opportunities available in the school's locality. This will be unique to each setting but there is an expected consistency in the range of learning opportunities and the specialist provision available in LSCs and beyond.</p>
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<p>Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Improving specialist provision for pupils in RCT has been at the heart of the decision-making process in relation to the proposal.</p> <p>All decisions have been made with a full understanding of the needs of the pupils and with the aim of providing high quality, fully accessible 21st Century specialist provision for pupils who require specialist provision in a LSC within a fully inclusive mainstream setting.</p> <p>ALN to benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.</p> <p>The new host schools will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and a multi-purpose learning resource area; • enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities; • traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in the capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.
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<p>Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The new LSCs will positively impact pupils with significant additional learning needs and their parents/carers.</p> <p>The proposed changes to the current and establishment of new LSC provisions provides pupils with significant learning needs the bilingual opportunity for pupils to attend LSC provision in mainstream schools.</p> <p>There is no negative impact to any individual who may be financially or materially disadvantaged, as the new provisions will provide additional opportunities for children to access Welsh medium, Early Years and Autistic Spectrum Disorder specialist provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in the capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.
	<p>Negative</p>	<p>For those pupils attending provision that will be relocating there will be some short term disruption that may incur a level of anxiety to both parents and pupils. This was raised by School Council at Penrhiwceiber Primary School who felt the children may initially find it 'tricky' to settle as they are not used to it. However, they also noted that the children would be able to make more friends in a new school and should move due to larger space to move around for play.</p>	

		<p>Those affected will be supported by Access & Inclusion during the transition phase. Those staff working in a LSC that is proposed to be relocated will move with the LSC pupils to ensure their expertise is maintained and that the pupils have continuity of staff supporting them.</p> <p>The proposed change in provision has some implications for a small number of pupils (currently 3 pupils) who currently attend an affected LSC but were due to transfer to Abercynon LSC in September 2023. To minimise any potential negative impact upon individual pupils, parents have been provided with the option to move to Abercynon LSC or to remain in Perthcelyn with additional support provided within the current Perthcelyn ASD LSC in September 2023. These arrangements will remain in place until a decision regarding the proposal has been reached, parents have been made fully aware of the implications of the option they have chosen.</p>	
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SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

- 4.a) **In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

Overall no substantial negative impacts have been identified in this equality impact assessment. However, a potential negative impact has been identified in relation to the short term disruption of pupils attending the LSCs proposed to relocate. To mitigate this potential impact, staff working in a LSC that is proposed to be relocated will move with the LSC pupils to ensure their expertise is maintained and that the pupils have continuity of staff supporting them.

- 4.b) **If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.**
The potential negative impact has been mitigated as detailed above.

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

- Data analysis is based on data derived from the Access & Inclusion data systems and PLASC where appropriate.
- Qualitative reasoning gathered from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team and Access and Inclusion Team and the Council's Corporate Estates Team.

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

In line with the School Organisation Code detailed cabinet reports, consultation documentation and consultation feedback reports have been written at each stage of the process to support the proposed realignment of LSC provision. All reports clearly identify the need for additional LSC provision and the data rationale behind the proposal. The consultation was undertaken between the 5th June and 14th July 2023 the consultation report will shortly be shared with cabinet and all relevant stakeholders. It is noted that there has been a good response to this statutory consultation process; 127 completed questionnaires, 12 letters/emails and 3 petitions. A further online petition was submitted by the Perthcelyn Community, however it has not been considered as it was received after the deadline. Meetings have been held with all impacted Schools Councils, Governing Bodies and staff. The feedback received has informed amendments to the proposal for Cabinet to consider further. Details can be found in the Consultation Feedback Report.

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

Yes

No

The consultation was undertaken on 5th June 2023 - 14th July 2023.

Face to face meetings were held with the staff, School Councils and Governing Bodies of the special schools across RCT.

A Consultation Response Form has also been available at on the Council's website on the 'Get Involved' page. The Consultation Response Form enabled consultees to indicate if they wished to be notified of the publication of the Consultation Report, once presented to the Council's Cabinet.

Consultees have also been welcomed to put their views, comments, and any questions in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Access & Inclusion Service
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon
CF45 4UQ

Or

E-mail: A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and considered in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access & Inclusion Service held meetings with the School Councils of all potentially impacted host schools, children and young people will be encouraged to be active participants throughout this process.

A drop in session was arranged so that members of the public could discuss the proposal with Officers from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services.

This Equality Impact Assessment was updated following the completion of the consultation to include any necessary feedback.

SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

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

The proposal is made in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018). Section 2.1 of the School Organisation Code 2018 refers to elements of school organisation that require the publication of proposals, including:

- The opening of a maintained school (including special school).
- The closing of a maintained school (including special school).

The consultation started on 5th June 2023 and completed at 17:00 on 14th July 2023.

Face to face meetings were arranged with the staff, School Councils and Governing Bodies of the host schools across RCT.

A Consultation Response Form was available at on the Council's website on the 'Get Involved' page. The Consultation Response Form enabled consultees to indicate if they wished to be notified of the publication of the Consultation Report, once presented to the Council's Cabinet.

The Council's Access & Inclusion Service will be fully engaged in supporting the head teacher and governing body to establish the LSC provision through its well-established line management and quality assurance processes relating to its management of LSC provisions. In line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) and Education Act 1996, the LA will continue to keep its LSC provision under review to ensure that it meets the identified needs of its learners with ALN in RCT.

Interested parties have been welcomed to put their views in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Access & Inclusion Service
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon
CF45 4UQ
or e-mail A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and considered in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access & Inclusion Service held meetings with the School Councils of all potentially impacted host schools, children and young people will be encouraged to be active participants throughout this process.

A drop in session was arranged so that members of the public could discuss the proposal with Officers from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services.

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

The Council's Cabinet will consider the Consultation Report and decide, based on the feedback, whether to proceed with the proposal, amend the proposal or not proceed with the proposal. If the Council's Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of the proposal.

If the Council's Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal can do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the Statutory Notice was published.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the outcome of the Statutory Notice at the next available Cabinet meeting and determine the proposal.

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education and Inclusion Services will publish an Objection Report providing a summary of the objections and the response to them within seven days of the day of the determination of the proposal.

If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, it will be implemented in accordance with the date stated in the Statutory Notice or any subsequently modified date. In the case of the proposal, the implementation date will be no later than the 2026 academic year.

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

Officers from the Access & Inclusion Service will monitor the proposal throughout the consultation and implementation period.

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

The Access & Inclusion Service will undertake a 'Lessons Learnt' review at the end of the implementation phase and this will feed into future projects so that each project improves and benefits from lessons learnt (positive and negative) during previous projects.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the definition of ‘Key Decisions’ must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Decision please forward your impact assessment to Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqIA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below:

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, the Impact Assessment could be strengthened by using the information contained within the consultation report as there is a wealth of information from Estyn, School Council etc to make it more robust and demonstrate due regard. • Disability section – requires more information given the nature of the proposal as ASD counts as disability under the Equality Act. • Page 125 – Transition plans and mitigation to be included; • Page 141 – Transition comments from teachers could be included. • Disability section – It notes that individuals may experience uncertainty for a period of time but this could be more specific and there is an opportunity for more clarity as to why it is both a positive and a negative i.e. is one long term, etc. 	<p>5th September 2023</p>	<p>Review Panel Comments have been noted and actioned as appropriate.</p> <p>Narrative from the Consultation Feedback Report has been included within the assessment including pupils’ comments where appropriate.</p> <p>Review Panel comments regarding transport have been noted but as agreed in the panel discussions pupils will not be disadvantaged as the home to school transport policy will be applied equitably. However, the assessment has been strengthened by including reference to the Gatekeeping process undertaken by ITU.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic – more data from the consultation would make it more robust (location and transport need to be addressed). • Pages 125-127 - Area deprivation – There's several comments in respect of the move to Abercynon – include 125/126/127 mitigations and the opportunities for children – Estyn comments 133 could be added. • Pages 127 and 141 - Pupil comments to be included to show you've engaged. • Good use of the Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation within the socio-economic section. • Area Deprivation section - Transport has been flagged but is there a need to be more specific on numbers and if there's a financial detriment to families as parents have raised this in the consultation? Opportunity to state that parents aren't losing out financially, that it is consistent with mainstream pupils and in line with existing home to school policy. • Section 4B has merged with 4A - HD to send LC/CJ a clean copy of an EIA to ensure the correct format is used; • Section 4C needs to be clear with the amount of engagement undertaken. • Section 6 needs to be updated to demonstrate that a number of potential negatives and mitigations have been put in place. 		
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
No comments have been received during the LSC consultation process regarding this assessment.	5 th June – 14 th July	

SECTION 6 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

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

In summary, the Equality Impact Assessment identifies positive and neutral impacts, and mitigations have been provided for any potential negative impacts upon pupils with protected characteristics.

- The impact on age is extremely positive as they will have the full benefit of being educated in specialist LSC provision based in fantastic facilities fit for the 21st Century. Providing an inclusive model of specialist provision hosted by a mainstream school that can meet their identified needs within their local community.
- The buildings will be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 thereby ensuring that no pupil, staff member, parent/carer or member of the wider community is prevented from fully accessing the whole extent of the new facilities.
- There will be positive impact on the Welsh language as the proposal seeks to establish more Welsh medium specialist LSC provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) to develop a bilingual Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system. It also aims to assist with the delivery of strategic priorities within RCTCBC's WESP.

There is an expectation that pupils in all LSCs will have mainstream inclusion opportunities. The LSCs are integral to the ethos of the host schools and families and pupils are treated equitably alongside mainstream peers. The realignment of LSCs and establishment of the proposed LSCs will ensure the LA has bilingually provided suitable provision to support children with ALN.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Lisa Carter

Position: Inclusion Co-ordinator

Date: 15/03/2023

I recommend that the proposal:

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

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name: Ceri Jones

Position: Head of Inclusion Services

Date: 19th April 2023

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

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WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

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

Stage 1 – Information Gathering

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. Please see [Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for more information on data sources.

Proposal Name:	CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF
Department	Access & Inclusion Service
Service Director	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Officer Completing the WLIA	Lisa Carter
Email	Lisa.c.carter@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	01443 744344
Brief Description	<p>To realign current provision to meet the demand for specialist placements. This will be achieved by the following adjustments to LSC provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from April 2024. • To transfer the LSC for pupils Year 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision at Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024. • To establish one Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024. • To establish two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish one LSC for pupils Year 7 – 11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.
Date	16 th March 2023; updated 6 th September 2023.
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Pupils with Additional Learning Needs requiring specialist provision, their parents/carers and the wider additional learning needs community.

What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	The aim of these proposals is to realign current ALN provision to meet the demand for specialist placements. At present, learners with significant additional learning needs attending Welsh medium schools who meet the criteria for Primary Phase LSC provision are supported by a specialist peripatetic team through an inclusive delivery support model. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) 2018 stipulates that all local authorities must develop bilingual ALN provision. The establishment of 2 Welsh medium LSCs in the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will ensure Welsh support is available to learners with ALN who meet the LSC criteria. The LSCs will support 18 pupils with significant additional learning needs in the Primary Phase.
Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh medium learners with significant additional learning needs. Early Years pre-statutory school age pupils presenting significant needs. Year 7-11 (formerly Key Stage 3/4) English medium pupils with ASD. Pupils at the hosting schools. Parent/carers of pupils attending hosting schools and those with children/young people with significant additional learning needs. Staff at hosting schools. The hosting schools are: Abercynon Primary Community School, Perthcelyn Primary School, new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin, the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site.
Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned	The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. There was, however, a small increase in RCT – the percentage of the population of the county borough who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%. Numerically, RCT saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough, from 27,779 speakers to 28,556 speakers. RCT was

also one of only four LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil. All of these are neighbouring county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase in demand for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed, data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider what impact it may have on the services we provide.

The table that follows illustrates the Welsh language skills of residents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf and is obtained from the 2021 Census.

Table 1: Welsh Language Skills of Residents (Census 2021) – (%)

	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	All Wales
Can Speak, Read and Write Welsh	10.1%	14.8%
Can Speak and Read but Cannot Write Welsh	0.7%	1.2%
Can Speak but Cannot Read or Write Welsh	1.4%	2.4%
Can read but cannot speak or write Welsh	1.6%	1.4%
Can write but cannot speak or read Welsh	0.2%	0.2%
Can read and write but cannot speak Welsh	0.5%	0.6%
Can Understand Spoken Welsh Only	4.0%	5.5%
Other Combination of Skills	0.1%	0.2%
No Skills	81.3%	77.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The Annual Population Survey collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on how often people speak Welsh. It is updated quarterly, so is a more up-to-date source than the Census. The most recent Annual Population Survey, for the year ending 31 March 2023, reported that 20.2% of respondents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf said they could speak Welsh, compared to the-all Wales percentage of 29.7% of respondents. This can be further broken down to the data contained in the table that follows.

Table 2: Welsh Language Skills of Residents (Annual Population Survey)

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)		
	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Wales
Can read Welsh	18.8%	26.0%
Can write Welsh	17.2%	23.9%
Can understand spoken Welsh	23.0%	33.5%

The data demonstrates that in each Welsh language skill area, the all-Wales percentages are notably higher than the County Borough percentages.

When asked about their frequency of speaking Welsh, the table that follows shows a breakdown of responses of respondents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf compared to the-all Wales responses.

Table 3: Welsh Language Skills of Residents (Annual Population Survey)

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)		
	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Wales
Speak Welsh daily	7.4%	15.0%

Speak Welsh weekly	5.1%	5.8%
Use it less often or never	5.2%	8.9%

The data demonstrates that the percentage of respondents that speak Welsh daily is far lower for the County Borough than the-all Wales percentage.

The Welsh Language Use Survey for the years 2013 to 2015, contains detailed information about Welsh speaker's fluency and their use of the Welsh language in a range of settings. When looking where respondents living in Wales learned to speak Welsh, the majority, 45.0%, learned to speak Welsh at home, followed by 26.0% who learned to speak Welsh at nursery school and primary school between the ages of 2 to 10 and 14.0% who learned to speak Welsh at secondary school at the age of 11 plus. The remaining 2.0% learned to speak Welsh in other settings, including at 'Welsh for Adults' courses.

The data above clearly shows that there is a gap in the Welsh language skills of residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf when compared to the whole of Wales. Proposals such as this significantly improve the opportunities available for Welsh learners with ALN through providing targeted specialist Welsh medium LSC provision for learners with significant additional learning needs in a 21st Century School environment. The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using the community use facilities at the school to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity for parents, carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh classes and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh. The school will be designed to be a fully accessible and there will be a dedicated area within the school itself so that the local community will be allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school.

In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase learners' use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith/Cymraeg Campus), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the CSCJES and the Urdd to provide opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in different contexts. In terms of the schools involved in this proposal -

- Perthcelyn Primary School have received their bronze and silver Cymraeg Campus awards and are working towards achieving the gold award.
- Abercynon Primary School have engaged with the Cymraeg Campus provision and are working with CSCJES to achieve their bronze award.

- Hawthorn Primary School have received their bronze Cymraeg Campus award and are now working towards achieving the silver and Hawthorn High School have engaged with the programme and are working towards achieving the bronze award.

An evaluation conducted in July 2023 whilst gathering information and data for the WESP Annual Review Report evidenced the positive impact the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme has had on the use of the Welsh language in English medium schools. 13 English medium primary schools from different areas of the County Borough were contacted and all reported an increased use of incidental Welsh throughout the school with more children playing yard games through the medium of Welsh and more assemblies being held with focus on the Welsh language, history and heritage. The Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme has been rolled out to all special schools and units in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and many have already begun their journey to receiving the awards. The continued roll out of this programme will support the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the targets set out in the Council's new WESP (2022 to 2032).

Other relevant data or research

Having reviewed internal data it was noted that due to a lack of Welsh medium LSC provision, 7% of the total number of pupils accessing specialist settings have previously attended Welsh medium provision.

The most recent data available from PLASC 2023 shows that there are currently 1,926 (6.28%) learners with ALN attending English medium schools and 256 (3.58%) learners with ALN attending Welsh medium schools across the County Borough. When comparing this with data available from PLASC for the previous year, the number of learners with ALN in schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf has increased, please see table below.

Table 4: Learners with ALN attending schools across the County Borough (PLASC)

Number and Percentage of Learners with ALN Attending Schools in RCT				
	2021 - 2022		2022 - 2023	
	Number	%	Number	%
English Medium Education	1,508	4.87%	1,926	6.28%
Welsh Medium Education	200	2.77%	256	3.58%

In line with the Council's new WESP, in order to achieve the targets of the WESP we will continue to ensure the benefits of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education are promoted to parents/carers from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education and onwards through to higher and further education

for all learners, whatever their learning need. In line with Outcome 6 of the WESP, the Council are committed to increasing the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with ALN (in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018).

The continuing development of Welsh medium ALN provision will form part of the Local Authority's Access and Inclusion Services' action planning, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing processes. This will ensure the sufficiency of Welsh medium additional learning provision for learners with ALN in Rhondda Cynon Taf is kept under review to ensure arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of learners and to identify any emerging needs or gaps in provision.

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

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

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

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

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

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	<p>The proposals included in this proposal are to relocate, transfer and establish English medium LSCs at different locations throughout the County Borough where there is identified need and demand for specialist provision should not have a negative impact on the Welsh language. The proposals to relocate and transfer LSCs between Perthcelyn Primary School and Abercynon Primary School is being proposed in order to improve the continuum of ALN provision in this area of the County Borough by creating a through provision at primary phase. The establishment of an Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age at Abercynon Primary School further supports the Council's hopes to improve the continuum of ALN provision in this area of</p>	<p>Data gathered by the Access and Inclusion team shows that 7% of the total number of pupils accessing specialist settings have previously attended Welsh medium provision, are now accessing English medium LSC provision due to there being a lack of Welsh medium LSC provision available in the County Borough.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Use Survey (2013 – 2015) reported that over half of the Welsh speaking respondents who completed the survey reported that they try to use Welsh in the workplace with colleagues and when dealing with public organisations. This demonstrates the importance of staff, residents and visitors having fair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of establishing the LSC provision in the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will be evaluated and demand monitored to ensure the opening of these classes have a positive impact on the Welsh language. If positive, opportunities to develop more LSCs like this across the County Borough will be considered. Ensuring inclusion with mainstream pupils is a key principle to ensure learners with ALN have equal opportunities to learn the language and receive their education through the medium of Welsh.

		<p>the County Borough where there is identified need.</p> <p>The establishment of a specialist LSC for pupils in Year 7 – 11 with ASD at the new 3 - 16 school which is being built on the current site of Hawthorn High School should not negatively impact the Welsh language as this will be a specialist provision.</p> <p>The establishment of two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin will transform the Welsh medium opportunities available to learners with significant ALN in this area of the County Borough as this will be the first of its kind in the County Borough and can only have a positive impact on the language. Alongside this, the newly established Welsh medium LSC provision at Ysgol Garth Olwg will open to the secondary aged learners from September 2023, providing opportunities for learners to remain in Welsh medium education and continue to receive their education through the medium of Welsh in this area of the County Borough.</p>	<p>access to opportunities to use the Welsh language.</p> <p>In line with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards, any Council publications, documentation and correspondence must be bilingual with a message included to state that correspondence in Welsh is welcomed and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. The Council also applies this to any new school builds so that signage in English schools is bilingual. New school builds now also incorporate bilingual braille on signage throughout the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the headteacher of the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin and Welsh medium organisations to utilise the facilities to deliver Welsh medium learning sessions for parents, carers and the wider community. • If a person is unable to speak Welsh, they must call on a colleague in the building who is able to speak Welsh if this is being requested.
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The establishment of Welsh medium provision at different stages of education can only positively impact the Welsh language. Welsh medium ALN provision and the demand for this type of provision will be evaluated and monitored closely. If deemed successful, the Council's Access and Inclusion Services will explore options to develop further provision like this in different areas of the County Borough.

The proposal to create 2 Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will have a positive impact on the Welsh language. This will be the first Welsh medium provision of its type in the County Borough and will widen the opportunities available to learners with ALN to learn the Welsh language. Learners accessing the provision will be able to access a range of additional extra-curricular activities in line with their peers through the medium of Welsh.

Opportunities for community and third-party use of the facilities at the school will be encouraged to offer Welsh medium learning classes for adults which will be promoted in the local community and throughout the County Borough. This will contribute towards Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the Council's WESP by providing opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language.

Welsh Government's Welsh Language Use Survey (2013 – 2015) reported the largest increases in the number of fluent Welsh speakers in Wales in Rhondda Cynon Taf and in our neighbouring authority Cardiff. By working with the headteacher of the proposed new special school, opportunities for community and third-party use of the facilities at the school to offer Welsh medium learning classes for adult will be promoted in the local community and throughout the County Borough. This will contribute towards Welsh

		<p>Government’s ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the Council’s WESP by providing opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language.</p> <p>The Council has opportunities for internal staff across all services to access free training to improve their Welsh language skills. Welsh Language Services are working to develop technological support for Welsh speakers and learners within the Council to be able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh. All newly recruited Council staff are required to undertake Welsh language Level 1 training. This will support the opportunities available for the Council to create a bilingual workforce with the ability to work and deliver services bilingually.</p>		
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

	Does the proposal	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any
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	have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	impact on the Welsh language.		negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers</p> <p>e.g Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Welsh Government's ambitious Cymraeg 2050 strategy calls for far-reaching changes and boundaries being pushed to increase the numbers learning and using Welsh. To achieve the Cymraeg 2050 targets of reaching a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050, each local authority needs to transform how Welsh is taught to all learners. The headteacher of the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will be supported and encouraged to utilise the facilities available to offer opportunities to deliver Welsh for Adults classes for parents, carers and other members of the community. This will support the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, and the targets set out in the Council's WESP.</p> <p>In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase learners use of the Welsh language in social</p>	<p>Welsh for Adults courses for the academic year 2022/23 are being held at Coleg y Cymoedd Llwynypia campus, Gartholwg Lifelong Learning Centre and Treorchy Library. Through utilising the facilities to deliver Welsh for Adults lessons at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin, this will encourage parents and carers to consider undertaking Welsh lessons. These types of lessons would be marketed and promoted throughout the community and neighbouring schools to encourage an uptake amongst parents, carers and the wider community.</p> <p>The Welsh for Adults classes are currently well attended. Learn Welsh Glamorgan have been engaging with schools throughout the County Borough to encourage schools to offer their facilities to deliver Welsh for Adults sessions for the next academic year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that parents, carers and the wider community are signposted to the Welsh for Adults classes. Marketing and promotion of the classes will be implemented via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms. • The school-based workforce will continue to be supported with continued professional learning and networking, utilising opportunities to share best practices. • To continue working with the CSCJES to promote and increase learners' use of the

		<p>contexts through implementing the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith/Cymraeg Campus) in Welsh and English medium primary and secondary schools in partnership with the CSCJES. The Siarter Iaith has been implemented in both primary and secondary Welsh medium schools in order to develop learners' use of the Welsh language in different contexts. As of July 2023, all Welsh medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award, 13 have achieved the silver award and 5 have achieved the gold award. Two Welsh medium secondary schools have achieved the bronze award and 1 has received the silver. The Cymraeg Campus has been implemented in both primary and secondary English medium schools in order to develop learners' use of the Welsh language. As of July 2023, 40 English medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award, 10 have achieved the silver award and 2 have achieved the gold award. A total of 5 English medium secondary</p>	<p>The WESP Outcome 7 sub-group provides an effective focus on the challenges faced in terms of the school-based workforce. The group includes local, regional and national officers who are working collaboratively to implement strategies to work towards creating more Welsh speakers to ensure we have a school-based workforce of sufficient size and capability.</p> <p>Monitoring reports prepared by local authorities throughout Wales who currently have established Welsh language immersion provision report positive outcomes for learners who have accessed the support, leaving them equipped to start learning in the mainstream Welsh medium classroom.</p> <p>Data and information relating to the Welsh Language Charter is shared with the Council each quarter via the CSCJES Welsh Language Officer.</p>	<p>Welsh language in primary and secondary schools with all English medium schools being supported to achieve the Cymraeg Campus awards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's WESP Co-ordinator to work collaboratively with partners in developing and implementing strategies in line with the Council's WESP to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of a million Welsh speakers, and to contribute towards the development of strategies which promote the Welsh language and Welsh medium education across the County Borough.
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		<p>schools have achieved the bronze award.</p> <p>More recently, CSCJES have begun working with special schools, learning support classes and pupil referral units in Rhondda Cynon Taf to implement the Welsh Language Charter (Cymraeg Campus) programme. To date, 3 special schools/units have achieved the bronze Cymraeg Campus award.</p> <p>In contributing towards the vision of achieving a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and in line with the commitments outlined in the Council's WESP, ensuring a school-based workforce of sufficient size and capability is vital. In order to create more Welsh speakers, our education system is dependent on its school-based workforce, we must work locally, regionally and nationally to ensure a workforce with robust linguistic skills with the ability to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium education.</p>		
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	Neutral	<p>The aim is to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning and promoting the information use of the Welsh language amongst learners across the education sector. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts is key to ensuring a continuum of linguistic progression to support learners throughout each key stage, offering all learners the opportunity to become fully bilingual in alignment with the Curriculum for Wales – 2022.</p> <p>Whilst pupils who meet criteria to access the Welsh medium peripatetic complex needs service within their mainstream school settings may opt to remain within their Welsh medium mainstream setting rather than accessing the new Welsh medium settings due to the potential increased travel time. 7% of pupils with other identified ALN who previously attended Welsh medium mainstream settings now attend English medium specialist</p>	<p>Having reviewed internal data it was noted that due to a lack of Welsh medium LSC provision, 7% of the total number of pupils accessing specialist settings have previously attended Welsh medium provision.</p>	
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		settings. Pupils will now have increased options to access Welsh medium specialist settings.		
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The Welsh language now has official status and legislation in place which provides rights for Welsh speakers to receive Welsh language services. The challenge is to expand the opportunities for people to be able to use the Welsh language in their daily life through creating the right conditions for new learners of all ages to develop and use their skills from early years, through every stage of compulsory education and post-16 provision, to opportunities for adults to learn Welsh.</p> <p>As mentioned above, the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme is having a positive impact on the promotion of the Welsh language in schools engaged with the programme through providing increased opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language. Although the proposals for the Cynon area of the County Borough and the proposals for Hawthorn Primary</p>	<p>Currently learners with significant ALN are receiving English medium specialist support due to the lack of Welsh medium provision available. The opening of these LSCs can only benefit the promotion of the Welsh language.</p> <p>The demand for Welsh for Adults classes is evidenced by the popularity of current classes being held, for example at the Gartholwg Lifelong Learning Centre.</p> <p>The new school will be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and the ALNET Act 2018 and such opportunities will be within the heart of the community, so that the local community can safely utilise the facilities.</p> <p>Representatives from Welsh Language, Youth, Leisure, Arts and Culture and Musical Services all form part of the WESP Outcome 5 sub-group which focuses on creating more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of establishing the LSC provision in the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will be evaluated and demand monitored to ensure the opening of these classes have a positive impact on the Welsh language. If positive, opportunities to develop more LSCs like this across the County Borough will be considered. Ensuring inclusion with mainstream pupils is a key principle to ensure learners with ALN have equal opportunities to learn the language and receive their education through the medium of Welsh.

		<p>School/Hawthorn High may not directly promote the Welsh language, the statutory changes to ALN provision in line with the ALNET Act 2018 and the introduction of the New Curriculum for Wales tied with the rollout of the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme in these schools ensures an increased opportunities for all learners to use the Welsh language, which in turn will support promoting opportunities to use Welsh.</p> <p>The proposal to establish two Primary Phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will allow for young children to access Welsh medium education at an inclusive school of brand new build, completed to 21st Century standard. Establishing Welsh medium LSC provision for children with significant ALN from this young age will enhance pupils' opportunities to continue to learn via the medium of Welsh but in a dedicated class setting alongside their peers who also have additional</p>	<p>opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school, therefore information is provided directly. The work underway not only supports the use of Welsh in different contexts in school, but also extends the use of Welsh in different contexts across all service areas and in the wider community which supports the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the use of the language and ultimately the number of Welsh speakers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that parents, carers and the wider community are signposted to the Welsh for Adults classes. Marketing and promotion of the classes will be implemented via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms. • Support the headteacher of the new school to promote community use of the facilities for the purpose of delivering a range of opportunities through the medium of Welsh with support of Welsh language organisations such as Menter Iaith and the Urdd to assist in the promotion of the Welsh language.
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learning needs rather than via peripatetic teaching.

As a result, we will work with the headteacher of the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin to provide opportunities to offer Welsh for Adults classes for anyone looking to learn the language and other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh. The school will be designed to be fully accessible in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the ALNET Act 2018, and a fully integrated community school with dedicated community use areas that the local community can safely utilise.

The Council will continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which requires the Council to produce a five year strategy outlining actions which will facilitate and promote the Welsh language.

The Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (2022 – 2027) has been taken into consideration in order to

encourage and facilitate long term growth for the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The strategy outlines the Council's commitment to working towards Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers, increasing the use of the language in the workplace, via Council services and throughout the community and creating favourable conditions. Rhondda Cynon Taf Welsh Language Services, Youth Services, Leisure Services and Arts and Culture Services and Musical Services are all working proactively towards developing opportunities for learners and the wider community to use the Welsh language. These include but are not limited to:

Welsh Language Services:

- Developing materials to provide to school-based staff to support with their Welsh language skills.
- Exploring the feasibility of Welsh medium learning/support applications

		<p>being placed on every member of staffs' devices.</p> <p>Youth Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Running trips for Welsh medium learners to provide opportunities to use Welsh in different contexts. - Creating promotional materials to be placed in youth clubs throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. - Working in partnership with the Urdd and Menter Iaith to develop Welsh Language Youth Forums in all Welsh and English medium secondary schools along with the local college. <p>Leisure Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with the Urdd to deliver sport activities for Welsh medium schools and exploring extending this to incorporate English medium schools on a bilingual model of delivery. - Working with Menter Iaith to develop opportunities to introduce the Welsh 		
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		<p>language into leisure sessions.</p> <p>Arts and Culture Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborating with Youth Services on a programme of provision across community and cultural venues to encourage the use of the Welsh language and incorporating the Welsh language into community based events. <p>Musical Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging with both Welsh and English medium schools to encourage an uptake in musical services, learners who show an aptitude for any instruments are being encouraged and supported into taking part in the Eisteddfod. <p>The Council will continue to ensure a clear alignment with the Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh learners and improving the Welsh language skills of staff and pupils across</p>		
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		schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.		
Stage 2 – Impact Assessment				
Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?				
	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards e.g increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	<p>All processes associated with this proposal will be in accordance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>The proposal to open 2 LSCs in the new Welsh medium school will create Welsh medium ALN job positions for 2 teaching staff and 2 non-teaching staff, increasing the Council's ability to deliver services through the medium of Welsh and contributing towards expanding</p>	<p>Contractual arrangements will ensure that all consultations are undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to these proposals will be sent out bilingually with Welsh positioned first.</p> <p>The new job positions generated as a result of the LSCs being established will help with increasing the workforce available to support learners with ALN, which is a key target of our WESP, mainly outcome 7 which</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instil contractor awareness of the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards and ensure compliance with these standards. • Work with the new Welsh medium school to ensure new members of staff have received sufficient training to deliver the level of

		the Welsh medium ALN workforce available in the County Borough.	<p>focuses on increasing the workforce available to teach Welsh as a subject and subjects through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The duties imposed upon us under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales (ALNET) Act 2018 requires all local authorities to ensure there is sufficient provision available through the medium of Welsh for learners with ALN.</p>	support required through the medium of Welsh.
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	Positive	The opening of these LSCs at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will have a positive impact on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English as at present there are 45 English medium LSCs in the County Borough, whereas there are no Welsh medium primary phase LSCs and this will be the first of its kind here in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Providing opportunities for learners who would previously not be able to access these opportunities will only positively impact on the Welsh language.	The Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme contains a wide range of schools, both Welsh and English medium, in various parts of the County Borough. This will be the first Welsh medium primary phase LSC provision in the County Borough. If deemed successful, the Council's Access and Inclusion team will explore options to develop more opportunities for learners with ALN to access Welsh medium opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that parents, carers and the wider community are signposted to the Welsh for Adults classes. Marketing and promotion of the classes will be implemented via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms.

The new Welsh medium school is being constructed as part of the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme which is jointly funded by the Council and Welsh Government. The purpose of this programme is to ensure there are good schools so all children and young people, whatever their learning need is, have equitable access to good Welsh and English medium education. This proposal will help us in achieving this purpose.

The new school will incorporate facilities for community use to offer opportunities through the medium of Welsh and staff will be encouraged and supported to undertake any additional learning to improve their Welsh language skills.

Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

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

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

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
Consultation and engagement with stakeholders (as set out in statutory Consultation Document).	The consultation was held between 5 th June and 14 th July 2023. The feedback from the consultation has been collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in September 2023.	Access & Inclusion Service
Learners at hosting schools	<p>The Council has acknowledged that the voice of children and young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management and improvement of their educational and learner experience.</p> <p>Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due consideration in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, the Council's Access & Inclusion Service will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve learners as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process.</p>	Access & Inclusion Service
<p><u>Stage 4 – Review</u></p> <p>As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.</p> <p>If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your impact assessment to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. See our guidance document for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.</p> <p>For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.</p>		

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

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh Language pupils with significant ALN that meet the criteria for English provision are supported, but there needs to be clarity on why English medium criteria is used for Welsh Language pupils. The wording throughout could be amended to inspire a pro-active approach. For example, it notes that Welsh Language provision may be extended if the need arises but you could put the provision in place, rather than when the need emerges. There is an opportunity to include a comparison between the proposal and the service in place previously i.e. relocation could have an impact on travel time and may impact where they choose to learn. The new service will provide 22 new English placements and 18 new Welsh placements, which in terms of the demographic of the area, is positive but why isn't it seeking complete equality? An opportunity to state that there will be 44 English classes and 3 Welsh classes. 	5 th September 2023	Comments have been noted and revisions made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The criteria based on the severity and complexity of pupils identified ALN and are language neutral. The ALN Code 2021 stipulates that LAs must develop bilingual ALN provision over time. Section 3.2 of the Code states that one of the principles underpinning the ALN system is A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh for children and young people who require support thought the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of ALP in Welsh over time. Numbers and/or percentages of Welsh speakers has been updated. The ALN Code 2021 stipulates that LAs must develop bilingual ALN provision over time. Section 3.2 of the Code states that one of the principles underpinning the ALN system is A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh for children and young people who require support thought the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of ALP in Welsh over time.
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
As above.	5 th September 2023	
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

No comments have been received during the LSC consultation process regarding this assessment.

5th June –
14th July

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

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

Officers from the Access & Inclusion Service will monitor the proposal throughout the consultation and implementation period.

The Access & Inclusion Service will undertake a 'Lessons Learnt' review at the end of the implementation phase and this will feed into future projects so that each project improves and benefits from lessons learnt (positive and negative) during previous projects.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

In summary, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment identifies only positive impacts with no negative or neutral impacts upon the Welsh Language.

- The impact on Welsh medium Primary Phase pupils with significant additional learning needs is extremely positive as they will have the full benefit of being educated in Welsh medium specialist LSC provisions alongside their mainstream peers through an inclusive model, hosted by a mainstream school.
- The proposal seeks to create Welsh medium specialist LSC provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) to develop a bilingual Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system. It also aims to assist with the delivery of strategic priorities within RCTCBC's WESP
- There is an expectation that pupils in all LSCs will have mainstream inclusion opportunities. The LSCs are integral to the ethos of the host schools and families and pupils are treated equitably alongside mainstream peers. The development of Welsh medium LSCs will ensure the LA has LSCs based in a fully accessible and high quality educational environments that has benefited from significant 21st Century Modernisation and Investment.
- The proposals also have a positive impact for pupils attending English medium provision due to the proposed increase in Early Years

and ASD placements.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Lisa Carter	Service Director Name:	Gaynor Davies
Position	Inclusion Co-ordinator	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments.
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined.
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language.
Signature		Service Director Signature	<i>Gaynor Davies</i>
Date	07.09.23	Date	07.09.23

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

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