CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Bydd cyfarfod hybrid o'r CABINET yn cael ei gynnal ar Dydd Mercher, 20fed Mawrth, 2024 am 10.30 am

Dolen gyswllt: Emma Wilkins - Uned Busnes y Cyngor (Rhif ffôn. 07385 406118)

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf, 2 Llys Cadwyn, Stryd Taf, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH

Os bydd cynghorwyr neu aelodau o'r cyhoedd yn dymuno cael cyfle i annerch y Cabinet am unrhyw fater ar yr agenda isod, rhaid iddyn nhw ofyn am gael gwneud hynny erbyn canol Dydd Llun, 18 Mawrth 2024. Rhaid iddyn nhw hefyd gadarnhau ai yn y Gymraeg neu yn y Saesneg y byddan nhw'n annerch.

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

MATERION I'W TRAFOD

1. **DATGAN BUDDIANT**

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

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

2. **COFNODION**

    Cadarnhau cofnodion o gyfarfod Pwyllgor y Cabinet a gynhaliwyd ar 21 Chwefror 2024 yn rhai cywir.

    (Tudalennau 7 - 14)

ADRODDIADAU ER GWYBODAETH

3.   CYNLLUN DIRPRWYO'R ARWEINYDD - 3A

Derbyn diweddariad ynghylch Cynllun Dirprwyo'r Arweinydd er gwybodaeth.

4.   ADBORTH RHAG-GRAFFU

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu sy'n rhoi adborth a sylwadau mewn perthynas â'r eitemau y rhag-graffwyd arnyn nhw gan Bwyllgorau Craffu thematig y Cyngor yn dilyn cyfarfodydd diweddaraf y Pwyllgorau, er gwybodaeth.

ADRODDIADAU'R SWYDDOGION

5.   RHAGLEN WAITH Y CABINET

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu sy'n rhoi diweddariad o ran y rhestr arfaethedig i'r Cabinet o faterion sydd angen eu hystyried yn ystod gweddill Blwyddyn 2023–24 y Cyngor.

6.   ADOLYGIAD O BOLISI CLUDO DISGYBLION O'R CARTREF I'R YSGOL Y CYNGOR

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Priffyrdd, Gofal y Strydoedd a Thrafnidiaeth, yn cynnwys dogfennau perthnasol eraill mewn perthynas â'r Polisi Cludiant o'r Cartref i'r Ysgol newydd arfaethedig, sydd â'r nod o gynorthwyo'r Cabinet gyda'i benderfyniad.

7.   GWEITHIO GYDA'N CYMUNEDAU - DRAFFT O GYNLLUN CORFFORAETHOL Y CYNGOR AR GYFER 2024-2030

Derbyn adroddiad y Prif Weithredwr, sy'n amlinellu drafft o'r Cynllun Corfforaethol newydd ar gyfer 2024/5 - 2029/30.

8.   ADRODDIAD CYFLAWNIAD Y CYNGOR – 31 RHAGFYR 2023 (CHWARTER 3)

Derbyn adroddiad y Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr a Chyfarwyddwr y Gyfadran Cyllid a Gwasanaethau Digidol a Rheng Flaen, sy'n rhoi trosolwg i'r Aelodau o gyflawniad y Cyngor dros naw mis cyntaf y flwyddyn ariannol hon hyd at 31 Rhagfyr 2023, a hynny o safbwynt ariannol a gweithredol fel ei gilydd.

9. **RHAGLEN GYFALAF ATODOL 2024-2025 AR GYFER Y PRIFFYRDD, TRAFNIDIAETH A CHYNLLUNIAU STRATEGOL**

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Priffyrdd, Gofal y Strydoedd a Thrafnidiaeth, sy'n nodi rhaglen gyfalaf fanwl ar gyfer y Priffyrdd, Trafnidiaeth a Chynlluniau Strategol.

10. **RHAGLEN GYFALAF ARFAETHEDIG ADDYSG A GWASANAETHAU CYNHWYSIANT 2024-2025**

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant, sy'n darparu manylion ynghylch y gwaith cyfalaf i'w gymeradwyo ar gyfer 2024/25, yn rhan o Raglen Gyfalaf dair blynedd y Cyngor.

11. **ADRODDIAD CYDRADDOLDEB BLYNYDDOL 2022-2023**

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Materion Adnoddau Dynol sy'n cyflwyno gwybodaeth ynglŷn ag Adroddiad Cydraddoldeb Blynyddol y Cyngor ar gyfer y flwyddyn 2022-2023.

12. **CYNLLUN CYDRADDOLDEB STRATEGOL 2024-2028**

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Materion Adnoddau Dynol sy'n cyflwyno gwybodaeth ynglŷn â Chynllun Cydraddoldeb Strategol y Cyngor ar gyfer 2024-2028.

13. **GWEITHIO I GREU RHONDDA CYNON TAF OED-GYFEILLGAR**

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Iechyd a Diogelwch y Cyhoedd a Gwasanaethau Cymuned, sy'n darparu gwybodaeth i Aelodau mewn perthynas ag ymrwymiad parhaus y Cyngor i fod yn Gymuned Oed-gyfeillgar, a'i gais arfaethedig i ddod yn aelod o Rwydwaith Byd-eang Sefydliad Iechyd y Byd o Ddinasoedd a Chymunedau Oed-gyfeillgar.

14. **ASESIAD Y CYNGOR O'R FARCHNAD DAI LEOL 2023-2028**

Derbyn adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu, sy'n cyflwyno canfyddiadau'r Asesiad o'r Farchnad Dai Leol 2023 – 2028 i'r Cabinet; ac yn ceisio cymeradwyaeth cyn i'r ddogfen gael ei chyflwyno i Lywodraeth Cymru a'i chyhoeddi.

15. TRAFOD CADARNHAU'R CYNNIG ISOD YN BENDERFYNIAD

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

16. DILEU DYLEDION NAD OES MODD EU CASGLU

Derbyn adroddiad y Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr a Chyfarwyddwr y Gyfadran Cyllid a Gwasanaethau Digidol a Rheng Flaen sy'n rhoi datganiad sefyllfa i'r Aelodau ar ddyledion nad oes modd eu casglu, ac sy'n pennu'r gofyniad i ddileu symiau penodol yn unol â meini prawf adolygu llym.

(Tudalennau 783 - 794)

17. MATERION BRYS

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

Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu

Cylchrediad:-

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

Swyddogion: Paul Mee, Prif Weithredwr
Barrie Davies, Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr ac Chyfarwyddwr Cyfadran - Cyllid, Gwasanaethau Digidol a Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen
Andy Wilkins, Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol
David Powell, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Eiddo'r Cyngor
Gaynor Davies, Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant
Louise Davies, Cyfarwyddwr – Iechyd a Diogelwch y Cyhoedd, a Gwasanaethau'r Gymuned
Richard Evans, Cyfarwyddwr - Materion Adnoddau Dynol
Simon Gale, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu
Stephen Williams, Pennaeth Materion Buddsoddi Strategol
Christian Hanagan, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu
Paul Griffiths, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Gwella
Derek James, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu
Neil Elliott, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

tudalen wag

PWYLLGOR CYNGOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF
CABINET
Cofnodion o gyfarfod y Cabinet a gynhaliwyd Dydd Mercher, 24 Ionawr 2024 am 2.00 pm ym Rhithwir.

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

Y Cynghorwyr Bwrdeistref Sirol – Roedd y Aelodau Cabinet canlynol yn bresennol:

Y Cynghorydd A Morgan (Cadeirydd)

Y Cynghorydd M Webber   Y Cynghorydd A Crimmings
Y Cynghorydd R Lewis   Y Cynghorydd C Leyshon
Y Cynghorydd M Norris   Y Cynghorydd B Harris

Swyddogion oedd yn bresennol:

Mr P Mee, Prif Weithredwr
Mr B Davies, Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr ac Chyfarwyddwr Cyfadran - Cyllid, Gwasanaethau Digidol a Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen
Mr A Wilkins, Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol
Mr D Powell, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Eiddo'r Cyngor
Ms G Davies, Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant
Ms L Davies, Cyfarwyddwr – Iechyd a Diogelwch y Cyhoedd, a Gwasanaethau'r Gymuned
Mr R Evans, Cyfarwyddwr - Materion Adnoddau Dynol
Mr S Gale, Cyfarwyddwr Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu
Mr S Williams, Pennaeth Materion Buddsoddi Strategol
Mr C Hanagan, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu
Mr P Griffiths, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth – Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Gwella
Mr N Elliott, Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Ms L Howell, Ysgolion yr 21ain Ganrif
Ms L Kidner, Rheolwr Busnes, Arlwyo

95   Croeso ac Ymddiheuriadau

Croesawodd yr Arweinydd bawb oedd yn bresennol i gyfarfod y Cabinet a derbyniwyd ymddiheuriad am absenoldeb gan yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol.

96   Datgan Buddiant

Yn unol â'r Cod Ymddygiad, cafodd y datganiadau personol canlynol eu gwneud mewn perthynas ag Eitem 8 yr agenda – Adolygu Cronfa Deddf Eglwys Cymru:

- Yr Arweinydd – "Rydw i'n rhan o nifer o sefydliadau sydd wedi elwa o'r Gronfa";
- Y Dirprwy Arweinydd – "Rydw i'n cadeirio grŵp sydd wedi derbyn arian oddi wrth y Gronfa";

- Yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion yr Amgylchedd a Hamdden – "Rydw i'n rhan o grŵp sy'n derbyn arian oddi wrth y Gronfa";
- Yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Datblygu a Ffyniant – "Rydw i'n rhan o grŵp sy'n derbyn arian oddi wrth y Gronfa"; ac
- Yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Addysg, Cyfranogiad Pobl Ifainc a'r Gymraeg - "Rydw i'n Llywodraethwr yn Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Abercynon".

97   Cofnodion

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet gymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 18 Rhagfyr 2023.

98   Adborth Rhag-graffu Pwyllgorau

Er gwybodaeth, cyflwynodd Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu adborth a sylwadau mewn perthynas â'r eitemau y rhag-graffwyd arnyn nhw gan Bwyllgorau Craffu thematig y Cyngor yn dilyn cyfarfodydd diweddaraf y Pwyllgorau.

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet:
1. Nodi sylwadau'r Pwyllgorau Craffu yn dilyn rhag-graffu ar yr eitemau a restrir yn adran 5 o'r adroddiad.

99   Darpariaeth Clwb Brecwast am Ddim mewn ysgolion cynradd ac arbennig a chyflwyno tâl am yr elfen gofal plant ychwanegol

Rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant wybod i'r Cabinet am ganlyniad yr ymgynghoriad diweddar ynghylch cynnig i gyflwyno tâl ar gyfer yr elfen gofal plant ychwanegol, sydd ar gael cyn i'r ddarpariaeth clwb brecwast am ddim ddechrau mewn ysgolion cynradd ac arbennig yn Rhondda Cynon Taf, gan nodi y byddai disgyblion sy'n cael Prydau Ysgol am Ddim (eFSM) yn cael eu heithrio o unrhyw dâl.

Diolchodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Addysg, Cyfranogiad Pobl Ifainc a'r Gymraeg i'r swyddogion am yr adroddiad a diolchodd i'r rheiny wnaeth ymateb i'r ymgynghoriad.

Roedd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet yn cydnabod bod y Cabinet yn ystyried y cynnig oherwydd yr heriau ariannol sylweddol sy'n wynebu'r Cyngor. Nododd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet y byddai'r cynigion gerbron y Pwyllgor yn cynnal mynediad i frecwast am ddim i bob disgybl; ac y byddai unrhyw incwm ychwanegol yn cael ei neilltuo a'i ail-fuddsoddi yng nghyllidebau ysgolion yn rhan o Strategaeth Cyllideb Refeniw 2024/25 arfaethedig y Cyngor.
Roedd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet yn falch o nodi y byddai disgyblion sydd a'r hawl i brydau ysgol am ddim (eFSM) yn cael eu heithrio o'r tâl arfaethedig a phwysleisiodd y byddai'r rheiny sydd fwyaf agored i niwed yn y gymuned yn cael eu hamddiffyn pe bai'r Cabinet yn derbyn yr argymhellion. Hefyd, croesawodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet yr argymhelliad mewn ymateb i'r ymgynghoriad i gytuno ar gategori cwnsesiwn ychwanegol a fyddai'n golygu bod rhieni/gwarcheidwaid

sydd am ddefnyddio'r ddarpariaeth dim ond yn talu am y ddau blentyn oedran cynradd cyntaf sy'n byw yn yr un cartref.

Mewn perthynas â'r ymatebion i'r ymgynghoriad, nododd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet yr adborth cryf ynghylch amgylchiadau llawer o rieni a gwarcheidwaid. Yr adborth oedd eu bod nhw'n dymuno dewis i gael mynediad i'r elfen gofal plant cyn y diwrnod ysgol am ran o'r wythnos waith yn unig. Holodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet a fyddai'n ymarferol cyflwyno ail opsiwn yn rhan o'r cynnig, sef ail dâl am hyd at dri diwrnod yn unig. Gofynnodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet am gyngor gan y Cyfarwyddwr ac os oedd hynny'n ymarferol, dywedodd y byddai'n bwriadu cynnig ychwanegu at argymhelliad 2.2, yn amodol ar sylwadau Aelodau eraill o'r Cabinet. Ategodd y Cyfarwyddwr sylw'r Aelod o'r Cabinet fod hon yn thema a oedd yn dod i'r amlwg o'r ymatebion i'r ymgynghoriad, a dywedodd y gellid ystyried yr awgrym ymhellach pe bai'r Aelodau'n cytuno ar hynny.

Manteisiodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd ar y cyfle i ddiolch i'r Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu am ei adborth ar y cynigion. O ran yr ymgynghoriad, cydnabu'r Dirprwy Arweinydd y pryderon a fynegwyd gan rieni drwy'r broses ymgynghori, ynghylch y gost ariannol ychwanegol y byddai'r cynnig yn ei chyflwyno. Eglurodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd fod hwn yn faes lle darperir cymorth y tu hwnt i'r hyn a fwriadwyd yn wreiddiol, pan gyflwynwyd brecwast ysgol am ddim, ac yn faes lle mae tâl eisoes yn cael ei godi gan nifer o Awdurdodau Lleol. Nodwyd bod Awdurdodau Lleol eraill, oherwydd y gostyngiad yng nghyllid y Sector Cyhoeddus, hefyd yn ymgynghori ar gynigion o'r fath ar hyn o bryd. Roedd y Dirprwy Arweinydd o'r farn, o gymharu â'r taliadau am ofal plant, fod y gost arfaethedig yn rhesymol.

Cydnabu'r Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion yr Amgylchedd a Hamdden y penderfyniad anodd sy'n wynebu'r Cabinet ond dywedodd ei fod yn angenrheidiol o dan yr amgylchiadau ariannol presennol. Holodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet sut y byddai'r Cyngor yn sicrhau cysondeb yn rhan o unrhyw gamau gweithredu, yn ogystal â mynediad i'r un lefel, neu amser, neu ofal plant am y tâl o £1.

Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr y byddai swyddogion yn gweithio gydag ysgolion a phartneriaid oherwydd yr amrywiadau o fewn yr arlwy bresennol o glybiau brecwast o ran amseroedd dechrau a gorffen. Roedd y Cyfarwyddwr yn cydnabod, pe bai'r Cabinet yn ei gymeradwyo, y byddai angen i'r cynnig fod yn deg ar draws y system.

Dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod yr ymgynghoriad wedi dangos mai'r uchafswm pris ar gyfer y ddau blentyn cyntaf o oedran cynradd, sy'n byw yn yr un cartref ac yn cael mynediad i'r ddarpariaeth, oedd y ffordd gywir ymlaen. Yn yr un modd, nododd yr Arweinydd y byddai'r rhai sy'n gymwys i gael Prydau Ysgol am Ddim o dan yr hen feini prawf yn cael eu heithrio o'r tâl, ac roedd hyn hefyd yn cael ei groesawu yn yr ymgynghoriad.

O ran y gwelliant i argymhelliad 2.2 fel y'i cynigiwyd gan yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Addysg, Cyfranogiad Pobl Ifainc a'r Gymraeg roedd yr Arweinydd yn cefnogi system codi tâl dwy haen ac awgrymodd opsiwn i rieni/cynhalwyr gael mynediad at y ddarpariaeth hyd at tri diwrnod yr wythnos yn unig am ffi o £40 yn ystod y tymor. Cydnabu'r Arweinydd y byddai'n rhy anodd cynnig tâl dyddiol ond teimlai y byddai'r dull dwy haen yn decach mewn ymateb i adborth yr ymgynghoriad.

Roedd yr aelodau'n fodlon ar y newid i argymhelliad 2.2 o'r adroddiad a

chadarnhaodd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu'r geiriad a ganlyn:

- *2.2 - I'r ffi a ffefrir o £1 y dydd, wedi'i dalgrynnu i lawr i £60 y tymor, ar gyfer yr elfen gofal plant ychwanegol, sydd ar gael cyn i'r ddarpariaeth clwb brecwast am ddim ddechrau, i'w gweithredu o ddechrau tymor y gwanwyn 2024 neu cyn gynted ag y bo'n ymarferol wedi hynny;* **ac i gadarnhau y gallu i gael mynediad at y ddarpariaeth hon am hyd at dri diwrnod yr wythnos yn unig, am ffi o £40 yn ystod y tymor.**

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet:
1. Nodi'r wybodaeth sydd yn yr Adroddiad Ymgynghori sydd ynghlwm, sy'n cynnwys adborth a dderbyniwyd o'r arolygon ar-lein, e-byst a llythyrau, cofnodion y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu ar 13 Rhagfyr 2023 a'r cwestiynau cyffredin a bostiwyd ar wefan y Cyngor;
2. Bod y ffi a ffefrir o £1 y dydd, wedi'i dalgrynnu i lawr i £60 y tymor, ar gyfer yr elfen gofal plant ychwanegol, sydd ar gael cyn i'r ddarpariaeth clwb brecwast am ddim ddechrau, i'w gweithredu o ddechrau tymor y gwanwyn 2024 neu cyn gynted ag y bo'n ymarferol wedi hynny; ac i gadarnhau y gallu i gael mynediad at y ddarpariaeth hon am hyd at dri diwrnod yr wythnos yn unig, am ffi o £40 yn ystod y tymor;
3. Y dylai disgyblion sy'n gymwys i gael Prydau Ysgol am Ddim gael eu heithrio o'r tâl arfaethedig a chytuno ar gategori pellach o gonsesiwn lle byddai rhieni/gofalwyr ond yn talu am y ddau blentyn cyntaf o oedran cynradd, sy'n byw yn yr un cartref, sy'n defnyddio'r ddarpariaeth;
4. Bod yr incwm ychwanegol sydd i'w gynhyrchu yn cael ei glustnodi a'i ail-fuddsoddi yn ôl i gyllidebau ysgolion yn rhan o Strategaeth Cyllideb Refeniw 2024/25 arfaethedig y Cyngor; a
5. Dirprwyo awdurdod i'r Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant i gymryd a chwblhau'r camau angenrheidiol i weithredu penderfyniad y Cabinet.

100   Cynnig i Ddatblygu Ysgol Arbennig Newydd yn Rhondda Cynon Taf

Rhoddodd y Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant wybod i'r Aelodau am ganlyniad cyhoeddi Hysbysiad Statudol yn ddiweddar mewn perthynas â'r cynnig i agor ysgol arbennig 3 i 19 oed newydd yn Rhondda Cynon Taf (RhCT) a chyflwyno dalgylchoedd ar gyfer pob un o'r ysgolion arbennig 3-19 oed ar draws RhCT.

Roedd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Addysg, Cyfranogiad Pobl Ifainc a'r Gymraeg yn falch o nodi nad oedd gwrthwynebiadau i'r ysgol arbennig 3 i 19 newydd arfaethedig a chyflwyno dalgylchoedd ar gyfer yr holl ysgolion arbennig 3 i 19 oed ar draws RhCT.

Cydnabu'r Aelod o'r Cabinet y pwysau difrifol a wynebai'r Awdurdod Lleol o ran lleoliadau ysgol arbennig a chroesawodd y cynigion gerbron yr Aelodau. Gorffennodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet drwy nodi ei fod yn edrych ymlaen at dderbyn adroddiad Rheoli'r Trysorlys yn y dyfodol i'r Cyngor a chanlyniad y cais am gyllid gan Lywodraeth Cymru.

Ategodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd sylwadau'r Aelod o'r Cabinet a chroesawu'r camau nesaf yn y broses.

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet:
1. Nodi na dderbyniwyd unrhyw wrthwynebiadau, na sylwadau mewn ymateb i gyhoeddiad yr hysbysiad statudol i weithredu'r cynnig yma;
2. Rhoi'r cynnig ar waith heb unrhyw newidiadau; a
3. Bod diweddariad i amlen fenthyca'r Cyngor yn cael ei gynnwys mewn adroddiad Rheoli'r Trysorlys i'r Cyngor yn y dyfodol pan fydd y costau'n hysbys a chyllid Llywodraeth Cymru wedi'i sicrhau.

101   **Cynigion Ffïoedd a Thaliadau'r Cyngor 2024-2025**

Amlinellodd Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Cyllid a Gwella:
- Ymgynghorir ar y diwygiadau arfaethedig i lefelau ffioedd a thaliadau'r Cyngor ar gyfer blwyddyn ariannol 2024/25 yn rhan o gam 2 o broses ymgynghori cyllideb 2024/25 (gyda'r diwygiadau arfaethedig i fod mewn grym o 1 Ebrill 2024 neu cyn gynted ag y bo'n ymarferol wedi hynny);
- Manylion penderfyniadau ffioedd a thaliadau a gymeradwywyd yn flaenorol ac i'w cynnwys yn y Strategaeth Gyllideb arfaethedig 2024/25; a
- Diweddariad arfaethedig i Gynllun Trwydded Masnach Stryd y Cyngor a threfniadau arfaethedig ynghylch gweithredu newidiadau yn y dyfodol i lefel uchaf y tâl wythnosol am wasanaethau gofal dibreswyl, fel y pennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru.

Diolchodd yr Arweinydd i'r Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth am yr adroddiad a dywedodd fod y ffioedd a'r taliadau arfaethedig y manylwyd arnynt gerbron y Pwyllgor yn gymharol deg. Eglurodd yr Arweinydd eu bod wedi ceisio sicrhau nad oedd y gost lawn yn cael ei throsglwyddo mewn rhai meysydd. Fel enghraifft, nododd yr Arweinydd y byddai'r cynnydd cyffredinol o tua 14% mewn costau bwyd yn golygu y dylai cost presennol cinio ysgol gynyddu tua 30-35c, ond y cynnydd arfaethedig yw 15c. Mewn perthynas â chostau meysydd parcio, dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod y cyhoedd wedi lobïo i'r Cyngor gyflwyno taliadau â cherdyn, ond er mwyn mantoli cost y cynnig newydd, roedd cynnydd bach o 10c wedi'i gynnig. Mewn perthynas â'r ffi gadw lle arfaethedig o 25c ar gyfer y Lido, dywedodd yr Arweinydd bod ffi trafodion i'r Cyngor ynghlwm â phob archeb, ond, pan fydd miloedd o unigolion yn cadw lle ond ddim yn dod i'r Lido, roedd y Cyngor yn codi tâl. Dywedodd yr Arweinydd y byddai'r ffi o 25c yn gwrthbwyso'r tâl wrth symud ymlaen.

Roedd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion yr Hinsawdd a Gwasanaethau Corfforaethol yn falch o nodi bod 82.3% o'r rhai a ymatebodd i gam un yr ymgynghoriad yn cytuno â dull y Cyngor o gyflwyno ffioedd. Roedd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet yn falch o weld yr agwedd gytbwys tuag at ffioedd a thaliadau, a oedd yn ei barn hi, wedi ystyried sefyllfa ariannol y trigolion.

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet:
1. Ystyried diwygiadau arfaethedig i ffioedd a thaliadau'r Cyngor ar gyfer blwyddyn ariannol 2024/25 ynghyd â thaliadau arfaethedig newydd;
2. Ymgynghori ar y cynigion ffioedd a thaliadau (fel y nodir ym mharagraffau 5.3.1 i 5.3.21 yr adroddiad) trwy gam 2 o broses

Ymgynghori Cyllideb 2024/25 y Cyngor ac adrodd y canlyniadau yn ôl i'r Cabinet i'w hystyried yn rhan o'r gwaith llunio Strategaeth Cyllideb a argymhellir ar gyfer 2024/25;

3. Nodi'r penderfyniadau ffioedd a thaliadau sydd eisoes wedi'u cymeradwyo a'u cynnwys yn Strategaeth Gyllideb arfaethedig 2024/25 (paragraff 5.10 / Tabl 2 yr adroddiad);

4. Nodi'r diweddariad arfaethedig i Gynllun Trwydded Masnach Stryd y Cyngor i'w ystyried gan Bwyllgor Trwyddedu'r Cyngor ar 30 Ionawr 2024 ac, yn amodol ar gymeradwyaeth y Pwyllgor, i'r incwm ychwanegol amcangyfrifedig a gynhyrchir gael ei ymgorffori yn Strategaeth Cyllideb Refeniw 2024/25 arfaethedig y Cyngor; a

5. Nodi cyfrifoldeb Llywodraeth Cymru o ran pennu lefel uchaf y tâl wythnosol am wasanaethau gofal dibreswyl a chymeradwyo bod y Cyngor yn gweithredu diwygiadau yn y dyfodol i uchafswm lefelau taliadau wythnosol, yn unol â chanllawiau Llywodraeth Cymru.

102   Newid i Drefn yr Agenda

Cytunodd yr Arweinydd i newid trefn yr agenda oherwydd mater technegol.

103   Adolygu Cronfa Deddf Eglwys Cymru

Ceisiodd Cyfarwyddwr Materion Ffyniant a Datblygu gymeradwyaeth i ddiwygio meini prawf a throthwyon ariannol Cronfa Deddf Eglwys Cymru er mwyn sicrhau effaith mwy cadarnhaol ar gymunedau lleol a manteisio i'r eithaf ar y Gronfa.

Siaradodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion Ffyniant a Datblygu yn gadarnhaol am gynnwys yr adroddiad ac am y cyfle i adolygu'r trothwy presennol. Cydnabu'r Aelod o'r Cabinet fod y gronfa eisoes yn darparu cymorth i lawer o grwpiau cymunedol lleol ac roedd o'r farn y byddai'r cynigion yn adeiladu ar y cymorth hwnnw, drwy ei wneud yn fwy hyblyg.

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet:
1. I'r meini prawf diwygiedig a amlinellir ym mharagraffau 7.2 – 7.4 yr adroddiad ar gyfer ymgynghoriad ffurfiol gyda Chynghorau Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr a Merthyr; ac,

2. Yn amodol bod dim gwrthwynebiadau gan Gynghorau Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr a Merthyr yn dod i law, bod y trefniadau newydd yn cael eu rhoi ar waith.

104   Cyllideb Refeniw'r Cyngor ar gyfer 2024-2025

Rhoddodd y Dirprwy Brif Weithredwr a Chyfarwyddwr Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Cyllid, Digidol a Rheng Flaen, wybodaeth i'r Cabinet am setliad llywodraeth leol 2024/2025 a chanlyniadau cam 1 o ymgynghoriad y gyllideb, i gynorthwyo gyda'i drafodaethau wrth lunio'r strategaeth cyllideb refeniw ar gyfer blwyddyn ariannol 2024/25, y bydd yn ei hargymell i'r Cyngor i'w chymeradwyo.

Diolchodd yr Arweinydd i'r Cyfarwyddwr am yr adroddiad a chyfaddefodd mai rownd y gyllideb eleni oedd yr anoddaf ers iddo fod yn Arweinydd y Cyngor o ran pwysau ar wasanaethau, costau cyfleustodau uchel a phwysau costau byw. Teimlai'r Arweinydd fod y gyllideb a gynigiwyd i'r Aelodau yn rhesymol o ystyried yr anawsterau a grybwyllwyd uchod, sy'n wynebu'r Cyngor a chartrefi. Nodwyd bod yr holl wasanaethau statudol wedi'u cynnal, ac mewn llawer o achosion, ymhell uwchlaw'r ddarpariaeth.

Tra'n cydnabod nad oedd cynnydd yn nhreth y cyngor yn ddelfrydol, roedd yr Arweinydd o'r farn bod y cynnig yn rhesymol er mwyn cynnal darpariaeth gofal cymdeithasol ac addysg werthfawr yn y Fwrdeistref.

Ategodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion yr Hinsawdd a Gwasanaethau Corfforaethol sylwadau'r Arweinydd a theimlai fod yr ymgynghoriad wedi amlygu bod mwyafrif y cyhoedd yn cydnabod y pwysau ariannol a roddwyd ar y Cyngor.

Manteisiodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd ar y cyfle i ddiolch i'r ymatebwyr i'r ymgynghoriad a nododd fod 75.6% yn cytuno i ddiogelu gwasanaethau ar y lefelau presennol gyda chynnydd rhesymol yn nhreth y cyngor. Nododd y Dirprwy Arweinydd hefyd y byddai'r cynnydd arfaethedig yn nhreth y cyngor yn dal i wneud lefelau RhCT yn un o'r rhai isaf yng Nghymru.

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet:
1. Nodi bod y gweithdrefnau sy'n ymwneud ag adeiladu cyllideb refeniw, y broses ymgynghori cyllideb, ac adrodd i'r Cyngor, wedi'u nodi yn "Y Gyllideb a'r Fframwaith Polisi", sy'n cael ei gynnwys yng Nghyfansoddiad y Cyngor;
2. Nodi ac ystyried canlyniadau proses cam 1 o ymgynghori ar y gyllideb;
3. Adolygu ac ystyried Strategaeth ddrafft Cyllideb Refeniw 2024/25;
4. Trafod a phennu lefel y cynnydd yn Nhreth y Cyngor ar gyfer 2024/25 y byddai'n dymuno ei gynnwys yn y strategaeth i ffurfio'r sail ar gyfer cynnal ail gam yr ymgynghoriad;
5. Yr amserlen ddrafft ar gyfer pennu cyllideb refeniw 2024/2025, sydd wedi'i nodi yn Atodiad A2;
6. Derbyn adborth o ail gam yr ymgynghoriad cyllideb er mwyn trafod a phenderfynu ar y strategaeth gyllidebol derfynol i'w chyflwyno i'r Cyngor;
7. Bod y Cyngor yn parhau i gefnogi'r strategaeth ariannol tymor canolig gyda'r nod o sicrhau'r effeithlonrwydd parhaus o ran darparu gwasanaethau, trawsnewid gwasanaethau wedi'u targedu a newidiadau eraill sy'n cynnal uniondeb ariannol y Cyngor wrth barhau i anelu cymaint â phosibl i ddiogelu swyddi a gwasanaethau allweddol.

105   Mabwysiadu'r Strategaeth Leol Ddiwygiedig ar gyfer Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd a'r Cynllun Gweithredu

Dywedodd y Pennaeth Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd a Phrosiectau Strategol wrth yr Aelodau am ganlyniad yr ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus statudol ar y Strategaeth Leol Ddiwygiedig ar gyfer Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd a'r Cynllun Gweithredu (Cynllun Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd yn flaenorol), fel sy'n ofynnol o dan Adran 10 o Ddeddf Rheoli Llifogydd a Dŵr (FWMA) 2010.

Cydnabu'r Arweinydd fod llawer iawn o waith wedi'i wneud i ddatblygu'r strategaeth a'r cynllun gweithredu diwygiedig. Canmolodd yr Arweinydd y cynllun manwl a dywedodd y byddai'n rhoi'r Awdurdod Lleol mewn sefyllfa dda wrth symud ymlaen o ran ceisiadau yn y dyfodol a chyllid cyfalaf gan Lywodraeth Cymru. Fodd bynnag, esboniodd yr Arweinydd fod y cynllun yn dangos yn glir mai Rhondda Cynon Taf sydd â'r perygl mwyaf o lifogydd dŵr wyneb yng Nghymru ac felly, roedd angen parhau i fuddsoddi mewn gwrthsefyll llifogydd ac i weithio gyda chartrefi a busnesau.

Roedd y Cyfarwyddwr y Gwasanaethau Priffyrdd, Gofal y Strydoedd a Chludiant yn dymuno cofnodi ei ddiolch i'r garfan am y gwaith a wnaed i gynhyrchu'r dogfennau gerbron yr Aelodau. Dywedodd y Cyfarwyddwr ei fod yn teimlo bod y buddsoddiad wedi dechrau talu ar ei ganfed a bod y garfan yn defnyddio dull seiliedig ar risg.

Manteisiodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd ar y cyfle i ddiolch i Gyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth y Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu am y llythyr i'r Cabinet, a amlinellodd sylwadau'r Pwyllgor Craffu - Materion yr Hinsawdd, Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen a Ffyniant ar ôl ystyried Strategaeth Leol Ddiwygiedig ar gyfer Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd a'r Cynllun Gweithredu yn ei gyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 18 Ionawr 2024. Estynnodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd ei diolch hefyd i'r swyddogion am eu gwaith yn rhoi'r strategaeth ddiwygiedig a'r cynllun gweithredu gerbron yr Aelodau.

Croesawodd Aelod o'r Cabinet ar faterion yr Amgylchedd a Hamdden yr adroddiad a'r sylwadau a wnaed gan y Pwyllgor Craffu. Cytunodd yr Aelod o'r Cabinet y byddai rhestr termau a thalfyriadau o fudd wrth symud ymlaen.

PENDERFYNODD y Cabinet:
1. Nodi'r canlyniadau a'r adolygiad o'r ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus statudol ar y Strategaeth a'r Cynllun Gweithredu drafft, a gyflwynwyd i'r Pwyllgor Craffu - Materion yr Hinsawdd, Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen a Ffyniant ar 22 Tachwedd 2023 yn unol â'r rhaglen waith y cytunwyd arni gan y Cabinet ar 15 Mai 2023;
2. Nodi'r adborth o gyfarfod Pwyllgor Hinsawdd a Gwasanaethau Rheng Flaen ar 18 Ionawr 2024, a ddarperir gan y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd a Chyfathrebu;
3. bod yr Awdurdod yn mabwysiadu'r Strategaeth Leol ar gyfer Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd a'r Cynllun Gweithredu;
4. Bod y Strategaeth Leol ar gyfer Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd, a'r asesiad amgylcheddol cysylltiedig, yn cael eu cyflwyno i Lywodraeth Cymru, i'w cymeradwyo gan y Gweinidog.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 2.55 pm

Y Cynghorydd A Morgan
Cadeirydd.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

PRE- SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

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 items that were pre-scrutinised by the Council's thematic Scrutiny Committee's following its last Committee cycle.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

2.1   Note the comments and observations of the Scrutiny Committees following pre-scrutiny of the items listed within section 5 of the report.

3.   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   The need for Members to be aware of the comments and observations of the Council's Scrutiny Committees prior to their consideration of the items listed within the Cabinet agenda for the 20th March 2024.

4.   BACKGROUND

4.1   In response to the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, where there is now a requirement for greater consideration of Cabinet decisions in Scrutiny, the Council's Scrutiny Committees place a greater emphasis on identifying items for pre-scrutiny to support and improve the decision making process

4.2   Members are reminded that the purpose of pre- scrutiny activity is to provide the key "critical friend" challenge and influence the decisions before they are made to contribute to policy and service improvement.

4.3   The Council's Scrutiny Committees continue to have the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on a number of reports in advance of Cabinet's consideration to bring a different perspective to the decisions being made and enabling Cabinet decisions to

be more informed. Effective scrutiny helps support the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the Council's services.

5.   **ITEMS CONSIDERED FOR PRE-SCRUTINY**

5.1   Outlined below are the items that have been pre-scrutinised in line with each Committees Terms of reference for Cabinet consideration:

Committee	Report	Comments
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2030	A letter to the Cabinet providing the feedback of the Committee is attached as appendix A to the report. In summary, the following points were raised: • Scrutiny Members welcomed the proposed vision statements and acknowledged the importance of remaining to be ambitious and setting an aspiration vision for the County Borough; • Members were pleased to see the continued focus upon school attendance and cited the importance place standards and attainment will play increase opportunities for young people and reducing poverty into the future; • The need for more explicit reference to Child Poverty within the Plan as well as a need to build aspiration for communities and young people in particular; • Concerns were raised in respect of the use of hyperlinks throughout the Plan and it was felt that these should only be used where necessary to ensure the plan is accessible and easy for the public to read and understand; • Concerns were raised in respect of the lack of employment opportunities available, in particular apprenticeships available outside of the public sector; and it was urged that the availability of apprenticeships and broader skills development is reviewed to ensure that placements are available to inspire people to train and secure skilled work after college; • Scrutiny Members would like to see reference to high skilled work and also supporting people into rewarding career paths and not just jobs; • The Committee sought stronger wording throughout the Plan to highlight the importance of the public taking responsibility for disposing of their rubbish and taking personal responsibility for the wider environment; and recommended that there needs to be more education around the dangers and health impacts of litter; and • Scrutiny Members would like to see more emphasis on the Council's partnership

		working, particularly with the Local Health Board and the existing health initiatives, such as Healthy Weight Wales etc to demonstrate how the Authority is working to address these concerns.
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	DRAFT ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2022 - 23	A letter to the Cabinet providing the feedback of the Committee is attached as appendix B to the report. In summary, the following points were raised: • Poverty and class could be discriminated against - is there scope to look at this in the future? • Query in respect of the data to the Perma project not reading correctly, as post project data did not suggest improved outcomes for pupils, although positive outcomes had been achieved. • In respect of the Equality monitoring data around national identity and ethnicity it was recommended that more commentary and summary around ethnicity, particularly including information around how the Council is widening recruitment practices to ensure we are an attractive employer to the global majority should be included.
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	DRAFT STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-2028	A letter to the Cabinet providing the feedback of the Committee is attached as appendix C to the report. In summary, the following points were raised: • Scrutiny Members welcomed the Plan and were pleased that the Authority were taking the matter seriously. Members recommended that Scrutiny revisit this item in the future to measure its effectiveness and implementation and the rollout of training for staff. • Members challenged whether the objectives within the draft plan addressed the comments and challenges received as part of the consultation • It was queried how training to staff will be taken forward throughout the Council.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

7.1 Details of the Scrutiny involvement and consultation are highlighted within section 5 of the report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 None

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 none

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

10.1 The work of all Councillors, through pre-scrutiny of Cabinet decisions is fundamental to the work of the Council and subsequently the delivery of the Corporate Plan

11. CONCLUSION

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

11.2 The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the relevant Scrutiny Committee will strengthen accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<u>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972</u>

<u>AS AMENDED BY</u>

<u>THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985</u>

<u>RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</u>

<u>CABINET</u>

<u>20th March 2024</u>

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

Item: **PRE – SCRUTINY FEEDBACK**

Background Papers

tudalen wag

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

30 January 2024

Dear Cabinet Members

Re: Pre-Scrutiny of the Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030

I have been instructed by this Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to the Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee were provided with the opportunity, by the Council's Chief Executive, to pre-scrutinise the Draft Corporate Plan at its meeting on the 29th January 2024. Members undertook a constructive discussion in respect of the draft plan, which I have summarised below:

Vision

Members welcomed and supported the content of the proposed Vision statement, which they determined demonstrates ambition, while also highlighting the challenges the Council and its communities will face over the next six years. A number of Committee Members suggested strengthening the 'inclusivity' within the Vision, by the inclusion of the word such as "All" at the beginning of the statement and there forward in the wider document.

Despite the likely challenges ahead, members acknowledge the importance of remaining to be ambitious and setting an aspiration vision for the County Borough.

Members then took the opportunity to focus and comment upon the specific wellbeing objectives contained within the plan.

Wellbeing Objective – People and Communities

Members were pleased to see the continued focus upon school attendance, noting the continued priority placed upon this by the Council's Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee. Many members cited the importance place standards and attainment will play increase opportunities for young people and reducing poverty into the future. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also considered that there needed to be more explicit reference to Child Poverty within the Plan as well as a need to build aspiration for communities and young people in particular. Members reaffirmed their wish to be provided with the opportunity to influence this specific aspect of the corporate plan moving forward. Some Members raised concerns at the use of hyperlinks throughout the Plan and recommended that the use of these are reviewed and used only where necessary to ensure the plan is accessible and easy for the public to read and understand.

Wellbeing Objective - Work and Business

Members expressed their broad support for this objective but raised concerns more widely, at the lack of employment opportunities available, in particular apprenticeships available outside of the public sector. Members urged that the availability of apprenticeships and broader skills development is reviewed to ensure that placements are available to inspire people to train and secure skilled work after college. Likewise members also acknowledged the positive benefits this could delivery in attracting investment and job creation to South Wales. Members questioned whether the plan could influence current and future national apprenticeship programmes, which some members deemed to be inflexible, which in turn deters smaller businesses based in RCT from participating. Members also indicated that they would like to see reference to high skilled work and also supporting people into rewarding career paths and not just jobs. Members noted the need to focus on attracted large high skilled employment back to the South Wales Valleys.

A member highlighted a general concern in respect of traffic issues and mobility across the County Borough, including the Town centres and in particular East -West connectivity in the south of the County. All members acknowledged that communities need to be well connected with improved infrastructure and accessible, affordable public transport.

Members also noted the value in local opportunities for residents to shop in smaller local retail areas, not just the focus on Town Centres, would bring wider economic benefits and enhance communities in RCT.

Wellbeing Objective – Nature and the Environment

The Committee highlighted the issues the Council faced with increased problems with litter and fly tipping throughout the whole of the County Borough and the unsightliness which this thus creates. The Committee sought stronger wording throughout the Plan to highlight the importance of the public taking responsibility for disposing of their rubbish and taking personal responsibility for the wider environment. They also recommended that there needs to be more education around the dangers and health impacts of litter, while noting the good work which already takes place to combat these issues. The Committee was keen to ensure cleaner streets across RCT and pride in our communities, should form a key plank of this specific objective.

Wellbeing Objective – Culture and Heritage

Many Members acknowledge the yet unlocked tourism potential of the County Borough. Some members noted that a vision for the future, should include reference to the significance of the rich industrial heritage and also earlier history. A member requested reference to wider history, including the Iron Age, of Rhondda Cynon Taf and would like to see this considered throughout the Plan.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

All members noted the important role the natural landscape should play in promote the history and culture of the area. Members also acknowledged the opportunity which will be created by the hosting of the National Eisteddfod in 2024.

Following consideration of the specific objectives, members noted some of the general themes and information contained within the draft plan. These included noting the stark health statistics in the data sections of the Plan both now and in the future, for health conditions particularly for obesity, noting that it would a concerted effort by all of the public sector to redress these issues, over future generations, and not just in the course of this draft plan. They indicated that they would like to see more emphasis on the Council's partnership working, particularly with the Local Health Board and the existing health initiatives, such as Healthy Weight Wales etc to demonstrate how the Authority is working to address these concerns.

Members also acknowledged the range and scale of challenges identified by the data, and wider breadth of challenges facing communities from health inequalities to economic deprivation and inactivity, made worse by the cost of living. Members noted the diverse difference in such challenges when comparing the South of the County Borough to the North, and how this would be considered in the context of future service delivery. Members noted the volume of data within the Plan but also noted that this needs to be utilised to inform work on the plan moving forward   Whilst acknowledging that the Plan contained the 'what' will be delivered, there was also a need to be clear about 'how' the priorities will be delivered, which in turn will help to identify the Outcomes.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were grateful for the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the draft Corporate Plan. A copy of the recording of the meeting can be found here

Yours sincerely,

Christian Hanagan
Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF

29 February 2024

Re: Pre-Scrutiny of the Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23 and Draft Strategic Equality Plan

Dear Cabinet Members

I have been instructed by this Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to the Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23 and the Draft Strategic Equality Plan.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the arrangements at its meeting on the 26th February 2024. Members undertook a constructive discussion in respect of the proposals. The Members' comments are summarised below.

Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23

The Committee welcomed and supported the report and during discussions considered the possibility of poverty and class being discriminated against which is a concern. Therefore members *recommended* that this is considered as part of the reporting process in future reports.

In analysing data throughout the report, Members were pleased to note the improved outcomes in a number of areas including the Healthy Relationship Programme. Members *recommended* that the data did not suggest improved outcomes following the project. Members were reassured to hear however that this was not the case and outcomes were positive. Members also noted the Equality monitoring data around national identity and ethnicity and *recommended* more commentary and summary around ethnicity, particularly including information around how the Council is widening recruitment practices to ensure we are an attractive employer to the global majority.

Strategic Equality Plan

Members welcomed the Strategic Equality Plan which was supported by all Members of the Committee. Members thanked the officers for their commitment on the implementation of the plan and were reassured to see a detailed action plan outlining its implementation. Members *recommended* that Scrutiny revisit this item in the future to measure its effectiveness and implementation, particularly in relation to the rollout and delivery of the mandatory training to all staff which they recognised is a vast undertaking.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were grateful for the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the above reports. A copy of the recording of the meeting can be found here

Yours sincerely,

Christian Hanagan
Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME: 2023- 24 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.

1.   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   To present, for Cabinet Members' comment and approval, an update on the Cabinet Work Programme on the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the 2023-2024 Municipal Year. The Work Programme will guide and direct the activities of other arms of the Council, as well as the Cabinet itself.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the Work Programme for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

3.   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   At the Council AGM on the 25th May 2022, it was agreed that going forward a detailed Cabinet Work Programme be published allowing sufficient notice and opportunity for consultation and / or pre scrutiny. Amendments to paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution were amended to reflect this position, although still allowing updated versions of the programme to be provided on a 3 monthly cycle to the Cabinet.

3.2   The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021, provides that information about forthcoming executive decisions must be made available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to ensure these Committees are best informed to undertake and better plan their work. Although the Council are already well placed in respect of this duty, it is important to ensure the development of an accurate and robust Cabinet work programme, outlining consideration of Key Decisions which will

strengthen the robust Governance arrangements intended to be taken forward.

3.3   The updated Work Programme is attached to this report for Members' consideration and covers the 2023-24 Municipal Year.

3.4   For ease of reference the work programme will also be available on the main Cabinet [webpage](#) for Members and members of the public information.

4.   CABINET REPORTS

4.1   The proposed work programme is a rolling work programme for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year, which is reported to Cabinet on a 3 month cycle to allow for regular updates and amendments.

4.2   An updated work programme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.3   During the period outlined, the Work Programme may be subject to further change to take into account any additional/deletion reports, including any new consultative documents or legislative initiatives from the Welsh Government, which require urgent attention.

4.4   In accordance with paragraph 2.5 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution, any Member of the Council may also request the Leader to put an item on the agenda of a Cabinet meeting. There is also the ability for a resolution to be made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the full Council that an item be considered by the Cabinet, which could alter the forward Work Programme.

4.5   In addition to publishing the Cabinet work programme on the main Cabinet web page, the Work Programme is will also be published on a standalone 'Work Programme page' on the website to again assist Members of the public, by improving transparency.

5.   CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

5.1   The work programme has been compiled by members of the Senior Leadership Team in discussion with the relevant portfolio holder(s) and has been consulted upon with the relevant scrutiny committees in respect of pre-scrutiny.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment including the socio-economic duty is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Not applicable. Any implications to the welsh language will be presented within each of the reports outlined within the work programme.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

8.1 The work programme has been compiled by members of the Senior Leadership Team in discussion with the relevant portfolio holder(s) and has been consulted upon with the relevant scrutiny committees in respect of pre-scrutiny.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution and the future requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

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

11.1 The Cabinet work programme encompasses all of the Council priorities as it indicates reports coming forward across the Directorates which may impact upon the Council's corporate priorities and others. It also embraces the Future Generations Acts as all future decisions taken by the Cabinet seek to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the County Borough.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 An updated Cabinet work programme for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year is attached.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL.

Item: CABINET WORK PROGRAMME: 2023-24 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

Background Papers

- Paragraph 12.1 (Part 4) of the Council's Constitution.

Cabinet Work Programme

Forward plan of proposed Cabinet Business for the 2023/24 Municipal Year

Specific Period: May 2023 – May 2024

(Summary of proposed Key Decisions coming forward for Cabinet Members consideration)

N.B – *The work programme is subject to change to take account of any additional / deletion of reports, including any new consultative documents or legislative initiatives from the Welsh Government, which require urgent attention.*

Contact: Hannah Jones (Tel No. 07385401954)

Date	Report	Officer	Cabinet Member	Open/ Exempt	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
MAY 2023	**Leader's Scheme of Delegation and associated matters arising from the AGM**	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	
	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	The Council's Office Accommodation Strategy Workspace Plan: Fit for the Future and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Operating Model and Working Arrangements Policy	Chief Executive	Leader and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Pontypridd Placemaking Plan	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Funding	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

	Pre-Scrutiny: Learning Disability Day Strategy	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	An Update in relation to the Looked After Children: Residential Care Transformation Strategy 2022-2027	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Exempt	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Real Living Wage Accreditation	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Report on progress of the Authority's review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	21ˢᵗ Century Schools Programme: Naming of New Schools *	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Consultation on the Proposals to realign Additional Learning Needs Mainstream Learning Support Class Provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

*deferred from February 2023.

	Planning and Biodiversity: RCT observations to Welsh Government regarding proposed amendment of Planning Policy Wales – Delegated Decision	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Draft Public Participation Strategy Public Consultation – Delegated Decision	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
JUNE 2023	**Review of Dog Control PSPO**	Andrew Wilkins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	(Redstart) Joint Venture Agreement – Request for Contract Extension	Paul Mee Chief Executive	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Draft Town Centre Strategy for Aberdare	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

	Community Safety Partnership Review	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Corporate Asset Management Plan Update	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Proposal to Improve the Education Provision for a New Special School in RCT	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
JULY 2023	**Council's Performance Report**	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Amgen Director Change	Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment		Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	To commence formal statutory consultation on the Draft LFRMS	Roger Waters, Director Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	RCT SACRE Annual Report	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Estyn Report	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

	Eco 4 Flex Scheme – Delegated Decision	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	
	Rock Grounds Aberdare Proposal	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Cardiff Capital Region Housing Viability Gap Fund for Undeveloped Sites	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Re-development of the 42-43 High Street, Former Rates Building, Aberdare – Delegated Decision	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
AUGUST 2023	**Purchase of Meadow View, Penrhiwfer Road, Penrhiwfer, Tonyrefail CF40 1SJ – Delegated Decision**	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
SEPTEMBER 2023	**Review of Dog Control PSPO**	Andrew Wilkins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Cost of Living	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Council Corporate Plan - Investment Priorities	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Council's Performance Report	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Medium Term Financial Plan Update	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Acquisition of Land to the East of Cenarth Drive, Cwmbach, Aberdare, CF44 0NH	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Statutory School Organisation Proposal	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
Consultation on the Proposals to realign Additional Learning Needs Mainstream Learning Support Class Provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

			Welsh Language		
	Local Toilet Strategy	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Street Trading – Delegated Decision	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
OCTOBER 2023	**Public Services Ombudsman for Wales - Annual Report and Letter 2022-2023**	Andrew Wilkins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Cynon Valley Waste Disposal Company Limited and Amgen Rhondda Limited – Annual General Meeting	Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Exempt	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Budget Consultation Report	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Irrecoverable Debts	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services and Digital Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

	Customer Feedback	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Social Services Annual Complaints and Compliments Report	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Report	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Acquisition of Land and Building at Plot 44, Michaels Grove, Enterprise Way, Llanharan – Delegated Decision	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Publication of the Air Quality Progress Report 2023 – Delegated Decision	Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	RCT Private Rented Sector Strategy	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	RCT Empty Homes Strategy	Simon Gale, Director of	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity

		Prosperity and Development			Scrutiny Committee
	Domiciliary Care Services	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Report	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Learning Disability Day Strategy – Consultation response	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Proposals to develop a new Special School in Rhondda Cynon Taf	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language		Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
NOVEMBER 2023	**Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects – Supplementary Capital Programme**	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Council Tax Base 2024/25	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Council's Performance Report	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

		Finance, Digital & Frontline Services			
	Corporate Asset Management Plan Transition Report	David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Exempt	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Medium Term Financial Planning – Service Proposals	Senior Leadership Team	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Director Social Services Annual Report	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2022-2023	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication And Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
DECEMBER 2023	**Cabinet Work Programme**	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Statutory School Organisation - Proposal to close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School – Consultation Response	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

	HMO Licensing Report	Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Aberdare Town Centre Strategy	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf Statutory Notice	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Day Services for Older People	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Risk Management Strategy	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Governance & Audit Committee
	Internal Audit Service	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Exempt	Governance & Audit Committee

JANUARY 2024	**Contaminated Land Strategy – Delegated Decision**	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Council Fees and Charges	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Budget Report	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Welsh Church Act	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Proposals to develop a new Special School in Rhondda Cynon Taf	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Report to commence publication of the Authority's final Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

	Continuation of free breakfast club provision in primary and special schools with the introduction of a charge for the additional childcare element	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
FEBRUARY 2024	**Council's Revenue Budget**	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Capital Programme	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Non-Domestic Rates Report	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) - Use of RIPA by RCTCBC	Andrew Wilkins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	The Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy	Paul Mee Chief Executive	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

MARCH 2024	Council's Corporate Plan	Paul Mee Chief Executive	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Cabinet Work Programme	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic Services and Communication	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	RCT Local Housing Market Assessment	Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity and Development	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Home to School Transport	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Council's Performance Report	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Education Supplementary Capital Programme	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

	Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects – Supplementary Capital Programme	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Annual Equality Report	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Irrecoverable Debts	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Strategic Equality Plan	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Working towards an Age Friendly RCT	Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
APRIL 2024	**Heritage Strategy**	Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee

	Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership	Paul Mee Chief Executive	Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Development for Infrastructure and Investment	Open	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Adult Social Care Strategy	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Corporate Parenting Charter	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	ALN Strategic Priorities for 2024-2027	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	Statutory School Organisation - Proposal to close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language	Open	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee
	RCT Health Determinants Research Collaboration	Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Communities	Open	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
MAY 2024	**Climate Change Cabinet Sub-Committee Annual Report**	Christian Hanagan, Service Director Democratic	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Open	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

		Services and Communication			

Ongoing Updates

Date	Report	Officer	Cabinet Member	Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Ongoing Updates	**Review of IAA Service**	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Processing Of Mixed Kerbside Recycling	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Highways Investment Scheme	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Review of Mainstream School Transport Provision	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Coal Tips	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure	Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
	Update on Aberdare – Hirwaun Passenger Rail Services Study	Steve Williams, Director of Highways, Streetcare and Frontline Services	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Update on North West Cardiff – RCT Transport Corridor Study	Steve Williams, Director of Highways,	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

		Streetcare and Frontline Services	and Investment	
	Digital Strategy	Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director of Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Corporate Services	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Modernisation of Residential Care and Day Care for Older People – Consultation feedback	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Extra Care Strategy	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Update In Relation To The Children Looked After:Residential Care Strategy 2022-2027	Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Local Air Quality Management Reports	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	Local Toilet Strategy	Louise Davies, Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services	Cabinet Member for Prosperity and Development	Community Services Scrutiny Committee
	21st Century School Transformation Programme	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language	Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

	Cardiff Capital Region - City Deal	Chief Executive	Leader and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Investment	Overview and Scrutiny Scrutiny Committee
	Staff Panel Report	Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
	Pre-Scrutiny Recommendations – To receive feedback and comments of the items that were pre-scrutinised by the Council's thematic Scrutiny Committees.	Christian Hanagan Service Director Democratic Services and Communications		

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, STREETCARE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR ANDREW MORGAN OBE AND THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE (COUNCILLOR ANN CRIMMINGS)

1.   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   The purpose of the report is to:

(i)   Report the results of the public consultation exercise initiated by Cabinet, together with updated Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments in relation to a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy; and

(ii)   Assist Cabinet in its determination of whether or not it wishes to progress with implementation of a new Home to School Transport Policy.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1   Considers the content of the report and outcome of the public consultation, together with the associated Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments appended to the report;

2.2   Subject to 2.1 above, determines whether or not, and if so how, it wishes to proceed with implementation of a revised Home to School Transport Policy giving consideration to the following preferred option which was consulted upon, namely:
- providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport in line with relevant statutory distance criteria,
- allowing a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language or preferred religious denomination;
- continuing to provide discretionary pre-compulsory school age transport and post-16 transport; and

- continuing to provide discretionary Additional Learning Needs transport:

2.3 Subject to 2.1 and 2.2 above, considers, in light of the feedback from the public consultation and analysis of the Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments, whether it wishes to amend the proposal as consulted upon, including consideration of alternative options presented within section 14 of this report;

2.4 Notes that any revised Home to School Transport Policy would need to be published in accordance with statutory requirements by 1st October 2024 in order for it to be able to be implemented for the commencement of the 2025/26 academic year; and

2.5 Subject to any decision taken to proceed with implementation of a revised Home to School Transport Policy delegates authority to the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services to develop, introduce or amend any operational policies/guidance incidental to the implementation of any revised Home to School Transport Policy.

3. <u>REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS</u>

3.1 The Council is facing significant financial challenges into the medium term and is considering a range of options to contribute to addressing the shortfall in funding.

3.2 To consider the results of a public consultation exercise, initiated by Cabinet, together with updated impact assessments, in respect of a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, which maintains elements of discretionary transport and provides mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport in line with relevant statutory distance criteria.

3.3 Should the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy be implemented, in respect of the preferred option consulted upon, the Council would continue to provide discretionary Home to School Transport beyond statutory requirements, using discretionary powers to provide transport in a number of areas as outlined in the report, including the provision of transport for pupils with Additional Learning Needs, pupils of pre-compulsory school age and post-16 learners. Further, it would allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with their choice of English or Welsh Medium language or preferred religious denomination.

3.4 The feedback received through the consultation exercise highlighted a number of recurring themes which are referenced in this report and in the associated impact assessments. Cabinet should have due regard to

these prior to making any final decision in relation to any revised Home to School Transport Policy.

4.   BACKGROUND

4.1   At its meeting on 18th September 2023 the Cabinet received an update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27. This reported an estimated budget gap of £35.005M for 2024/25 financial year, rising to £85.4M (cumulatively) across the next 3 years. This follows the Council having balanced its largest ever budget gap for the current year, 2023/24.

4.2   Given the size of the budget gap and with a focus across the medium term, this report sets out an option to reduce the cost base with regard to the provision of Home to School transport.

4.3   Moreover, at its meeting on 20th November 2023, Cabinet agreed to initiate a public consultation in respect of a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, which, if approved, would be adopted from the beginning of the 2025/26 Academic year.

4.4   The Council currently operates a very generous Home to School Transport policy over and above the statutory distance criteria which is the largest operation of its kind in Wales. The Council currently provides Home to School transport for approximately 9,000 mainstream pupils, 960 Additional Learning Needs ("ALN") learners, and 2,300 College students each day, with approximately 9,000+ of these learners transported on a discretionary basis. This transport is provided through the provision of contracted coaches, minibuses, taxis, and public transport season tickets.

4.5   Many Councils have already modified their eligibility criteria in line with the statutory distance. Therefore, the Council now provides discretionary transport for more learners than almost every other Council's entire Home to School transport operations.

4.6   Since the Covid-19 pandemic and conflict in Ukraine, bus operators have experienced significant increases in operational costs e.g., fuel, parts, wages etc. These costs have naturally impacted the viability of school bus routes and the affordability to operate them at pre-pandemic rates. As a result, the Council has uplifted its current contract rates significantly to match industry demand and continues to receive tender bids for new/replacement routes far above those received prior to March 2020.

4.7   The resultant effect of this has seen the Council's Home to School Transport costs increasing from £8M in 2015 to over £15M for the 2023/24 financial year.

4.8 Factoring in the increasing costs Cabinet determined to initiate a consultation on a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy.

5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK: THE COUNCIL'S DUTIES UNDER THE LEARNER TRAVEL (WALES) MEASURE 2008

5.1 The Council has several statutory duties which are relevant to this policy area which Members are reminded of, and must give due consideration to, before taking any final decision(s) in respect of the implementation of any new Home to School Transport Policy. These are set out in detail below.

5.2 The Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (referred to in this report as the "Measure") sets out the current statutory duties of Local Authorities with regard to the provision of home to school transport. Statutory guidance is also provided by the Welsh Government in the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – June 2014 (the "Guidance"). The Measure and the Guidance can be accessed by clicking on the following links: Measure / Guidance.

5.3 Under the Measure the Council **must**: -

- Assess the travel needs of learners in its area.
- Provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age _attending primary school who live 2 miles or further from their nearest suitable school_.
- Provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age _attending secondary school who live 3 miles or further from their nearest suitable school_.
- Assess and meet the needs of "looked after" children in its area.
- Promote access to Welsh medium education.
- Promote sustainable modes of travel.

5.4 The Council must therefore continue to meet these responsibilities in any future policy it adopts.

5.5 The Measure requires the Council to provide learners with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they ordinarily reside beyond a "safe" walking distance to that school. The term "suitable school" applies to the catchment area English, Welsh or dual-language mainstream school, or special school or class as appropriate. Where learners are not entitled to free transport the Council has the power to provide transport on a discretionary basis.

5.6 The definition of nearest "suitable school" is where the "education or training provided is suitable having regard for the age, ability and aptitudes of the learner and any learning difficulties he or she may have".

5.7 The walking distance is measured by the shortest available route. The Guidance states that, "a route is available" if it is considered to be safe, (as far as reasonably practicable), for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone, or with an accompanying adult if the learner's age and levels of understanding requires this." If a route is not "available" then a learner is entitled to free transport to their nearest suitable school even though the distance from home to school is less than the distance limit that applies to his or her age.

5.8 *Assessing the travel needs of learners does not mean providing free transport. Learners will only qualify for free transport provision if they meet the entitlement criteria.* Whist the Council is required to assess the travel needs of all learners under the age of 19, there is currently no legal duty to provide free or assisted transport arrangements for non-compulsory school age children, (up to the term in which a child turns 5 or post 16 learners).

5.9 Parents and learners may express a preference for a particular school or a particular type of language provision, or Faith school, but the Measure does not confer on those parents and learners any rights to free transport to their preferred school and or location, unless that school is determined by the Council to be the learner's nearest suitable school and the learner meets the distance criteria. However, Members should note, particularly, the position in relation to Welsh medium education as outlined in paragraphs 5.17 – 5.20 below.

5.10 The Council is also required to have regard to: -

- The needs of disabled learners and learners with learning difficulties.
- Any particular needs of learners who are "looked after" or formerly looked after by the Council.
- The age of a learner.
- The nature of the route that the learner is expected to take between home and the places where they receive education or training.

5.11 In assessing the travel needs of learners, the Council must take into account the fact that the travel arrangements they make in light of the assessment must not cause unreasonable levels of stress, take an unreasonable amount of time, or be unsafe.

5.12 When exercising functions under the Measure, the Council is not required to take account of extra-curricular activities or breakfast and / or after-school clubs when assessing learner travel needs.

5.13 If a learner cannot be admitted to their nearest suitable school which results in the learner having to attend the next available nearest suitable

school, the Council has the same duty to provide free transport, if the requisite distance criteria is met.

5.14 Free transport for statutory age learners who attend special schools, pupil referral units and learning support classes is provided in accordance with the Council's agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes, (as set out above). This must be supported by appropriate evidence and be confirmed by the Council's Access and Inclusion ALN Panel. Learners with disabilities, (as defined by the Equality Act 2010), may be entitled to assistance with transport from home to an appropriate school or college even though the Council's agreed criteria on safe walking distance, (as set out above), are not met.

5.15 There is no statutory duty for the Council to provide free transport to post-16 learners who continue their studies in mainstream further education or training, as well as for learners with a disability or learning difficulty attending post-16 further education or training. Although, in assessing learner travel needs, the Council "must have regard in particular" to the needs of learners who are disabled or with learning difficulties.

Power To Provide Discretionary Provision

5.16 The Measure provides the Council with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for non-compulsory school age children.

5.17 When deciding which schools are most suitable for learners in its area, the Council and Welsh Ministers have a duty under the Measure to "promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh".

5.18 The Council has the option to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because of language preference.

5.19 The Council has to make clear in its Home to School Transport Policy, (which is contained in the annual Starting School Booklet), its arrangements for providing free or assisted travel to schools teaching through the medium of Welsh or English.

5.20 Preference for either language should be treated equally. The Council must also take into account its Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027 and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032 (WESP). The WESP sets out the ten-year plan for the planning and improvement of the provision of Welsh Medium and Welsh Language education. It is the plan for increasing the number of pupils attending Welsh Medium Schools.

5.21 A learner is entitled to free transport to a denominational or Faith school, if that school is considered by the Council to be the learner's nearest suitable school, should they meet the relevant distance criteria. However, the Measure also provides the Council with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because of denominational preference.

5.22 The Council is also required to make clear in its Home to School Transport Policy its arrangements for providing discretionary, or assisted travel to denominational schools.

5.23 If the Council does make use of its discretionary powers, it must ensure that the policy applies to all learners in the same circumstances living in that Council's area. The Council should ensure that any policy is fair, reasonable, and lawful, and complies with relevant equality legislation to ensure it does not discriminate unlawfully between learners when using their discretionary powers.

Charging for Transport

5.24 The Council cannot charge for transport arrangements that it is *required* to make for learners of compulsory school age, (i.e., the statutory requirement to provide free home to school transport), except in relation to Children Looked After (CLA), where the Council makes travel arrangements for a child who is looked after by another Authority, (where a charge may be made to another Authority).

5.25 However, when the Council uses its Section 6 powers under the Measure to provide discretionary travel arrangements for learners not entitled to free transport provision, a charge can currently be applied for these arrangements.

The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR)

5.26 The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) of 2000 and 2005 apply to all new public service vehicles, (buses or coaches), that:

- Have been introduced since 31st December 2000.
- Have a capacity exceeding 22 passengers.
- Are used to provide a local or scheduled service.

5.27 PSVAR applies in England, Scotland and Wales and come under the responsibility of the UK Government's Department for Transport.

5.28 Requirements under the regulations have been introduced in phases. The final requirement from the PSVAR was implemented on 1st January

2020. This requirement means that any coach used on a scheduled service from that date must provide wheelchair access. The PSVAR apply only to public service vehicles. A vehicle that is not a public service vehicle (i.e., one that is not operated on a commercial basis for hire and reward), is outside the scope of the PSVAR.

5.29   The PSVAR apply to transport for learners provided by Local Authorities on a discretionary basis where the Local Authorities collect a fee from the learner, (i.e. impose a charge or sell surplus seats). The regulations do not include transport that Local Authorities provide themselves. In some areas, as a consequence of the PSVAR, some fare paying school buses have been withdrawn.

5.30   Medium-term exemptions to the PSVAR have been introduced by the UK Government in respect of in-scope home-to-school services. Those exemptions came into force on 1st July 2023 but expire on 31st July 2026. The grant of such exemptions requires operators concerned to progressively increase the compliance rate among their vehicles that are available for in-scope home to school transport services. All must be what the UK Government describes as "either fully or partially compliant with PSVAR" by 1st August 2026.

5.31   There is currently a significant shortfall in the number of buses that meet the PSVAR requirements in the marketplace. Due to the additional time required to operate scheduled school bus routes, and the geographical restrictions along these routes, e.g., a bus with wheelchair lift requires a road to be flat without incline, it is also not practical to operate such vehicles on school contract routes.

5.32   As a result of the above, the option of charging for transport under the statutory distance is not available for consideration.

Education Act 1996

5.33   Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 creates the offence on the part of a parent of failing to secure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil. Section 20 of the Measure amends Section 444 to provide that a parent will have a defence to a prosecution if a Local Authority has failed to discharge, where required, their statutory duties under the Measure to make travel arrangements to facilitate the attendance of their child at school.

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

5.34   The Council needs to have due regard to the Welsh Government's Active Travel Action Plan for Wales and the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.

5.35   The action plan aims to address congestion and encourage people to walk and cycle more often. The Welsh Government estimates that one in five cars on the road at 8:50am on a weekday is undertaking a journey to school. Therefore, congestion in towns is a serious issue. The Action Plan sets out the actions that the Welsh Government and its partners will take to encourage more people to walk and cycle for more journeys. It is hoped that this will not only improve the health of our young people, but also improve the health and well-being of those who live and work in the area.

6.   **CURRENT POLICY**

6.1   The Council currently provides Home to School transport for approximately 9,000 mainstream pupils and 2,300 College students[1] each day through the provision of more than 193 routes. This transport is provided through the provision of contracted coaches, minibuses, and public transport season tickets.

6.2   The following table demonstrates how the Council schedules its contracted mainstream and college bus transport provision to ensure the most efficient use of available resources.

Number of learners carried by contracted bus	9,528
Number of school/college bus routes	193
Number of buses in operation	168
Average number of learners per route	49
Overall % of vehicle capacity utilised	81%
Number of learners carried by public transport	1,750

6.3   The Home to School transport budget for 2023/24 is £15m.

6.4   The Council's Learner Travel Policy is contained in its annual Starting School Booklet.

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[1] As at September 2023

6.5 The Council is currently exercising its discretionary powers (referred to in paragraphs 5.16 - 5.23 above) under the provisions of the Measure to make a more generous provision to learners. The comparison to the statutory requirements is shown below: -

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Free Transport	RCT Provision (as of November 2023)
3 – End of term in which child turns 5	Non-compulsory school age	No statutory provision (although duty to assess needs)	Free transport for pupils attending full time in line with the Council's admission arrangements if reside 1.5 miles or further safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
Term following 5th Birthday – 11	Learner receiving compulsory primary education (English or Welsh Medium & SEN)	Reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Free transport if reside 1.5 miles or further safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school.
12 – 16	Learner receiving compulsory secondary education (English or Welsh Medium & SEN)	Reside 3 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Free transport if reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school
16+	Post-16 learners	No statutory provision, (although there is a duty to assess needs)	Free transport if reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school or college at which the approved course of study they wish to follow is offered (full time attendance) – for 2 years after the end of compulsory education (or 3 years for those who have reached 19

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Free Transport	RCT Provision (as of November 2023)
			but started a course when under 19 and continue to attend that course).
3 – 19	Learners selecting a school in accordance with their preferred religious denomination	No statutory provision – Measure does not require provision where learner selects a school that is not the nearest 'suitable school' (as the definition does not include voluntary aided (Faith) mainstream schools).	Allows learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with their preferred religious denomination. Therefore, distance provisions above apply.
3 – 19	Learners selecting a Welsh Medium School	Statutory provision is an issue of interpretation – Measure does not require provision where learner selects a school that is not the nearest 'suitable school'.	Allows learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language. Therefore, distance provisions above apply.

6.6   Based on a review of all Welsh local authorities, the provision at Rhondda Cynon Taf compares favourably to other parts of Wales. The table in Appendix 1 to the report summarises an analysis of Home to School Transport provision using available information contained in each Authority's starting school booklets for 2023/24, (note: policies may have been subsequently updated and relevant information has been provided in this regard where possible). It is also noted that 18 out of 22 Councils in Wales currently provide Home to School Transport in line with the Welsh Government's statutory distance requirements.

7. REVIEW OF SERVICE PROVISION – INITIAL OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Three options were initially considered as part of this review[2], namely:

A. **Status Quo** i.e., retain the current level of provision resulting in £nil savings.

B. **Provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport in line with statutory distance criteria.**

Transport for all primary school pupils living between current discretionary distance of 1.5 miles and statutory distance of 2 miles would no longer be provided. Free transport for pupils living further than 2 miles away would continue, including where pupils attend Welsh or Faith schools because of parental/carer/learner preference.

Transport for all secondary school pupils living between current discretionary distance of 2 miles and statutory distance of 3 miles would no longer be provided. Free transport for pupils living further than 3 miles away would continue, including where pupils attend Welsh or Faith schools because of parental/carer/learner preference.

This option has the potential to deliver savings of approximately £2.5M in a full year.

C. **Removal of all discretionary provision.**

In this option transport would no longer be provided for:

- Primary school pupils of compulsory school age attending an English medium school living between current discretionary distance of 1.5 miles and statutory distance of 2 miles.
- Secondary school pupils of compulsory school age attending an English medium school living between current discretionary distance of 2 miles and statutory distance of 3 miles.
- Pupils below compulsory school age.
- Post 16 pupils.
- All Primary and Secondary school pupils attending a Welsh Medium or Faith school, except where it is the nearest suitable school and is more than the statutory safe walking distance away.

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[2] Savings figures based on pupil numbers and service usage as of September 2023

This option has the potential to deliver savings of approximately £6.9m in a full year.

7.2   An analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each initial option, including the impact on pupil numbers as of September 2023, is shown at Appendix 2 to this report.

7.3   The proposed preferred option Cabinet initiated a consultation upon was Option B – namely to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college, transport, in line with statutory distance criteria. Furthermore, it was proposed that this policy would be implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year.

7.4   Option B would deliver a financial saving whilst maintain all other elements of discretionary provision. It would also assist in addressing increasing concerns about market stability in respect of Home to School transport provision. It is anticipated that it would also encourage more pupils onto public transport, add routes, which would help in turn to sustain public transport services, albeit it is acknowledged that for younger pupils there may be safeguarding concerns.

7.5   Furthermore, with the electrification of valley lines and improved frequency of services via the South Wales Metro, pupils will have access to improved rail services and integrated public transport network in some areas. However, it would mean approximately 2,750 pupils no longer receiving access to free Home to School transport. From an educational perspective, it was identified that this may raise potential issues in respect of pupil attendance and learner engagement in education should the Council's policy be amended in this way. This is a potential risk given the strong correlation between learner attendance and outcomes, and the continued impact of the pandemic on attendance rates at a local, regional, and national level. These considerations and others are explored in further detail later in the report.

7.6   Option B would mean the Council continues to meet the requirements of the Measure, with 18 of the 22 Council's in Wales already adopting the statutory distance requirements.

7.7   If implemented Option B would deliver savings of approximately £2.5M per year, which would be fully realised in the 2026/27 financial year. The part-year savings for 2025/26 would be approximately £1.4M.

8.   **PROPOSED NEW HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY**

8.1   Whilst the Council has chosen to make use of its powers to provide discretionary transport arrangements, it also has the power to remove this provision at a later date.

8.2 In doing so the Council should follow the correct procedures in line with its relevant policy protocols.

8.3 If the Council does decide to change or remove the discretionary transport provision it provides, it must publish the information before 1st October of the year preceding the academic year in which the changes will come into force.

8.4 Therefore, subject to the Cabinet determining how it wishes to progress with the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, it is proposed that the new policy would be implemented from the start of the 2025/26 Academic year and published prior to 1st October 2024.

8.5 Should Cabinet determine to progress with the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy as consulted upon in respect of the preferred option, it would mean that the Council's current discretionary distance eligibility criteria for Home to School transport, as set out in the table at paragraph 6.5 above, would be amended in line with the Welsh Government statutory distance eligibility criteria. The overall provision would be as set out in the table below:

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Free Transport	Proposed changes to RCT Mainstream Transport Provision from September 2025
3 – End of term in which child turns 5	Non-compulsory school age, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	No statutory provision (although duty to assess needs)	Continue to provide transport for pupils that reside 2 miles safe walking distance to their catchment or nearest suitable school, at the beginning and end of the normal school day and not at lunchtimes
Term following 5th Birthday – 11	Learner receiving compulsory primary education, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	Reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school
12 – 16	Learner receiving compulsory secondary education, learner selecting education through English or Welsh medium.	Reside 3 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school	Reside 3 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school
16+	Post-16 learners, learner selecting	No statutory provision	Continue to provide transport for pupils that reside 3 miles or further

Age during Academic Year	User	Statutory Requirement to Provide Free Transport	Proposed changes to RCT Mainstream Transport Provision from September 2025
	education through English or Welsh medium.	(although duty to assess needs)	safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school or college.
3 – 19	Learners selecting a school in accordance with their preferred religious denomination	No statutory provision – Measure does not require provision where learner selects a school that is not the nearest 'suitable school' (as the definition does not include voluntary aided (Faith) mainstream schools).	Continue to provide transport for pupils that: Reside 2 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school for 3–11-year-olds (primary) attending full time in line with the Council's admission arrangements. Reside 3 miles or further safe walking distance to their nearest suitable school for 11–19-year-olds (secondary).

8.6 The Council would continue to provide all other areas of its discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum Welsh Government statutory requirement, as demonstrated in the table below:

Service Provision	WG Statutory Policy	RCTCBC Proposed Policy
Primary School Distance > 2 miles	✓	✓
Secondary School Distance > 3 miles	✓	✓
Pre-compulsory School Age < 5 years *	✗	✓
Transport to nearest suitable Faith School (Primary and Secondary) **	✗	✓
Transport to nearest suitable Welsh Medium School (Primary and Secondary) **	✗	✓
Post 16 Education Transport (6th form or College) *	✗	✓

* Subject to a learner meeting relevant distance criteria

** Parents and learners may express a preference for a particular school, a particular type of language provision or faith school, but the Learner Travel Measure does not confer on those parents and learners any rights to free transport to their preferred school and or location, unless that school is determined by the local authority to be the learner's nearest suitable school and the learner meets the distance criteria. Section 6 of the Measure provides local authorities with the power to provide discretionary transport arrangements for learners who are not attending their nearest suitable school because

of language preference and/or preferred religious denomination. The Council is currently using those powers to provide such discretionary provision (subject to a learner meeting the relevant distance criteria).

8.7 Learners would continue to be able to select their nearest "suitable school" in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language or preferred religious denomination.

8.8 The same age and distance criteria apply to children looked after as to children who are not looked after. If the Council determines that a child looked after should attend a school other than the nearest suitable school, then transport will be provided upon request by the child's social worker in accordance with the Council's agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes.

8.9 Pupils living beyond statutory distances attending their nearest or catchment school by choice of language would continue to have the benefit of free transport.

8.10 Whilst pupils with additional learning needs and / or disabilities receiving education at their catchment or nearest special school, pupil referral unit or learning support unit are assessed by distance criteria, in practice these pupils would not be affected by this proposed policy change as their transport is based upon their individual needs.

8.11 As stated in paragraph 5.12 above when exercising functions under the Measure, the Council is not required to take account of extra-curricular activities or breakfast and / or after-school clubs when assessing learner travel needs. Given that position, such considerations did not form part of the development of the preferred option.

8.12 The Council is aware that Welsh Government are in the process of reviewing the Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council will review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.

9. THE COUNCIL'S DUTY IN RESPECT OF CHILDREN IN NEED

9.1 It is the duty of the Council under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 ("the 1989 Act") to:

   (a) Safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.
   (b) So far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

9.2 For the purposes of the 1989 Act "children in need" are defined as follows:

"A child shall be taken to be in need if:

(a) He or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local Council.
(b) His or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services, or,
(c) He or she is disabled."

9.3 As previously noted the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy maintains and protects existing and future ALN transport provision.

9.4 Most importantly however the care needs of individual families with "children in need" will inevitably be affected by their particular circumstances at any given point in time and by the particular local services available to them at that point. The Council works with these individual families to identify the specific needs of any child determined to be in need at that point in time.

Looked After Children

9.5 As indicated earlier in the report the Council must have regard to, and assess and meet the needs of, "looked after" children and those formally looked after in its area.

9.6 The definition of a 'looked after' child is the term used within the Children Act 1989 to describe a person (under the age of 18) who is in the care of the Council, or who is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by it in the exercise of its social services functions. This could be a placement with foster carers; in residential homes or with parents or other relatives ('kinship care').'

9.7 Under the Measure, the same age and distance criteria apply to 'looked after' children (learners) as to those who are not looked after. But the provision that the learner must attend their nearest suitable school to their home does not apply to 'looked after' learners (in the same way it applies to learners who are not looked after).It is for the Council to determine where the looked after child should go to school. The school decided upon might be a school other than the nearest suitable school due to the need to maintain continuity in education or contact with siblings or friends to promote wellbeing. If that is the case, transport would be provided.

9.8   As previously stated the Council may not charge for transport arrangements that it is required to make for learners of compulsory school age under the Measure, except in relation to looked after children where the authority making the travel arrangements for a child who is looked after by another authority. In these cases, it can recoup costs from the placing local authority.

9.9   If the Council determines that a looked after child should attend a school other than the nearest suitable school then transport would be provided upon request by the child's social worker in accordance with the Council's agreed policy on walking distance and safe routes.

10.   <u>CONSULTATION</u>

10.1   Section 9 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local authorities to have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parent, however this is "in so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and with the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure".

10.2   Due to the financial pressures the Council is currently facing, it is considered that changes to its current Home to School Transport Policy, are necessary to align the transport provision more closely with the Welsh Government statutory transport requirements for the Council in order to:

- Maintain affordability within future financial constraints;
- Continue to be able to meet its statutory requirements; and
- Maintain discretionary transport for its most vulnerable users (e.g., ALN pupils).

10.3   As previously noted, Cabinet determined to initiate a consultation in respect of a preferred option relating to a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy as detailed in section 8 of this report in consideration of the current budget pressures. The Council is not alone in facing these challenges, nor in having to consider such reviews of discretionary areas of current provision.

10.4   A comprehensive public consultation exercise was conducted with all key stakeholders such as pupils, parents, carers, transport providers and Elected Members. The consultation originally ran from Monday 27th November 2023 until 5pm Monday 8th January 2024. Recognising the significance of the proposal for pupils who use and will use home to school transport now or in the future, the consultation was extended for a further three-week period, from Thursday 18th January until 5pm Thursday 8th February 2024. This period provided a further opportunity for those potentially impacted to take part in the consultation. In total the consultation therefore ran for a period of nine weeks.

10.5 The consultation had a dedicated page on the Council's consultation section of its website which provided details of the proposal and a link to the consultation survey. Consultees were also referred to the initial Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments considered by Cabinet prior to initiating the consultation exercise.

10.6 A 'frequently asked questions' sheet was developed to provide further information to consultees.

10.7 An email was sent to all schools who could be potentially impacted by the proposal to Headteachers and Chair of Governors to be forwarded on to all parents and carers. Further emails were sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation in the online survey, including public transport operators. School Councils, headteachers and school and college governors were also invited to submit their views on any proposed new policy.

10.8 Respondents were also given the option to write in using a dedicated email address HTSConsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, and a telephone option was also in place through the Council's contact centre.

10.9 The Council held 8 public engagement events at venues throughout the County Borough, where officers were on hand to answer any questions on the proposal and encourage or assist people to take part in the survey.

10.10 The consultation was widely promoted in the Press and via social media including the Council's Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) accounts.

10.11 Consultees were therefore able to respond to the consultation through various channels including an online survey/questionnaire, a dedicated consultation email address, a freepost postal address, a telephone option and providing feedback at the local engagement sessions.

10.12 The Council's YEPs team developed a young person's version of the proposal and shared with youth forum members. The consultation was undertaken by sharing relevant information with young people through a social media group for youth forum members and they were asked to complete a survey following this.

10.13 The proposals were presented and discussed at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 13th December 2023. The report and minutes of that meeting can be accessed here and a letter summarising the Committee's feedback is attached at Appendix 6 to the report.

10.14 In total **2858 responses were received to the consultation survey** and **39 individual emails/letters.**

10.15 A detailed report outlining the methodology used in analysing the responses and the results of the extensive consultation exercise including feedback received is attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

10.16 The results of the consultation and feedback received are explored in further detail at Section 13 of this report.

10.17 Prior to this Cabinet meeting a facility was made available for Cabinet Members to view all responses received through the various channels as a result of the consultation. This was done to ensure Cabinet gives due regard and conscientious consideration to all elements of the Consultation feedback and responses received. This approach also ensures Cabinet gains a comprehensive and genuine understanding of the wide range of views and opinions expressed by the consultees prior to making any decision.

11. **<u>ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND KEY THEMES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION TO BE CONSIDERED PRIOR TO ANY FINAL DECISION BEING MADE IN RESPECT OF ANY NEW HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY</u>**

11.1 As referenced earlier in the report the full results of the extensive consultation exercise including feedback received is attached at Appendix 3 to the report. For ease, a summary is provided below of the consultation feedback and an analysis of the key themes that emerged from the consultation. This section should also be read in conjunction with the EqIA and WLIA. It is designed to assist Cabinet with any decision it may subsequently take with regards to implementation of the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy.

11.2 The majority of respondents to the consultation were a parent/carer of a young person who uses or will use Home to School transport (79.8%). There were a high number of responses from Welsh schools overall (36.8%), considering that there are 17 Welsh medium schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and 115 schools in total.

11.3 79% of respondents disagreed with the preferred option consulted upon namely, to continue to provide a generous discretionary Home to School Transport Provision for over 6000 learners and bring mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport in line with statutory distance criteria, with the potential to deliver savings of approximately £2.5m

11.4 The preferred option would maintain discretionary school transport provision for over 6,000 learners. Respondents were asked if they

agreed that this level of discretionary provision should be retained? 50% agreed that it should be retained, 36% disagreed and 14% stated don't know.

11.5   The preferred option would result in savings of approximately £2.5m to help towards safeguarding changes to other discretionary elements of the school transport provision. Respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposal if it helps to maintain future discretionary school transport provision. 70% disagreed.

11.6   54% of respondents thought that the proposal would impact the opportunities and promotion of the Welsh Language negatively.

11.7   41% of the respondents said that the proposal does not treat the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language, although 36% thought that it did. The Council considered other options prior to consultation but deemed that they were either unaffordable, i.e. do nothing and risk more significant impacts in future years, or that the impact on learners was too great, i.e. removing all discretionary provision. Respondents were asked if they agreed that the proposal taken forward to consultation is the fairest option available to the Council. 69% responded that they did not agree that it was the fairest option, with 16% agreeing and 15% stated they didn't know.

11.8   69% of respondents who disagreed that the proposal was the fairest option were asked to provide any alternative options that they would like the Council to consider.

11.9   Consultees were able to provide specific comments as part of responding to the consultation and suggest possible alternative options. The key themes which arose as a result of those comments are set out below:

- General disagreement with the proposal/ transport provision should remain as is currently provided;
- Financial impact – on family and single/working parents/carers;
- Respondents said they would be happy to pay a charge (including suggestions of a means tested or subsidised charge);
- Impact on school attendance;
- Safety concerns (particularly for younger learners);
- Increased traffic / congestion and environmental concerns;
- Unfair to 'exempt' faith and Welsh schools, they should be the same;
- Impact on Welsh Language learners/Welsh Education standards;
- Treating Welsh/English Medium and Faith learners equitably;
- Savings should be found from elsewhere;

- Alternative options should be considered such as looking at other possible distances that would qualify for free transport provision or retaining certain elements of current discretionary provision;
- Issues with existing public transport provision.

11.10 The following responses seek to address each of the points raised above:

General Disagreement with the proposal/ transport provision should remain as is currently provided.

As stated within the report, the option to maintain the status quo and do nothing was not proposed as the costs of existing discretionary provision are considered to be unaffordable. The Council is facing significant financial challenges into the medium term and is considering a range of options to contribute to addressing the shortfall in funding. Should the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy be implemented the Council would continue to provide discretionary Home to School Transport beyond statutory requirements.

Financial impact – on family, single/working parents/carers and post-16 learners

It is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / carers should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense, however the walking distances proposed are within the requirements of the Measure, with 18 of the 22 Council's in Wales already adopting the statutory distance requirements.

It is also acknowledged that this proposal may have an impact, or present increased pressures on single parents/carers and working families, especially where they have children of primary school age.

The Welsh Government operate a discounted bus fares scheme for young people in Wales aged 16 to 21 with approximately 1/3 off their bus fare. The 'mytravelpass' can be used at any time of day and on any day of the week that the services operate, including weekends and bank holidays. There is no restriction on the type of journey that users can make, and can be used for school or college, visiting friends and leisure.

The Welsh Government also offer an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to help 16- to 18-year-olds with the costs of further education. This includes transport costs. Entitled pupils receive £40 per week, with payments made every 2 weeks, as long as they meet the school or college's attendance requirements.

Respondents said they would be happy to pay a charge (including suggestions of a means tested or subsidised charge)

As stated at paragraphs 5.27 to 5.33 of this report, the option of introducing a charge for transport under the statutory distance is not available for consideration due to the implementation of the UK Government's Department for Transport PSVAR legislation.

Impact on school attendance

Through the Consultation parents/carers expressed concern that the proposed policy could discourage or inhibit some children and young people from attending school, due to their parents/carers being unable to transport their child ot school or state there was no safe route to school for their child. This would mean pupils affected would need to find an alternative way to get to school, such as on foot/cycling, in a car or on public transport. Consultation respondents felt that children and young people could not be expected to walk the distances outlined in the proposed policy and/or could not be relied upon to attend school without the provision of free transport.

It was also stated that some parents/carers may find it difficult to transport children and young people by car, because they may not own a vehicle or have work commitments during the school drop-off and pick-up times.

In addition, consultation respondents felt that the public transport provision and cost was prohibitive to pupils travelling to school on a public bus.

Therefore, overall, parents/carers disagreed with the proposed policy on the grounds that it could have a negative impact on the attendance of children and young people, which would be likely to have a negative affect on pupil achievement.

Parents, or anyone with parental responsibility, have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends school. Failure to do so can result in penalty notices and even prosecution. However, consultation respondents stated that the proposed policy made it more likely that some children and young people not using the Home to School Transport provision would be expected to walk or cycle to school independently of their parents and, therefore, would be more likely to truant.

In assessing the possible impact of the proposed changes on attendance a comparison of the attendance level for those learners receiving home to school transport provision was made against those learners who do not use home to school transport to get to school.

Current attendance levels at RCTCBC mainstream schools receiving school transport.

Overall attendance levels:

	Total
Attendance levels of pupils currently making their own way to school	89.99%
Attendance levels of pupils who are in receipt of school transport	89.43%
Overall difference	-0.56%

Overall, therefore there a is 0.56% average reduction in attendance levels where school transport is provided.

Primary School attendance levels:

	Total
Attendance levels of pupils currently making their own way to school	92.44%
Attendance levels of pupils who are in receipt of school transport	91.99%
Overall difference	-0.44%

Overall, therefore there a is 0.44% average reduction in attendance levels where school transport is provided.

Secondary School attendance levels:

	Total
Attendance levels of pupils currently making their own way to school	87.05%
Attendance levels of pupils who are in receipt of school transport	86.42%
Overall difference	-0.63%

Overall, therefore there a is 0.63% average reduction in attendance levels where school transport is provided.

Attendance data therefore suggests that the provision of free transport within 1.5-2 miles for primary schools and 2-3 miles for secondary schools (as is currently the case in Rhondda Cynon Taf) has little impact on attendance.

The EqIA has identified that as a mitigating action if a revised policy is implemented, officers should continue to monitor attendance on a school

level to ensure that any potential negative affect of the proposed policy is identified, and arrangements put in place to improve the pupil's attendance.

The local authority continues to invest in supporting school attendance via a number of means. Since 2020, Cabinet funding alongside Welsh Government grant has supported the match funding of Family Engagement Officers in 29 of the Council's education settings. In 2022, the Attendance and Wellbeing Service was restructured to ensure more frontline officers were available to support learners, families and schools to improve their attendance. A number of initiatives have also been centrally supported during this time including incentive schemes and marketing campaigns to ensure the importance of school attendance is communicated effectively.

Safety concerns (particularly for younger learners)

All walking routes to school are assessed using the criteria laid down by the Welsh Government Statutory Guidance for the Risk Assessment of Walked Routes to School. As confirmed at the Cabinet meeting on 20th November 2023, all routes would be reviewed, and re-assessed where appropriate, prior to eligibility confirmation.

The focus of active travel measures and legislation is on facilitating everyday short-distance walking and cycling journeys such as to schools. As part of the Council's Statutory duties under the Active Travel (Wales) Act, it produced an Active Travel Network Map (ATNM), which was updated and approved by Welsh Government in 2022. This map contains details of existing walking and cycling routes and where improvements or new routes are proposed, which the Council will seek to deliver over the next 15 years. Future proposals also include links to all schools within the County Borough that will connect to either existing or new active travel routes.

Increased traffic / congestion and environmental concerns

The proposal includes the removal of a significant number of buses from the school bus network. Given that these vehicles are some of the most polluting on the Council's highways, it is envisaged that this will help to reduce the carbon impact. However, whilst the Council is unable to determine the precise impact this proposal may have on traffic congestion, it is acknowledged that should it be implemented there may be an increase in vehicular movements around school start and finish times.

Unfair to exempt Faith and Welsh schools, they should be the same

It is assumed that this particular theme is a result of respondents misinterpreting the consultation information as the proposed changes would apply to English/Welsh medium and Faith education provision.

Impact on Welsh Language Learners/Welsh Education standards

The potential impact on Welsh language education is referenced within section 13 of this report and within the WLIA.

Treating Welsh/English Medium and Faith learners equitably

The proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision.

As part of its discretionary provision, the Council would, as now, allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language and faith/religious denomination should the proposal be implemented.

Further considerations on the potential impact on Welsh language education is referenced within section 13 of this report and within the WLIA.

Savings should be found from elsewhere

At its meeting on 18th September 2023 the Cabinet received an update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27. This reported an estimated budget gap of £35.005M for 2024/25 financial year, rising to £85.4M (cumulatively) across the next 3 years. This follows the Council having balanced its largest ever budget gap for the current year, 2023/24.

Given the size of the budget gap and with a focus across the medium term, all service areas across the Council have been required to submit service efficiencies resulting in a reduction in the budget gap. The Home to School Transport proposal is in line with the challenges proposed.

Alternative Options should be considered such as looking at other possible distances that would qualify for free transport provision or retaining certain elements of current discretionary provision

The distances proposed are within the requirements of the Measure. A review of the number of pupils living within alternative distances e.g. 2.5 miles for secondary school pupils, would not result in the reduction of transport required to achieve the level of savings required.

Issues with existing public transport

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the commercial viability of all bus services, with substantial Welsh Government funding being needed to support bus operators to maintain pre pandemic levels of service. Whilst the Welsh Government had made money available to support the bus industry since April 2020 and now beyond April 2024, this funding is intended to maintain as much of the pre pandemic bus network from deregistration, focussing on maintaining current services and transitioning towards a more sustainable commercial network.

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

12.1 Cabinet Members will be fully aware and mindful of the general equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010 and the specific public sector equality duties applicable to the Council as a local authority in Wales, including the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and Socio-economic Duty.

12.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Single Equality Duty) requires public authorities to demonstrate in decision making that they have paid 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.3 The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council must have due regard to the impact of any of the proposals on those with a protected characteristic. The Council has a specific duty to publish information to demonstrate how they have paid due regard to the aims above as part of their decision making. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment ("EqIA") would be evidence that the Council has considered its legal obligations in making the decision on the recommendations in this report.

12.4 The Equality Act 2010 outlines that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;

- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; or
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

12.5 In addition to the general duty the Council must:

- assess the likely impact of proposed policies and practices on its ability to comply with the general duty;
- assess the impact of any policy which is being reviewed and of any proposed revision;
- publish reports of the assessments where they show a substantial impact (or likely impact) on an authority's ability to meet the general duty; and
- monitor the impact of policies and practices on its ability to meet that duty.

12.6 A pre-consultation EqIA was completed and included as part of the original Cabinet report before Members. This EqIA was also made available to consultees as part of the consultation process in order for them to comment on some of the initial considerations identified by officers when formulating the proposal.

12.7 The EqIA has been updated following the consultation, utilising the feedback received and additional data gathered to assist Cabinet in reaching any final decision on the proposal. This is attached as Appendix 4 to the report.

12.8 The EqIA has found that there are three negative and eight neutral equality and diversity implications, based on protected characteristics, associated with the preferred option consulted upon.

12.9 A duty to have due regard also arises by section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 when the Council makes a decision of a "strategic nature". The Council accepts that the decision as to which policy to adopt is a decision of a strategic nature and accordingly that particular duty is to have due regard to the desirability of exercising the Council's functions in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

12.10 In deciding how to fulfil a duty which is subject to that socio-economic duty as set out above, regard must be had to the Welsh Government's statutory guidance.

12.11 The EqIA has found that there are two negative and four neutral socio-economic impacts with the preferred option consulted on.

12.12 The impacts identified in the EqIA (both equalities and socio-economic related) could be mitigated by a range of actions as detailed in the EqIA and through the potential alternative options put forward in section 14 of this report.

12.13 Under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 the Council must: -

(a) Prepare and publish a strategy for contributing to the eradication of child poverty which the Council has done through the adoption of the [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Plan 2023-2028](#); and

(b) Take all reasonable steps to perform the actions and functions set out in the strategy for the eradication of child poverty. The actions and functions, and the steps the Council has taken and will take to perform them, are again set out in the Well-being Plan.

12.14 It is a priority of the Council, and its partner organisations of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board, to engage with families who have any additional needs as early as possible to support them to make the most of family life and reach their full potential.

12.15 The Council has also used as a basis for developing its priority of ensuring that the future generations of Rhondda Cynon Taf live in a safe, healthy and prosperous County Borough the shared set of rights for children and young people set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. A link to a summary of these rights is provided below: -

[Summary of United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child](#)

12.16 In order to further assist Members and ensure compliance with the Council's duty the rights of children have been specifically considered in respect of the proposed new policy and this assessment forms part of the EqIA. Further consideration of the effect of the proposal for issues of child poverty and social deprivation, utilising feedback received through the consultation and additional data is also explored in Section 13 of the report.

13. <u>WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS</u>

13.1 Members will be aware that the Welsh language has official status in Wales which means that the Welsh language should not be treated less favourably than the English language in Wales.

13.2 The Council must also promote access to education and training through the medium of the Welsh language when exercising the functions under the Measure.

13.3 The Council must also take into account its [Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027](#) and [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032](#) ('WESP'). The WESP sets out the ten-year plan for the planning and improvement of provision of Welsh Medium and Welsh Language education. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 includes a requirement to make sure the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

13.4 The seven main outcomes as outlined within the WESP are as follows:

Outcome 1: More nursery/three year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 2: More reception/five year old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

Outcome 6: An increase in 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

Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

13.5 Under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, when deciding which schools are most suitable for learners in its area, the Council has a duty to promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh.

13.6 A pre-consultation Welsh Language Impact Assessment ('WLIA') was completed and included as part of the original Cabinet report before Members. This WLIA was also made available to consultees as part of the consultation process in order for them to comment on some of the initial considerations identified by officers when formulating the proposal.

13.7 The WLIA has been updated following the consultation, utilising the feedback received and additional data gathered, to assist Cabinet in reaching any final decision on the proposal. This is attached as Appendix 5 to the report.

13.8   The WLIA has identified that there will be negative impacts on the Welsh language in respect of the preferred option consulted upon. There is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools, in favour of nearer English medium catchment schools, with a greater risk at the primary school level. Given there are fewer Welsh medium schools compared to English medium schools they are generally further away from learners. Thus Welsh medium learners may be impacted the most by any change to existing policy and particularly with regards to primary aged learners. These risks could be mitigated by a range of actions as detailed in the assessment and through the potential alternative options put forward in section 14 of this report.

14.   POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS ARISING OUT OF THE CONSULTATION FEEDBACK AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS FOR CABINET'S CONSIDERATION

14.1   This section of the report sets out alternative options for Cabinet to consider. These options have been developed as a result of considering feedback from the public consultation and an analysis of the EqIA and WLIA. It should be emphasised that other alternative options could be pursued. Implementation of either alternative option detailed below would comply with the provisions of the Measure, particularly the duty to promote access to Welsh Medium education and compliance with other legislation detailed in this report.

14.2   **The first option would be to maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all <u>primary schools,</u> (English, Welsh, and Faith).** Transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh, and Faith) would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Measure.

14.3   Whilst the Council would be introducing a change to its secondary school and post-16 eligibility criteria, it would nevertheless continue to provide all other areas of its discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum Welsh Government statutory requirement.

14.4   As a result of adopting this proposed policy, based on data as at 1 September 2023, 305 primary school pupils would retain their discretionary entitlement than otherwise would have lost it under the preferred option consulted upon. This is split between 242 Welsh language primary pupils, and 63 faith primary pupils, and would be a positive mitigation against some of the potential impacts identified within the EqIA and WLIA and feedback received as part of the consultation, the themes of which are outlined above. By adopting this proposed option it would further assist the Council in being able to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the requirement in the Measure to promote

Welsh Medium education by maintaining current discretionary transport provision for primary school pupils who live beyond 1.5 miles, which is in excess of the statutory requirement. It might also be a contributing factor in enabling the Council to address several of the outcomes set out in the WESP and thus mitigate against some of the negative aspects of Option B as set out in the WLIA.

14.5   If implemented, the Council would continue to offer a more generous eligibility policy than 18 of the 22 Council's in Wales that have already adopted the statutory distance requirements for both primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges.

14.6   This option would reduce the potential overall savings achievable through Option B by approximately £200K per year.

14.7   **A second option would be to maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith) and Welsh secondary schools only.** Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Measure.

14.8   As a result of adopting this proposed policy, based on data as at 1 September 2023, 228 Welsh secondary school pupils would retain their entitlement than otherwise would have lost it under the preferred option consulted upon. This is in addition to the 305 primary school pupils as described in section 14.4 above. Implementation of this option might act as further mitigation against some of the potential impacts identified within the WLIA and feedback received as part of the consultation.

14.9   The option would reduce the potential overall savings achievable through Option B by approximately £500K per year.

15.   **SCRUTINY ENGAGEMENT**

15.1   The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was provided with an opportunity on 18th March 2024 to consider the consultation feedback and draft Cabinet report. Feedback from that scrutiny meeting will be provided to Cabinet in advance of the Cabinet meeting to consider this report.

16.   **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

16.1   The cost to the Council of delivering its current Home to School Transport Policy amounts to £15M per year. Of this, the cost of delivering the discretionary provision, that is, at levels above that required by the Measure amounts to £6.9M.

16.2 The proposed Option B which was consulted upon would deliver savings amounting to £2.5M in a full year, meaning the Council would continue to provide discretionary provision amounting to £4.4M per year.

16.3 Subject to the decision of Cabinet, Option B would be implemented from September 2025, with £1.4M being realised in financial year 2025/26, with the full year saving of £2.5M then being realised from financial year 2026/27.

16.4 This is within the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, currently forecasting a budget gap of £85.4M to financial year 2026/27.

16.5 In relation to the two alternative options detailed in section 14 above, those options would reduce the potential overall savings achievable through Option B by approximately £200K or £500k per year.

17. <u>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS & LEGISLATION CONSIDERED</u>

17.1 The legal implications and relevant legislation in respect of the proposal are set out in the main body of the report.

18. <u>LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN, NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015</u>

18.1 The delivery of Home to School transport services support and promote the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for People – are independent, healthy, and successful; Places – where people are proud to live, work and play; and Prosperity – creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper.

18.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. To make sure we are all working towards the same purpose, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals on the Council:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

18.3 The Act imposes a duty on all public bodies in Wales to carry out "sustainable development", defined as being "the process of improving

the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the wellbeing goals."

18.4 The Act sets out five ways of working needed for the Council to achieve the seven well-being goals, these being:

- The importance of balancing short term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
- Considering how the Council's objectives impact upon each of the well-being goals listed above.
- The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the Council services.
- Acting in collaboration with other persons and organisations that could help the Council meet its well-being objectives; and
- Acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse.

18.5 The potential health and environmental implications associated with implementing the recommendations set out in this report support the Well-being Plan of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board, the declaration by the Welsh Government of a Climate Emergency and the Council's own Corporate and Air Quality Action Plans. One of the objectives of the Corporate Plan is to "encourage our residents to be more active and healthy".

18.6 The Air Quality Action Plan is aimed at tackling pollution at locations within the County Borough which currently exceed national guidelines. School transport bus fleets are contracted from operators, mainly local SMEs based in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Fleet profiles are generally older than public transport fleets and they are typically in their final stage of usage – i.e., their primary purpose has ceased, and they have been converted for school's use.

18.7 Their daily mileage is low, they all have diesel engines, and therefore they represent a huge challenge for carbon reduction. The Council has worked with the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA) to commission a study on decarbonising school transport. It shows that there is no business case to replace these vehicles with new ultra-low emission coaches and it will be some time before the market generates second hand vehicles. Retrofitting options may evolve in the short-medium term.

18.8 Reducing the number of school buses in operation each day would assist with the implementation of the Council's Corporate and Air Quality Action Plans. However, by extension, the use of private vehicles by parents and grandparents to transport pupils to school due to the reduction in number

of school buses, may lead to additional cars on the network, which in turn, may off-set some of the associated air quality gains.

18.9 One of the objectives in the Well-being Plan is to "help people live long and healthy lives and overcome any challenges". A recent Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board report on childhood obesity has found that the combined Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil area has the highest rate in Wales at 14.6%. It is possible that the policy change proposal would have an impact on obesity in a positive way, as it would lead to more pupils walking to school.

19. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

19.1 Section 9 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parent, however this is "in so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and with the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure".

19.2 Due to the financial pressures the Council is currently facing it is considered that changes to current Home to School Transport Policy to align transport provision more closely with Welsh Government statutory transport requirements are necessary for the Council to: -

- Maintain affordability within future financial constraints.
- Continue to be able to meet its statutory requirements; and
- Maintain discretionary transport for its most vulnerable users (e.g., ALN pupils).

19.3 A proposed new Home to School Transport Policy has been developed with the proposed changes to existing policy being outlined in this report. A preferred option in respect of that new policy has been consulted upon, the feedback from which is detailed in this report and its appendices.

19.4 The proposed new policy considers current budgetary pressures. The Council is not alone in facing these challenges, nor in having to consider such reviews of discretionary areas of current provision.

19.5 If the Cabinet does determine to implement a new Home to School Transport Policy the Council would need to monitor and evaluate its effect, particularly in relation to those groups highlighted in the EqIA and this report, in order to continue to meet the Council's duties under the Equality Act, together with any impact on the Welsh Language/Welsh Medium education, Faith education and issues such as school attendance.

19.6 As a result of the possible impacts on the Welsh Language, identified during the public consultation (and as subsequently detailed within the

WLIA), there is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools, in favour of nearer English medium catchment schools, with a greater risk at the primary school level.

19.7   Consequently, alternative options have been developed and are set out within section 14 above. It is considered both options would be positive mitigation against the potential impacts identified within the EQIA and WLIA as regards Option B.

19.8   In order for a fully informed decision to be taken on the proposed new policy it is now for Cabinet to review:

- all the available information contained in this report;
- the report appendices (including the EqIA and WLIA);
- the consultation report and feedback, including the consultation responses made available for Members' review;
- the alternative options detailed in section 14 of the report and any other alternative options they wish to consider;

and decide on whether or not, and if so how, it wishes to proceed with implementation of the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, which would become effective from September 2025.

19.9   Any new Home to School Transport Policy may need to be supported by Operational Guidance to be used by officers involved in the assessment of entitlement and procurement of Home to School Transport. If a decision is taken to proceed with implementation of a revised Home to School Transport Policy it is recommended Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services to develop, introduce or amend any operational policies/guidance incidental to the implementation of any revised Home to School Transport Policy.

Other Information:-
Relevant Scrutiny Committee-

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Cross-cutting themes)

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

APPENDIX 1 – HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT PROVISION - ALL WALES PICTURE

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Analysis of Home to School Provision in Other Welsh Local Authorities						
Authority	Nursery/ Reception (Age 3 - 5)	Primary Provision (Age 5 – 11)	Secondary Provision (Age 11– 16)	Post-16 (Age 16+)	Faith School Provision (Age 3 – 19)	Welsh Medium Provision (Age 3 – 19)
RCT – Current Provision	>1.5 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school.	>1.5 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school.	>2 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school.	>2 Miles to catchment school / college or nearest place providing course.	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Blaenau Gwent	>1.5 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school. No provision for Nursery	>1.5 miles for Infants to catchment area school or the nearest school. >2 miles for Primary to catchment area school or the nearest school.	>2 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school.	No direct provision but £150 grant provided. College subsidises local bus route for pupils at £2 per day (plus £150)	Same as Primary & Secondary. Post 16 allowed to travel at no cost if continuing education at same school	Same as Primary & Secondary. Post 16 allowed to travel at no cost if continuing education at same school

Bridgend	>2 miles to local catchment area school. (Nursery provision remains 1.5 miles)	>2 miles to local catchment area school.	>3 miles to local catchment area school.	>3 Miles to catchment school / college or nearest place providing course.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary (in County schools only).
Caerphilly	No Provision	>1.5 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school.	>2 miles to catchment area school or the nearest school.	>2 Miles to catchment school / college or nearest place providing course.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.
Cardiff	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	No Provision.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.
Carmarthenshire	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 Miles to catchment school / college or nearest place	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary

				providing course.		
Ceredigion	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 Miles to catchment school / college or nearest place providing course.	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Conwy	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 Miles to catchment school / college or nearest place providing course.	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Denbighshire	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 Miles to catchment school / college or nearest place providing course.	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary

Flintshire	>2 miles No provision for Nursery	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles Only to nearest named place of education	Same as Primary & Secondary. Must prove faith to qualify	Same as Primary & Secondary
Gwynedd	>2 miles No provision for Nursery.	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles Only to nearest named place of education.	Same as Primary & Secondary.	Same as Primary & Secondary.
Merthyr Tydfil	>2 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>2 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.
Monmouthshire	>1.5 miles to nearest suitable or designated school. No provision for Nursery	>1.5 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	>2 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	No Provision	Same as Primary & Secondary.	Same as Primary & Secondary.
Neath Port Talbot	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest	>3 miles to nearest	Provided for	Same distances	Same distances as Primary & Secondary.

		suitable or designated school.	suitable or designated school.	students >3 miles at a charge of £100 pa.	as Primary & Secondary.	
Newport	No provision	>2 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	>3 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	No transport provided but £150 grant provided.	Same as Primary & Secondary.	Same as Primary & Secondary.
Pembrokeshire	No Provision	>2 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest appropriate catchment area school.	>3 Miles to catchment school / college or nearest place providing course.	Same as Primary & Secondary	Same as Primary & Secondary
Powys	>2 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	>2 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	>3 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	>3 miles to nearest suitable or designated school / college.	Same as Primary & Secondary.	Same as Primary & Secondary.
Swansea	No provision	>2 miles to nearest suitable or	>3 miles to nearest suitable or	>3 miles to nearest suitable or	Same as Primary & Secondary.	Same as Primary & Secondary.

		designated school.	designated school.	designated school / college.		
Torfaen	>2 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	>2 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	>3 miles to nearest suitable or designated school.	>3 miles to nearest suitable or designated school. Provision will either be in the form of a Travel Grant (currently £48.00 per term) or a bus pass.	Same as Primary & Secondary if child adheres to faith of school in question.	Same as Primary & Secondary.
Vale of Glamorgan	No Provision.	>2 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	Same as Primary & Secondary.	Same as Primary & Secondary.
Wrexham	No provision	>2 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	No Provision.	Same as Primary & Secondary.	Same as Primary & Secondary.

Ynys Mon	No provision	>2 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	>3 miles to nearest or designated catchment area school.	No Provision.	Same as Primary & Secondary.	Same as Primary & Secondary.

Current provision information taken from the 'Starting School Booklet' for each Authority for the 2023/24 academic year or their current Home to School Transport policies.

APPENDIX 2

ANALYSIS OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OPTIONS

Option		Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?
A	Status Quo i.e. retain existing service provision	o Would retain provision for approximately 11,300 pupils. Meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education.	o The total level of discretionary transport costs the Authority £6.9M per year.	**Not proposed** as the costs of discretionary provision as currently provided are considered to be unaffordable. Current provision is in excess of statutory requirements.
B	Provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only.	o Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. o Meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. o Policy applies to all students above the statutory distances. o Potential to deliver a saving of approximately £2.5m in a full year. o Policy would continue to offer transport on a discretionary basis to 6,000+ learners.	o Increased congestion on roads if pupils transported by car. o Potential impact on local bus companies. o Potential challenges on "available" routes. o Will affect 305 primary school pupils and 2,370 secondary school and college pupils. o Potential negative impact on school attendance, learner engagement in education and outcomes. o Potential impact on low income families who would not have the financial means	**Yes, Proposed Preferred Option** This option would continue to offer transport in excess of the statutory minimum and provides an equitable service for learners in English, Welsh, and Faith School education. It meets the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 including in relation to the promotion of access to Welsh medium education.

Option		Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?
			to transport their children to school. o Potential impact on the number of learners accessing Faith and Welsh medium education.	18 of the 22 Council's in Wales already adopting the statutory distance walking policy. If implemented this option would deliver savings of £2.5m per year, which would be fully realised in the 2026/27 financial year. The part-year savings for 2025/26 would be £1.4m.
C	Removal of all discretionary provision.	o Equality of provision to all pupils, in line with statutory requirements. o Could encourage pupils/parents to walk to school – Health and environmental benefits. o Delivers an estimated £6.9m saving per year o As this option removes discretionary provision there would be no subsidy	o Increased congestion on roads if pupils transported by car. o Impact on capacity of schools. o Potential impact on local bus companies. o Risk of not meeting requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education. o Potential impact on school attendance, learner engagement in education and outcomes. o Potential impact on low income families who would not have the financial means to	**Not proposed** as this option would result in the complete removal of transport provision for 9,000+ pupils. Some journeys will not be on direct commercial routes, reducing the number of alternative travel options for pupils. This could have a negative impact on school attendance. There is a risk of not meeting the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) measure 2008 in relation to promotion of access to Welsh medium education.

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Recommended Option?
		transport their children to school. o Potential impact on the numbers of learners accessing Faith and Welsh medium education. o Potential challenges on "available" routes. o Will affect 9,000+ pupils. o May impact on viability of some schools.	

Notes:

The number of pupils included in the table above are as at September 2023.

tudalen wag

Dewch i siarad RhCT
Let's talk RCT

Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

February 2024

Home to School Transport Policy Consultation

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

CONTENTS

2

FIGURES AND TABLES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the consultation on the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

- The Home to School Transport consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 27th November 2023 and ended on the 8th January 2024. The Consultation was then extended for a further 3 weeks between the 18th January and the 8th February to provide a further opportunity for people to take part in the consultation.

- An email was sent to all schools , Headteachers, and Chair of Governors to be forwarded on to all parents and carers. An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation in the online survey, including public transport operators.

- Respondents were also given the option to write in using a dedicated email address HTSConsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, and a telephone option was also in place through the Council's contact centre.

- The Council held 8 public engagement events, where officers were on hand to answer any questions on the proposal and encourage or assist people to take part in in the survey.

- The majority of respondents were a parent/carer of a young person who uses or will use Home to School transport (79.8%). There were a high number of responses from Welsh schools overall (36.8%), considering that there are 17 Welsh medium schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and 115 schools in total.

- The service change **proposal** was outlined in the survey as follows;

    To continue to provide a generous discretionary Home to School Transport Provision for over 6000 learners and bring mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport in line with statutory distance criteria. This option has the potential to deliver savings of approximately £2.5m

    79% of respondents **disagreed** with the proposal.

- The proposal would maintain discretionary school transport provision for over 6,000 learners. Respondents were asked if they agreed that this level of discretionary provision should be retained? 50% agreed that it should be retained, 36% disagreed and 14% stated don't know.

- The proposal would result in savings of approximately £2.5m to help towards safeguarding changes to other discretionary elements of the school transport provision. Respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposal if it helps to maintain future discretionary school transport provision. **70% disagreed.**

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- The Council considered other options prior to consultation but deemed that they were either unaffordable, i.e. do nothing and risk more significant impacts in future years, or that the impact on learners was too great, i.e. removing all discretionary provision. Respondents were asked if they agreed that the proposal taken forward to consultation is the fairest option available to the Council. 69% responded that they did not agree that it was the fairest option, with 16% agreeing and 15% stated they didn't know.

- The 69% of respondents who disagreed that the proposal was the fairest option were asked to provide any alternative options that they would like the Council to consider. A number of themes were identified;

    - General disagreement with the proposal/ transport provision should remain as is currently provided;
    - Financial impact – on family and single/working parents/carers;
    - Respondents said they would be happy to pay a charge (including suggestions of a means tested or subsidised charge);
    - Impact on school attendance;
    - Safety concerns (particularly for younger learners);
    - Increased traffic / congestion and environmental concerns;
    - Unfair to 'exempt' faith and Welsh schools, they should be the same;
    - Impact on Welsh Language learners/Welsh Education standards;
    - Treating Welsh/English Medium and Faith learners equitably;
    - Savings should be found from elsewhere;
    - Alternative options should be considered such as looking at other possible distances that would qualify for free transport provision or retaining certain elements of current discretionary provision;.
    - Issues with existing public transport provision.

- A number of comments raised concerns that up to 3 miles of walking each way to school is not achievable in many areas due to topography and weather conditions, alongside safety concerns.

- A number of comments were received in relation to the potential impacts of the proposal on protected characteristics of residents, particularly for preferred language/belief, disability, relationship status and sex.

- A large number of comments were received referring to the different provisions that are proposed for faith and Welsh language schools, with commenters believing they are being discriminated against as a result.

- A number of comments raised concerns about the effect of the proposals on parents/ guardians with disabilities being less able to walk or provide other transport for pupils to school. Some respondents were concerned that there will be a disproportionate impact on single/ lone parents.

- There are comments about a perceived higher risk to female pupils when walking to school, as well as a potential greater impact on women who are more likely to be primary caregivers.

- A number of comments highlighted impacts on socio-economic factors, including employment and lower-income families and those who cannot access public transport easily or regularly.

- A large number of comments were received that raise concerns about disincentivising parents from placing their children in Welsh Language Schools.

- 54% of respondents thought that the proposal would impact the opportunities and promotion of the Welsh Language negatively.

- 41% of the respondents said that the proposal does not treat the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language, although 36% thought that it did.

- Overall, **2858** responses were received to the consultation survey and 39 emails.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents the findings of the consultation on the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.

1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background to the consultation.

1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.

1.4 Section 4 provides the results of the survey.

1.5 Section 5 presents the feedback received from written responses.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council is facing significant financial challenges into the medium term and is considering a range of options to contribute to addressing the shortfall in funding. Due to the financial pressures the Council is facing we are considering changes to current Home to School Transport Policy, to align transport provision more closely with Welsh Government statutory transport requirements. This is necessary for the Council to: -

- maintain affordability within future financial constraints;
- continue to be able to meet its statutory requirements; and
- maintain discretionary transport for its most vulnerable users (i.e. ALN pupils).

2.2 Currently, the Council provides Home to School Transport to all pupils who live 1.5 miles away from their primary school and 2 miles from their secondary school. This is above the statutory legal requirement set out by Welsh Government. If the service change is approved, the Council will provide Home to School Transport to all pupils who live 2 miles or more away from their primary school and 3 miles or more away from their secondary school.

2.3 For almost 10 years, the Council has provided over 9,000 learners with access to free school transport on a discretionary basis. This means that the Council currently provides discretionary transport for more learners than almost every other Welsh Council's Home to School Transport operations.

2.4 The Council's Home to School Transport costs have increased from £8 million in 2015 to over £15 million for the 2023/24 financial year.

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2.5   This service change would put the Council's transport policy in line with Welsh Government's statutory distance eligibility criteria and statutory walking distance policy, which 18 of the 22 Councils in Wales currently adopt. and deliver savings amounting to £2.5 million in a full year, meaning the Council would continue to provide some discretionary provisions amounting to £4.4 million per year.

2.6   The full details of the proposal are outlined in the <u>Cabinet Report</u> that initiated the consultation.

3   METHODOLOGY

3.1   The Home to School Transport consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 27th November 2023 and ended on the 8th January 2024. The Consultation was then extended for a further 3 weeks between the 18th January and the 8th February to provide a further opportunity for people to take part in the consultation. This section presents the methodology which was used to promote and collect the data.

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

3.3   An email was sent to all schools who could be potentially impacted by the proposal to Headteachers and Chair of Governors to be forwarded on to all parents and carers.

3.4   To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the Councils online consultation webpage. An FAQ was developed to provide further information.

3.5   An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation in the online survey, including public transport operators.

3.6   Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address HTSConsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, in order to allow them to share their views.

        Overall, there were a total of 39 emails/letters received from the public relating to the consultation.

3.7   A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation

materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address was available for postal responses.

3.8   The Council held 8 public engagement events, where officers were on hand to answer any questions on the proposal and assist or encourage people to take part in in the survey.

- Rhondda Sports Centre, Ystrad 4th December 2023, 4pm-7pm
- Llantrisant Leisure Centre, Llantrisant 6th December 2023, 12pm-2pm & 4pm-7pm
- Sobell Sports Centre, Aberdare 11th December 2023, 4pm-7pm
- Hawthorn Leisure Centre, Hawthorn 29th January 2024, 4pm-7pm
- Sobell Leisure Centre, Aberdare 30th January, 12pm-2pm, 4pm-7pm
- Rhondda Fach Leisure Centre, Tylorstown 31st January 2024, 4pm-7pm

3.9   The Council's YEPs team developed a young person's version of the proposal and shared with youth forum members The consultation was undertaken by sharing the HTS information with young people through a social media group for youth forum members and they were asked to complete a survey following this.

3.10   The proposals were presented and discussed at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 13th December 2023.

3.11   Overall, 2858 survey responses and 39 emails were received to the consultation. The map on the following page shows the distribution of responses.
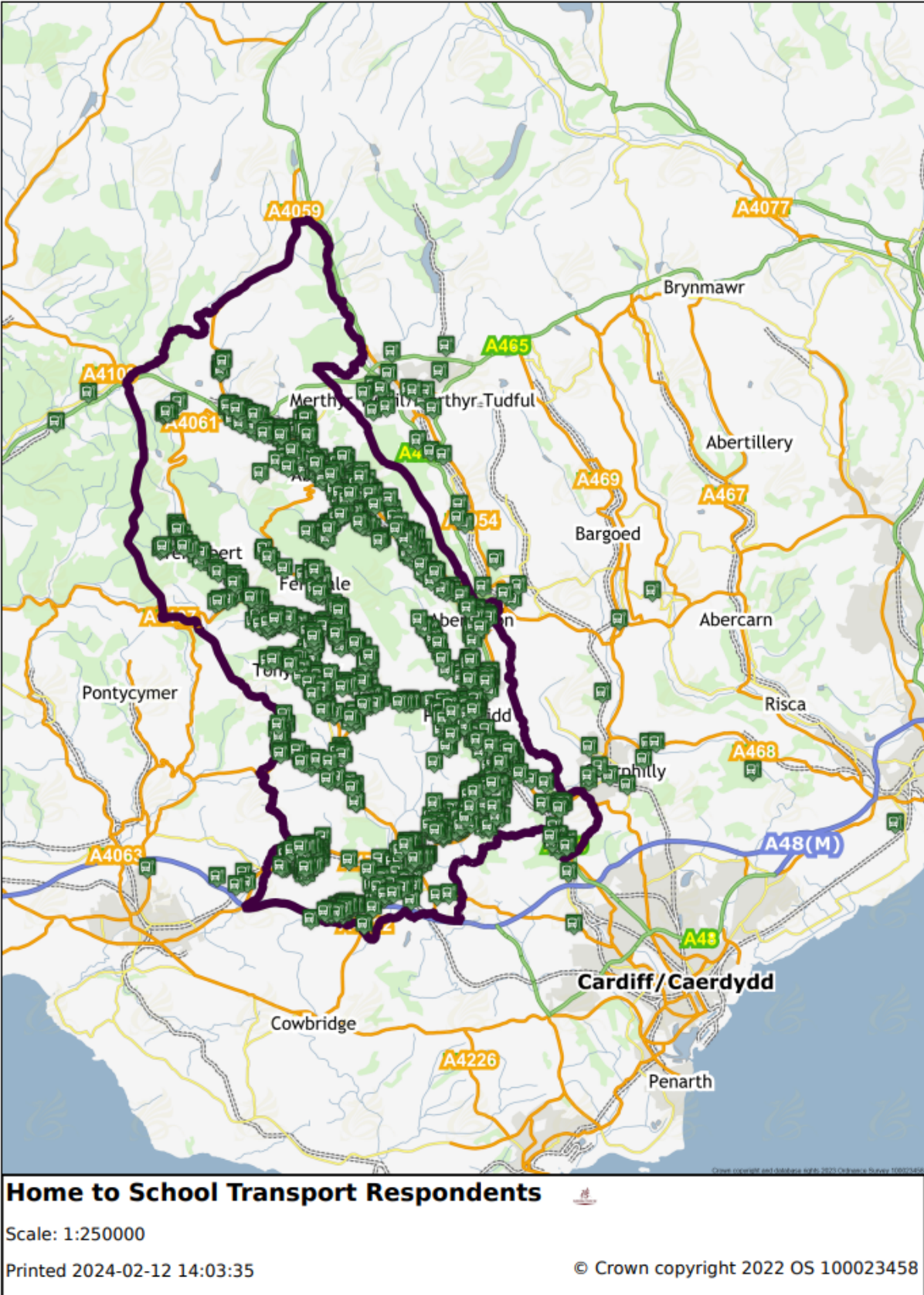
9

Home to School Transport Respondents

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Figure 1 – Map of respondents

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4   Questionnaire Results

4.1   The following section outlines the results from the online and paper questionnaires, which received 2858 responses. A selection of comments are provided and the full list of the comments will be provided to Cabinet Members and senior officers to assist with decision making.

4.2   Respondents were asked whether they were responding as a parent/carer of a young person who uses or will use Home to school transport, a young person/learner that uses the service, a person employed within a school or a school governor, or a person employed within the school transport industry.

The table below shows that the majority of respondents were a parent/carer of a young person who uses or will use Home to school transport (79.8%).

Note: the tables that include type of respondent do not add up to 100% as this was a multiple response question. The base is the total number of respondents, some of whom will have provided more than 1 response. There were 10 no replies to this question.

Table 1: Respondents

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
Base	**2858**
Are you...?	
A parent/carer of a young person/learner who uses or will use Home to School Transport?	2266 79.8%
A young person/learner who uses or will use Home to School Transport?	118 4.2%
A person employed within the school transport industry?	15 0.5%
A person employed within a school setting or a school governor?	154 5.4%
None of the above?	287 10.1%

4.3 Respondents who stated that they were a parent/carer, or a young person who uses/will use School transport were asked what type of school setting they were in, table 2 shows the breakdown.

Table 2: School Setting

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	English	Welsh	Faith
Base	2943	1706 58.0%	1082 36.8%	259 8.8%
At a School Nursery Setting	143	66 46.2%	75 52.4%	9 6.3%
At Infant School	150	61 40.7%	87 58.0%	7 4.7%
At Primary School	717	346 48.3%	332 46.3%	68 9.5%
At Secondary School	1560	991 63.5%	468 30.0%	147 9.4%
At Secondary School/college (Yr 12 - 13, post 16)	373	242 64.9%	120 32.2%	28 7.5%

There were a high number of responses from Welsh schools overall (36.8%), considering that there are 17 Welsh medium schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and 115 schools in total.

4.4 The service change **proposal** was outlined in the survey as follows;

To continue to provide a generous discretionary Home to School Transport Provision for over 6000 learners and bring mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport in line with statutory distance criteria. This option has the potential to deliver savings of approximately £2.5m

4.5 Respondents were asked if they agreed with the preferred proposal. 79% disagreed, 15 % agreed and 5% said they didn't know.

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Do you agree with the preferred proposal?
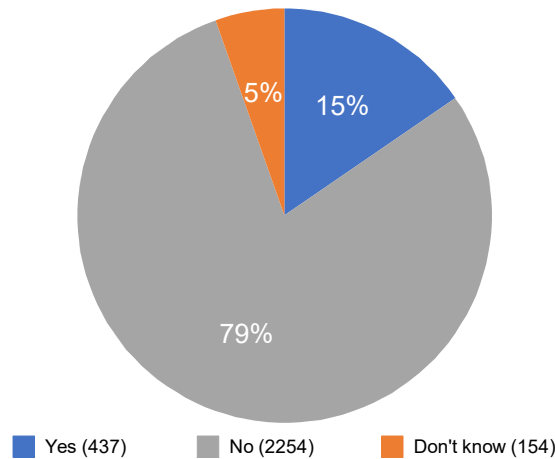

Yes (437) · No (2254) · Don't know (154)

Figure 2: Agreement with preferred proposal

Note: %'s may not total 100% due to rounding.

4.6   The proposal would maintain discretionary school transport provision for over 6,000 learners.

Respondents were asked if they agreed that this level of discretionary provision should be retained? 50% agreed that it should be retained.

This proposal will maintain discretionary school transport provision for over 6,000 learners. Do you agree that this level of discretionary provision should be retained?

Yes (973) · No (710) · Don't know (272)
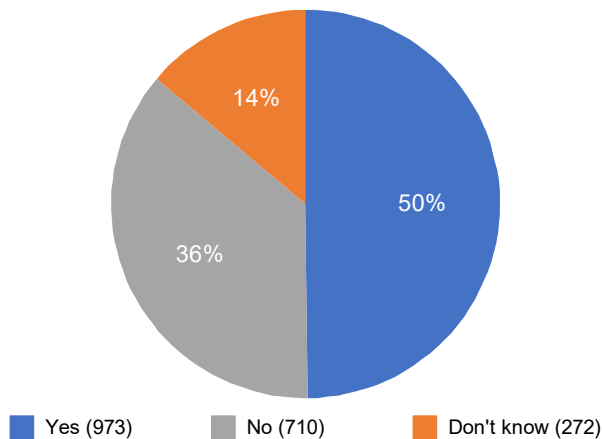
Figure 3: Agreement with retention of discretionary provision

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4.7   The proposal would result in savings of approximately £2.5m which will help towards safeguarding changes to other discretionary elements of the school transport provision.

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the proposal, if it helped maintain future discretionary school transport provision. 70% disagreed.

This proposal will result in savings of approximately £2.5m which will help towards safeguarding changes to other discretionary elements of the school transport provision. Do you agree with this proposal if it helps to maintain future discretionary school transport provision?

Yes (537)   No (1993)   Don't know (308)
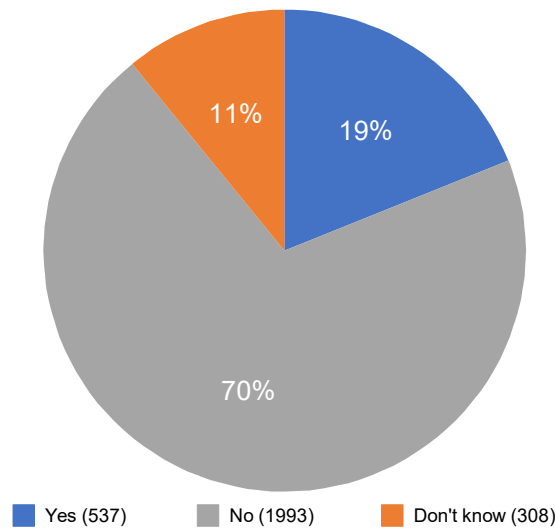
Figure 4: Agreement if it helps to maintain future discretionary provision

Note: %'s may not total 100% due to rounding.

4.8   The Council considered other options prior to consultation but deemed that they were either unaffordable, i.e. do nothing and risk more significant impacts in future years, or that the impact on learners was too great, i.e. removing all discretionary provision.

Respondents were asked if they agreed that the proposal taken forward to consultation is the fairest option available to the Council?

69% responded that they **did not agree** that it was the fairest option, with 16% agreeing and 15% stated they didn't know.

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The Council considered other options prior to consultation but deemed that they were either unaffordable, i.e. do nothing and risk more significant impacts in future years, or that the impact on learners was too great, i.e. removing all discretionary provision. Do you agree that the proposal taken forward to consultation is the fairest option available to the Council?
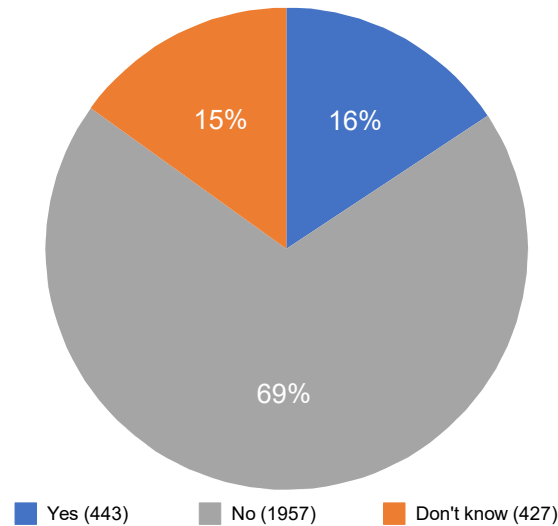

Yes (443)   **No (1957)**   **Don't know (427)**

Figure 5: Agreement that the proposal is the fairest option

Note: %'s may not total 100% due to rounding.

4.9   The 69% of respondents who **disagreed** that the proposal was the fairest option were asked to provide any alternative options that they would like the Council to consider.

A number of themes were identified, including;

- **General Disagreement/Keep the same**

"Travel should be FREE for all children who need it despite of the distance."

"Education is everything. No child should be at risk travelling to school or unable to attend regularly due to lack of available and affordable transport."

"Children's safety is more important than money. Lots of children will be expected to walk along dangerous roads to get to school. This is not acceptable."

"Keeping school transport as it. Too many family will be affected! Children shouldn't have to pay the price!"

- **Would pay/subsidise/means test**

"Subsidise the transport to support the status quo but charge parents who can afford it and provide free transport for those who can't, those who are on benefits, free school meals or low earners."

"People need to understand we cannot provide all that they want. They need to take some responsibility for getting their children to and from school. this is a significant saving for an already stretched council."

"Reconsider services that parents can pay for. Such a service exists for Graig pupils who go to Pontypridd High".

"Stop school transport to Welsh medium schools. This is parental choice - they should get their children there themselves or pay for transport."

"Means tested or discounted transport either on current home to school transport or discount schemes offered for public transport users."

- **Impact on family/pressure on working parents.**

"It's too far for them to walk. What about those whose parents work full time and leave early and are unable to drop them off at the school."

"We live in a valley that has high rain fall and no train line! It is also a deprived area - our children have suffered enough with cutbacks - no youth clubs, closed swimming pools etc - there is nothing easily available to them! And now education, this will have a massive impact on their education!"

"Proposals being considered by the council directly impact children and working families. No school in the local RCT area has the capacity to manage these levels of traffic during the school run. This is a poor choice by RCT."

- **Impact on school absence**

"There won't be any savings in the long-term when you find that children aren't getting to school due to lack of transport"

"Why is it always schools and our future generations that are always affected by financial cuts? If this is implemented in the long run, you'll lose more money chancing and trying to improve lower attendance in children."

"Plus not all parents drive and can afford to send children by public transport.. this again will affect children not attending school"

- **Safety**

"Mae'n rhaid ystyried y taith bydd rhaid i'r plant cymryd i gyrraedd yr ysgol hefyd. Fel engrhaifft nid yw'r taith i Ponty High o Glyncoch yn ddiogel o gwbl gan fod	*(The journey the children will have to take to get to school must also be considered. For example the journey to Ponty High from Glyncoch is not safe at*

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goleuo gwael ar y llwybr sy'n neilltuedig ofnadwy. Mae'n rhaid ystyried yr effaith sydd gan y tywydd ar blant a'u taith i'r ysgol"	*all as there is poor lighting on the route. The effect the weather has on children and their journey to school must be considered).*

"The children walking to and from school in my area would have to walk along main busy roads. It is not safe and if it was to rain these children would be soaking wet."

"Yes, to provide safe, well-lit walking and cycling routes to and from the schools. Provide all evidence of this routes in a well-documented handbook so parents and carers know how to access them."

- **Increased traffic/congestion and environmental concerns**

"Have you thought about the environment the congestion around schools are crazy at the moment, it will be much higher if parents are taking all the children to comprehensive schools. Not to mention the increased risk of accidents to children running out in front of vehicles etc."

"Its impossible to walk to bryncelynnog safely from southgate . There are going to be more young people caught up in accidents road if expected to walk through the narrow streets of old llantrisant with increased road traffic also the bypass is unsafe no lights secluded areas ."

"More people will come in cars which will effect the environment in a negative way"

- **Financial Cost**

"I would also hope that there would be financial support for families who are unable to pay for public bus transport. A child return bus ticket currently costs £3.50 days a week, which would be £17.50 a week and £682.50 for the 39 week school year. The public transport company should provide a reduced-price school pass for school journeys, which they don't currently offer (only 16+-year-olds are entitled to a student bus pass)."

"This would add a further 1.5 hours onto her school day and means her having to get up even earlier than she does now. I cannot afford to pay for bus fares or a bus pass for her during what is a cost of living crisis."

"I would be paying almost 200 a month for my children to go to school if this proposal goes ahead. This is completely unacceptable and unaffordable for families. Neither one of the comprehensives closest to my family I deem safe for my children to walk"

- **Unfair to exempt faith and Welsh schools, they should be the same**

"Treat all schools the same; it is deeply unfair that faith and Welsh language schools are treated differently."

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"My daughter has a choice of a Faith College because CNS lost their 6th form - this is in Cardiff and I think it is fair this choice and transport should remain Also, under 5s by taking transport away will add to congestion at drop off and pick up"

"Remove transport from faith schools. Choosing a Faith school is an option. Choosing Welsh Medium is a right for all Welsh people."

"To remove free transport from Mainstream schools, while remaining with free transport for Faith & Welsh speaking schools is discriminatory".

- **Make savings elsewhere/waste/expenses**

"Stop vanity projects within RCT, paying ridiculous amount of money to senior managers at the detriment of our community."

"You keep giving away free travel on buses within RCT to encourage people to use public transport. This proposal seems contrary in that you are going to take children off the bus and they will have to go in cars."

"No change needed. Otherwise, negotiate with bus companies for a better deal. The council needs to cut costs in other areas or get more money from Welsh Government."

- **Alternative Distance suggestions.**

"Transport should be available for anyone living more than 1.5 miles from place of learning."

"Take a more risk based and targeted approach to this policy- remove the policy for post 16 education and reinstate the >2mile secondary policy. This is a more targeted and risk based approach to take - i.e. concerning the safeguarding of children (particularly younger children year 7/8 commuting to secondary school) it will also have a bigger impact (i.e. effecting all children In secondary school , not just the 16+)"

"Transport should be provided and fully funded if more than a 10 minute reasonable walk"

- **Concerns about impact on Welsh language schools**

"I think it's scandalous that the council would take thus away from families. I wanted to provide my children with Welsh language, the local school Is in Cwmdare which is difficult when working to get to without free transport!"

"Mae cludiant ysgol yn gorfod bod yn flaenoriaeth, yn enwedig ar gyfer addysg gyfrwng Gymraeg. Mewn nifer fawr o achosion nid oes dewis am ysgol Uwchradd Gymraeg o fewn pellter cerdded. Nid yw'n resymol	School transport has to be a priority, especially for Welsh medium education. In a large number of cases there is no choice of a Welsh secondary school within walking distance. It is not reasonable to ask

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gofyn i ddisgybl gerdded dros dwy filltir i gael addysg Gymraeg - yn y rhan fwyaf o achosion mae'r mwyafrif o ddisgyblion di-Gymraeg â dewis ysgol o fewn pellter cerdded resymol. Bydd hwn hefyd yn diriwio niferoedd addysg Gymraeg ac felly yn mynd yn erbyn WESP yr ALl. Rhaid edrych ar arbedion y tu allan i addysg e.e. costau cynghorwyr y cyngor lle mae nifer ohonynt yn cael arian sylweddol am eistedd lawr mewn ambell gyfarfod".	*a pupil to walk over two miles to receive a Welsh education - in most cases for the majority of non-Welsh speaking pupils, their choice of school is within a reasonable walking distance. This will also negatively impact the number of children receiving Welsh education and therefore go against the LA's WESP. You have to look at savings outside of education, e.g. the costs of councillors where many of them receive significant money for going to the occasional meeting.*

"Rhywbeth sydd ddim yn peryglu addysg Gymraeg. Nid yw'n deg eich bod yn cyfyngu gallu disgyblion y cymoedd i dderbyn addysg uwch trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mae'n mynd yn erbyn egwyddorion a ddylai fod yn gadarn."	*Something that does not endanger Welsh language education. It is not fair that you limit the ability of pupils in the valleys to receive education through the medium of Welsh. It goes against principles that should be set in stone*

A Member of the School Budget Forum voiced concerns in respect of the proposed changes to Home to School Transport and the impact on Welsh medium schools.

- **Problems with public transport**

"Yes, improve public transport for the area, more busses more frequently and on time. Consider the increased traffic to the area of Church Village, Llantwit Fardre and Beddau and considering the 20-mph speed limit, this will bring areas to standstill".

"The council does not have enough public transport provision to cover for all those who can no longer get the school transport."

"My child lives 2.9 miles away and would require 2 buses. This is completely unacceptable."

4.10 All respondents were asked if they had any other comments they would like the Council to consider.

Many similar points were raised here to the previous question. In addition, there was criticism of the consultation process and content, and perceived inconsistencies in policies across RCTCBC.

"Your wording of the proposal is purposefully misleading. Your timing over consultation Xmas period is purposefully misleading. How can a council on one hand say use public transport citing environmental policies then on the other hand force far more cars on to the road?"

"Your second point is ambiguous. You need to add another option - do you wish to keep provision as is. You're giving yourself too much leeway there to interpret answers in a which fits your agenda".

"The legal jargon in these proposals and the way they are presented are misleading, where the questions and answer options are purposely confusing to the general public. Yes explain the proposal details but use simple language in the questions as it is unclear which proposal or even which answer should be given for the desired outcome."

"Not informing the public of the 'other options' that were considered makes it difficult for us to provide a measured response or propose viable alternatives."

"This proposal is not in agreement with Llwynr Newydd: The Welsh transport strategy. Have you carried out a survey to understand how much this will increase private car usage and in turn, increase congestion on our arterial routes during peak times. We are meant to encourage a change in modal shift due to an overreliance on private car usage - in my opinion, a lot of younger people will not choose to walk or cycle to school particularly during inclement weather. The current council policy of is a much more reasonable approach because it strikes the correct balance with regards to active travel and home to school transport."

4.11 A number of comments in this and the previous question also raised concerns that up to 3 miles of walking each way to school is not achievable in many areas due to topography and weather conditions, alongside safety concerns.

"Yes i believe that if the council agreed to this then they should also rent out their own car parks for extra funds and tell their staff to park 2 miles away and walk to work to aid in the need for funding or start charging staff who live within 2 miles for the use of the car parks."

"What about when it's raining? Or parents who can't afford a stage coach bus everyday? Especially if they have more than one child. What child should have to walk nearly 3 miles to get to school and then home!? Absolutely shocking!!"

"The distance proposed is completely impractical for the majority of children. The streets/lighting/safe crossing points are in no way appropriate for a 3 mile journey. A journey which for most would take more than an hour."

"Given the Geography of the area and the shameful lack of safe cycling routes, 3 miles can be a long journey within RCT".

"We live in church village - we do not have the infrastructure for lots of school children to catch local transport - how can I expect my two children to cycle/walk 3 miles to and from school every day? The main road has lots of on street

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parking, there will be so much rush hour traffic, and how do you expect parents to afford these bikes and helmets? Will the schools have the space for all these bikes? Showers for when the kids come in wet or muddy?"

About you

4.12   Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents were asked how the proposals affect you because of?:

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

The following are a selection of the comments received.

Preferred language and Religion/ belief

4.13   A large number of comments were received referring to the different provisions that are proposed for faith and Welsh language schools, with commenters believing they are being discriminated against as a result.

"Preferred language is English and proposals are discriminatory against me as Welsh school parents / pupils get treated differently."

"Transport is not going to be provided to me due to my child's religion and language. If they were to change this then they would continue to receive transport."

"The council's decision will have an impact upon my preferred language"

Disability

4.14   A number of comments raised concerns about the effect of the proposals on parents/ guardians with disabilities being less able to walk or provide other transport for pupils to school.

"My disability means getting my children to school without free school transport would be impossible."

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"Myself and my partner are disabled and will find it hard to find/afford alternative transport"

"I am disabled so don't drive . I possibly couldn't afford public transport every day . I would be extremely concerned my 12 year old walking to school especially in the winter months"

4.15   There is also concern at the impact on children with neurodiverse and other health issues that do not qualify for additional transport provision.

"Not all children can easily walk to a school when they have other health concerns"

"My son is autistic. He would not be able to walk on his own and I have no means to get him to school by car."

"As a disabled parent myself with 1 of my two children affected by neuro diversity disability, that cannot do public transport and due to my disability I can't always drive them."

"My daughter is type 1 diabetic which is a disability, walking 6 miles each day 3 before even starting school would make her school day a lot more difficult with the possibility of low blood sugars then affecting her day and all the complications that come with that".

Relationship Status

4.15   Some respondents were concerned that there will be a disproportionate impact on single/ lone parents.

"I am a single mother who lives just over 2 miles from the school. The public transport buses are every hour which would make my child late for school which would result in poor attendance and probably fines. This is not affordable whatsoever."

"I'm a single working mother of 2 girls and I'd find it a struggle with arranging transport back and for work 2. My youngest is 9. There's no way I could expect her to walk this distance twice a day. Imagine if the weather is bad. She wailed have to spend the day in soaked clothes."

Sex

4.16   There are comments about a perceived higher risk to female pupils when walking to school, as well as a potential greater impact on women who are more likely to be primary caregivers.

"duty of care (driving to and from school) is more likely to fall to women."

"It is like they want us to return to the old days with women at home doing all the school drop offs and pickups. It will become harder and harder for me to go out to work. My eight year old can't walk two miles to school on their own can they?"

"it gets dark early young girls walking home potentially in the dark bullying will happen".

"It is not safe for my daughters them to walk on a dark route home in the winter months. When they do walk home from the service bus if they stay in school late, they are targeted by sexist abuse and catcalling on a daily basis by male drivers."

Other Concerns

4.17   A number of comments highlighted impacts on socio-economic factors, including employment and lower-income families and those who cannot access public transport easily or regularly.

"I will have to take time off work to do the school runs again when I've only just started working longer."

"I am a working parent not entitled to benefits. However I would not be able to work full time if the provision is removed."

"It's discrimination against single and low income families, it's an assault on children's education - I can't afford to pay to send my kid every day in public transport. Some kids have free school meals and go without food as it is!"

"Public transport is unreliable & can be dangerous for the vulnerable children".

"This would affect us under the socio-economic Duty Wales 2021".

4.18   As part of our Welsh Impact Assessment (WIA) process, the Council has identified that there is a possibility of impacts on the Welsh Language. Respondents were asked for views after considering the WIA.

A large number of comments were received that raise concerns about disincentivising parents from placing their children in Welsh Language Schools, as well as raising other concerns based upon the Impact Assessment.

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"You have identified within the WIA that students who attend Welsh language schools are more reliant on school transport. This policy clearly discriminates against those attending Welsh language education."

"Trwy gydnabod y gallai'r polisi hwn effeithio ar addysg cyfrwng cymraeg mae'r cyngor yn ymwybodol o'r sgil effeithiau niweidiol posib - er hynny yn parhau i ymgynghori ar y mater. Fel y nodwyd gan y cyngor, mae HYRWYDDO mynediad at addysg gyfrwng cymraeg yn un o'i gofynion statudol, ond teimlaf bod y cynigion gerbron yn tynnu yn groes i hyn."	*"By recognising that this policy could affect Welsh medium education the Council is aware of the possible harmful side effects - nevertheless continuing to consult on the matter. As stated by the Council, PROMOTING access to Welsh medium education is one of its statutory requirements, but I feel that the proposals go against this."*

"There will be a massive impact on Welsh language, especially in the catchment area for Ysgol Llanhari. The area of the school itself is absolutely horrendous at school drop off and pick up times, it's very dangerous".

"Parhau I roi'r dewis ond cynyddu'r cost, sut all hyn fod yn niwtral o ran effaith?"	*"Continue to offer the choice but increase the cost, how can this be neutral in terms of its impact?"*

4.19 With regards to the proposals, and the impact it may have, respondents were asked "How do you feel the proposal could impact on opportunities for pupils and staff to use and promote the Welsh Language?"

How do you feel the proposal could impact on opportunities for learners to use and promote the Welsh Language?
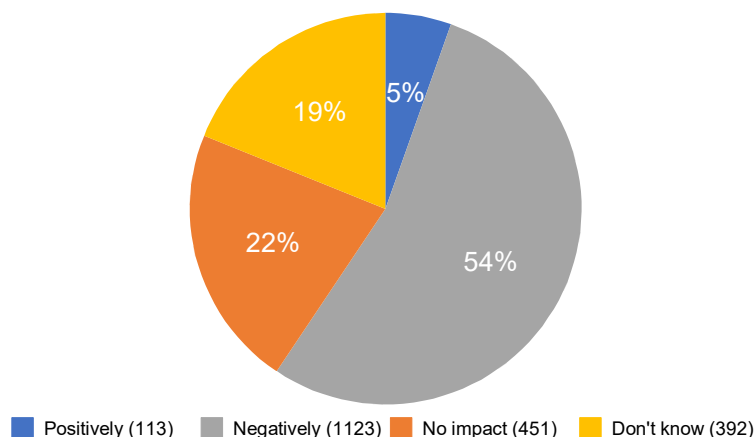

Positively (113)   Negatively (1123)   No impact (451)   Don't know (392)

Figure 6: Impact on opportunities and promotion of Welsh Language

4.20 54% of respondents thought that the proposal would impact the opportunities and promotion of the Welsh Language negatively.

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4.21 Respondents were asked how any positive effects could be increased, or negative effects be decreased. The following are a selection of comments received.

"Trwy cael polisi hir dymor sy'n hybu hyrwyddo'r iaith Gymraeg ac addysg Gymraeg yng nghymunedau Rhondda Cynon Taf"	"By having a long term policy which promotes the Welsh language and Welsh education in Rhondda Cynon Taf's communities"

"The parking around YGG bodringallt is appalling now! I think more transport should be put on as long as parents pay for their spot for the child. It would be less congestion on the roads."

"The free transport should be maintained for Welsh schools as there are less options available to parents wishing to send their children to Welsh schools."
.

"Oes modd i rannu'r costiau - ee ble mae'r cyngor yn darparu'r trafnidiaeth ac y talu 50% o'r costiau gyda rhieni yn talu 50% hefyd (neu debyg)"	*"Is there a way to share the costs - e.g. where the Council provides the transport and pays 50% of the costs with parents paying 50% as well (or similar)"*

"I think the busses should be capped and school children should be able to pay a school bus fare on a public bus"

"Mae darparu addysg Gymraeg lleol mor bwysig. Mae teithio milltiroedd i'r ysgol, yn enwedig i blant cynradd, yn andwyol."	*"Providing local Welsh language education is so important. Traveling miles to school, especially for primary school children, is detrimental".*

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4.13   41% of the respondents said that the proposal does not treat the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language, although 36% thought that it did.

Does the proposal, in any way, treat the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language?
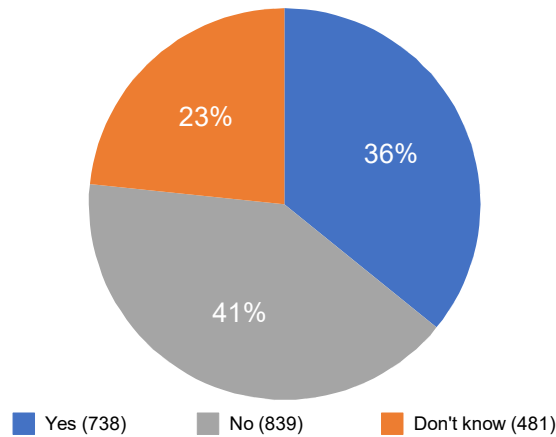

Figure 7: Does the proposal treat Welsh less favourably than English?

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

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Respondent Demographics

4.14   Respondents were provided with an option to provide further demographic information. The full data will be used to inform the Impact Assessments where relevant. The below provides some of the demographic data provided by respondents.

Age

Base	552
15 or under	8 1.0%
16-24	21 2.6%
25-34	115 14.2%
35-44	400 49.4%
45-54	215 26.5%
55-64	33 4.1%
65-74	13 1.6%
75+	1 0.1%
Prefer not to say	4 0.5%

Sex

Base	1171
Female	912 77.9%
Male	231 19.7%
Prefer not to say	28 2.4%

Disability (Do you consider yourself to be disabled?)

Base	1140
Yes	124 10.9%
No	970 85.1%
Prefer not to say	46 4.0%

Table 3-5 – Respondent Demographics

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5   Young Person Consultation

5.1   The Council's YEPs team developed a young person's version of the proposal and shared with youth forum members The consultation was undertaken by sharing the HTS information with young people through a social media group for youth forum members and they were asked to complete a survey following this. 15 young people took part in the exercise.

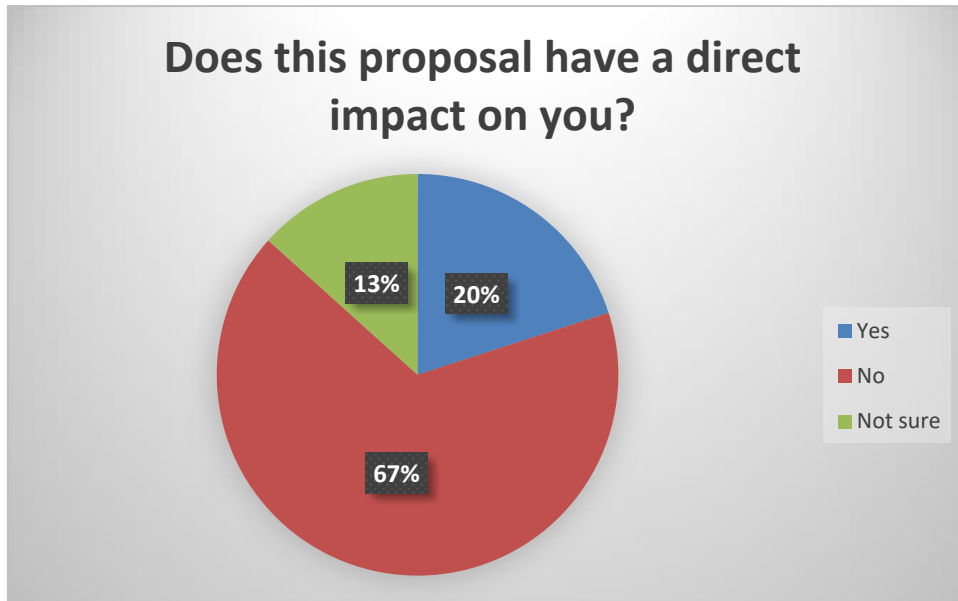The proposal had a direct impact on 20% of the young people.

Figure 8: Direct impact of proposal on respondent

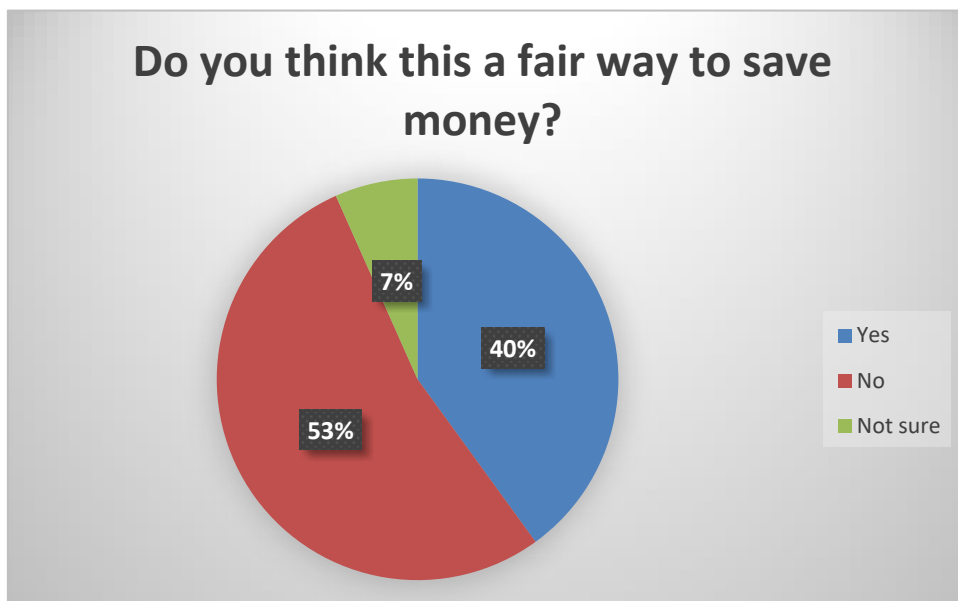5.2   53% though that the proposal was not a fair way to save money.

Figure 9: Is the proposal a fair way to save money?

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<u>What do you think about the proposal?</u>

5.3   The young people were asked what they thought of the proposal, the comments below are a selection of those received;

<u>Positive</u>

It's good

I think it's fair

<u>Negative</u>

I think that it is quite an issue for people who live outside of the new circle for school transport because parents can't always take on board the responsibility of getting their children to school and public transport is expensive

Puts kids at risk of poorer education standards and by proxy impacts schools' overall review standards (limited amount of payed bus passes, expensive bus passes, parents unable to take pupil to school, unsafe walking routes, therefore pupil does not attend at all)

Its okay, the government would save more money but where is that money going? If we make students get public transport and walk because they're not close enough to the school this can stress them out and affect their gcses. some families may not be able to afford public transport and others won't be able to drop their kids off at school. This means more kids walk. The parents who would start driving will create more traffic on the roads meaning earlier starts for kids and this cannot help their gcses

Less people will be able to get to school which will result in less GSCE results

It's not good anyone who need transport to school or college should get transport

School transport should be allocated to anyone in need of a transport to school. It is unsafe for a young person to be walking home or to school. Especially when it's dark! We need to think about the safety of our young people rather than money

It doesn't affect me at all.

I think it's very inconvenient for people who use school transport because some parents can't take upon themselves to drive their kids to and from school everyday and public transport is expensive

<u>Can you provide some other ideas on ways that RCT Council could save money?</u>

5.4   Some of the other ideas suggested by the young people to save money were;

More £1 bus fares through the year

There is none they are wasting money on things that does need to be wasted on it could be used on better things

Idfk not my problem xx

less unnecessary buses, improve council tax, close council cash offices…

To many councillors and less offices

possibly a fundraiser?

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6   Written Responses

6.1   A total of 39 emails/letters were received from a range of consultees. The responses reflect the themes outlined in the main report, with the majority against the proposal. These responses have been made available for Cabinet to review.

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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 competing 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: Geraint Roberts

Service Director: Stephen Williams

Service Area: Transportation

Date: 26/2/2024

1.a)   What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
☒	☒	☒	☒	☐

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

Review of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy

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

A new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport in line with relevant statutory distance criteria, which would be implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. However, it should be noted that it is not proposed to amend the discretionary elements of Additional Learning Needs, (ALN), transport - distance criteria for ALN Transport will not change.

An alternative option for Cabinet to consider has arisen following feedback from the public consultation and an analysis of the Equalities Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment. This option would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). Transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh, and Faith) would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

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

The Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets out the current statutory duties of Local Authorities with regard to the provision of home to school transport. Statutory guidance is also provided by the Welsh Government in the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – June 2014.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- o Service users ☒
- o Employees ☐
- o 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.

Protected Characteristics	**Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts**	**Provide detail of the impact**	**What evidence has been used to support this view?**
Age (*Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people*)	Negative	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age, and their	Current passenger information.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		families/carers, in the county borough.

The proposal will affect 305 primary school pupils and 2,370 secondary school and college pupils (based on February 2024 passenger data).

Overall, this proposal will impact approximately 29% of pupils that currently receive school transport.

The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would help towards mitigating this negative impact. | A walking route is considered to be available if it is safe for the learner to walk the route alone or, if appropriate for the age of the learner, accompanied by an appropriate adult. Pupils of primary age would not be considered appropriate to walk a route unaccompanied. |
| **Disability**
(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions) | Negative | Children and young people who have a disability or additional learning need attending mainstream education would be assessed individually for transport on a discretionary basis. Children attending one of the special schools within the county borough are not considered as part of these proposals, so there is no change to their current provision. | Current passenger information and Council policy.

Whilst pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) are assessed by distance criteria, in practice SEN pupils would not be affected by this proposed policy change as their transport is based upon their |

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		The Council's school transport policy states that free transport to and from school may be provided on medical grounds e.g. chronic illness or temporary incapacity for short but continuous periods. This is not subject to change under the proposals. There is some indicative evidence to suggest that this proposal may have a bigger impact, or present increased pressures on parents with disabilities or long-term health issues, especially where they have children of primary school age. The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would mitigate this negative impact.	individual need. The discretionary elements of SEN transport (pre-school, post 16, etc.) would continue. A walking route is considered to be available if it is safe for the learner to walk the route alone or, if appropriate for the age of the learner, accompanied by an appropriate adult. Pupils of primary age would not be considered appropriate to walk a route unaccompanied.
Gender Reassignment *(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they*	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that children and young people who are transgender or gender neutral will be disproportionately impacted by the proposals.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)			distance only, regardless of gender.
Marriage or Civil Partnership (people who are married or in a civil partnership)	Neutral	No impact	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough.
Pregnancy and Maternity (women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)	Neutral	No impact.	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough. The Council will continue to offer transport on medical grounds where deemed appropriate by medical practicioners.
Race (ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on race or ethnicity.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of race or ethnicity.
Religion or Belief	Neutral	Learners attending the faith schools (primary and secondary) will maintain	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)		home to school transport under the proposed statutory walking distances providing the faith school is determined to be their nearest available school. Pupils generally travel further to Faith/Welsh Medium schools, although the proposed changes will be applied equally to English and Welsh medium education provision as Faith education.	and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of religion or belief.
Sex (women and men, girls and boys)	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on sex.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of sex.
Sexual Orientation (bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on sexual orientation.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			distance only, regardless of sexual orientation.

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 *(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)*	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on whether a member a member of the Armed Forces Community or not.	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of whether a member of the Armed Forces Community or not.
Carers *(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)*	Negative	Whilst it is not wholly possible to qualify the extent of the impact on Carers, (i.e. whom they are providing care for and how they are providing caring responsibilities), it is nevertheless acknowledged	The proposal is to provide mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary and secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only, regardless of whether a Carer or not.

| | | that existing data suggests that the proposed policy change will affect 19 out of a total of 171 registered young carers.

The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report may mitigate this negative impact. | |

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:

N/A

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

Name: Geraint Roberts

Position: Integrated Transport Manager

Date: 26/2/2024

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

Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/Income Poverty *(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)*	Negative	There is some indicative evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on low income or in income poverty. It is acknowledged that there will be some families that will not be able to afford the appropriate clothing and footwear to be able to undertake longer walking journeys. It is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough. A number of comments receive through the public consultation highlighted impacts on socio-economic factors, including the affordability of appropriate clothing that is suitable for all weather conditions.
Low and / or No Wealth *(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)*	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on low and/or no wealth. However, it is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Material Deprivation *(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)*	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based material deprivation. However, it is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough

Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Area Deprivation *(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)*	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on area deprivation.	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age across the county borough
Socio-economic background *(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)*	Negative	There is some indicative evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate impact upon learners based on socio-economic background. It is acknowledged that this proposal may have a bigger impact, or present increased pressures on single parents or working families, especially where they have children of primary school age. It is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense. The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would mitigate this negative impact.	The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough. A walking route is considered to be available if it is safe for the learner to walk the route alone or, if appropriate for the age of the learner, accompanied by an appropriate adult. Pupils of primary age would not be considered appropriate to walk a route unaccompanied.
Socio-economic disadvantage	Neutral	There is no evidence to suggest that there will be a disproportionate	The proposals will affect children and young people of

(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)		impact upon learners based on socio-economic disadvantage. However, iIt is acknowledged that there will be additional financial cost to parents / guardians should they decide to transport their child(ren) to school at their own expense.	school age in the county borough

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.**

Protected Characteristic - Age. The proposals will affect children and young people of school age in the county borough. The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would reduce this negative impact as it would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith).

Protected Characteristic - Disability. There is some indicative evidence to suggest that this proposal may have a bigger impact, or present increased pressures on parents with disabilities or long-term health issues, especially where they have children of primary school age. The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would mitigate this negative impact as it would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith).

Protected Characteristic - Carer. Whilst it is not wholly possible to qualify the extent of the impact on Carers, (i.e. whom they are providing care for and how they are providing caring responsibilities), it is nevertheless acknowledged that existing data suggests that the proposed policy change will affect 19 out of a total of 171 registered young carers. The alternative option proposed in section 14 of the cabinet report would mitigate this negative impact as it would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith).

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.

Data used is school bus passenger information from February 2024.

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.

A comprehensive public consultation exercise was conducted with all key stakeholders such as pupils, parents, carers, transport providers and Elected Members. The consultation originally ran from Monday 27th November 2023 until 5pm Monday 8th January 2024. Recognising the significance of the proposal for pupils who use and will use home to school transport now or in the future, the consultation was extended for a further three-week period, from Thursday 18th January until 5pm Thursday 8th February 2024. This period provided a further opportunity for those potentially impacted to take part in the consultation. In total the consultation therefore ran for a period of nine weeks.

The consultation had a dedicated page on the Council's consultation section of its website which provided details of the proposal and a link to the consultation survey. Consultees were also referred to the initial Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments considered by Cabinet prior to initiating the consultation exercise.

A 'frequently asked questions' sheet was developed to provide further information to consultees.

An email was sent to all schools who could be potentially impacted by the proposal to Headteachers and Chair of Governors to be forwarded on to all parents and carers. Further emails were sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation in the online survey, including public transport operators. School Councils, headteachers and school and college governors were also invited to submit their views on any proposed new policy.

Respondents were also given the option to write in using a dedicated email address HTSConsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk, and a telephone option was also in place through the Council's contact centre.

The Council held 8 public engagement events at venues throughout the County Borough, where officers were on hand to answer any questions on the proposal and encourage or assist people to take part in in the survey.

The consultation was widely promoted in the Press and via social media including the Council's Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter) accounts.

Consultees were therefore able to respond to the consultation through various channels including an online survey/questionnaire, a dedicated consultation email address, a freepost postal address, a telephone option and providing feedback at the local engagement sessions.

The Council's YEPs team developed a young person's version of the proposal and shared with youth forum members The consultation was undertaken by sharing relevant information with young people through a social media group for youth forum

members and they were asked to complete a survey following this.The results of any consultation will be reported back to Cabinet in order for it to determine whether, and if so, how it wishes to progress with implementation of the proposed new policy.

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 implementation of the proposal will be monitored through reviewing the eligibility of pupils impacted. This will be done by reviewing the safety of walking routes to schools, and through assessing eligibility as a result of medical needs. Attendance levels at schools, and any impact as a result of the proposal will be periodically reviewed.

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

After the end of the first academic year (2025/26).

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

The Integrated Transport Unit and Education and Inclusion Services.

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

The results of the monitioring will determine whether further amendments of the Council's School Transport policy requires review to help meet it's statutory duties.

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
The review panel comments have been incorporated within this assessment.	7th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review have been included within the Cabinet Report.
Consultation Comments	**Date Considered**	**Brief description of any amendments made following consultation**
The review panel comments have been incorporated within this assessment.	7th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review have been included within the Cabinet Report.

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.

This assessment has found that there are three negative and eight neutral equality and diversity implications, based on protected characteristics, associated with the preferred option consulted upon. Furthermore, the assessment has found that there are two negative and four neutral socio-economic impacts. These risks could be mitigated by a range of actions as detailed in this report and with the alternative option explored in further detail at Section 14 of the cabinet report.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer: G ROBERTS

Name: GERAINT ROBERTS

Position: INTEGRATED TRANSPORT MANAGER

Date: 12/3/2024

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: S WILLIAMS

Name: STEPHEN WILLIAMS

Position: DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, STREETCARE, AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Date: 12th March 2024

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

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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 new Home to School Transport policy.
Department	Integrated transport Unit
Director	Stephen Williams
Officer Completing the WLIA	Geraint Roberts
Email	Geraint.e.roberts@rctcbc.gov.uk
Brief Description	The proposal seeks to introduce a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only and implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. Should the proposed new Home to School Transport Policy be implemented the Council would continue to provide discretionary Home to School Transport provision beyond statutory requirements in a number of areas.
Date	26 February 2024
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Service Users

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What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	The aim of the proposal is to implement a new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport in line with relevant statutory distance criteria, which would be implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. This could potentially impact on the Council's ambitious Welsh in Education Strategic Plan ('WESP') targets to grow the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education.
Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.	The proposal, as consulted upon, would affect transport entitlement for learners attending Welsh medium primary and secondary schools that live under the statutory distances from school, although the proposed changes may adversely impact more on learners in Welsh medium settings who are generally more reliant on school transport to access education. This is a potential risk to the Council's target to significantly grow the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education in Rhondda Cynon Taf, as specified in the Council's WESP. It should be noted however that under the proposed Home to School Transport Policy the discretionary element of allowing a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language would continue. This supports the provision in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 which places a duty on the Council to promote access to Welsh Medium education when exercising its powers thereunder.
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 Local Authorities in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and the Vale of Glamorgan. All of these are neighbouring County Boroughs, which could demonstrate that the 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), the Council will need to consider what impact it may have on the services it provides. The table that follows outlines the Welsh language skills of residents living in RCT and Wales and is obtained from the 2011 Census.

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Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2011 Census)		
Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales
Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.7%	14.6%
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	0.9%	1.5%
Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	1.6%	2.7%
Can understand spoken Welsh only	4.2%	5.3%
Other combination of Skills	3.3%	2.5%
No skills	80.4%	73.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all Wales Welsh language skills level.

The table that follows outlines the Welsh language skills of residents living in RCT and Wales and is obtained from the 2021 Census.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2021 Census)		
Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales
Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.8%	13.8%
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	0.7%	1.1%

Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	1.4%	2.2%
Can understand spoken Welsh only	3.9%	5.0%
Other combination of Skills	5.5%	5.2%
No skills	78.7%	72.7%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all Wales Welsh language skills level.

The data demonstrates the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT and the all Wales Welsh language skills level are lower in 2021 than 2011.

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 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 medium learning classes for adults. In RCT it is considered the majority of Welsh speakers would have learned Welsh in Primary School.

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all-Wales Welsh language skills level. In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase pupils 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), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) and the Urdd. This activity is designed to contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

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Other relevant data or research	All Local Authorities in Wales must produce a 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 Council aims to contribute significantly to achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050. The WESP can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 – 2032 | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (rctcbc.gov.uk) There are seven outcomes within the WESP, these are: • Outcome 1: More nursery/three-year-old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh. • Outcome 2: More reception/five-year-old learners receive their education through the medium of Welsh. • Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another. • Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh. • Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school. • Outcome 6: An increase in 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. • Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh. During the ten-year lifespan of the Council's WESP (2022-2032), it is seeking to increase the percentage of year one learners in Welsh medium education by between 8.0% to 12.0%. This equates to an increase from 506 year one learners in Welsh medium education to between 720 and 825 year one learners in Welsh medium education. However, the Council has committed to a 10% increase. It is therefore noted that any proposal that would have an impact on the take up of Welsh medium education, would reduce the Council's ability to meet this very ambitious target set by Welsh Government. Whilst the Council would meet statutory walking distance requirements from a free home to school transport perspective, the proposal, as consulted upon, may potentially impact on the numbers of families wishing to send their children to Welsh medium education as they might opt to send their child to a closer English medium

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	school. This in turn could impact on the requirement to promote access to Welsh medium education within the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

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?

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	Negative	All consultation correspondence and any correspondence issued in relation to the operation of the Council's Home to School Transport policy would continue to be published in Welsh with the Welsh appearing first. Future recruitment would focus on recruiting Welsh speakers to increase face-to-face Welsh language service provision. As there are currently only 4% of staff within the Service area with Welsh language skills of level 3 or above, (the level at which speakers likely have sufficient skills to use the language more extensively at work), recruiting more Welsh speakers would have a positive impact on the service's Welsh provision, and the Council's attempts to promote the language. 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	Current / ongoing public consultations shows Welsh language appearing first. The percentage of Welsh speakers in RCT according to the 2021 Census was 12.4%, and the Council's Welsh Language Skills Strategy aims to ensure the percentage of staff with Welsh language skills is at a similar level. 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 school signage providing equal opportunities in terms of the Welsh language and equality.	Ensure that, upon each new order of consultation material and/or materials relating to the operation of the Council's Home to School Transport policy, all correspondence is reviewed, and bilingualism retained. Encourage contact in Welsh by incorporating an appropriate additional line into correspondence, e.g., "we welcome correspondence in Welsh, which will not lead to a delay in responding". Ensure steps are taken for basic relevant Welsh lessons for those who need it with the aim of further upskilling and training as appropriate. Investigate opportunities to ensure there are a number of Welsh-speaking members of staff on the team through advertising some new posts as "Welsh-essential" roles *where practical to do so*.
Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language e.g., staff, residents and visitors The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work				

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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. By working with the Council's Welsh Language Services, specifically the internal Welsh language tutor, all members of staff will be encouraged to continue to improve their Welsh language skills beyond Level 1. Members of staff who opt to do this will be fully supported. This will support the opportunities available for the Council to create a bilingual workforce with the ability to work and deliver services bilingually.

Moreover, in light of recent guidance from the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Council has a statutory duty not only to mitigate negative impacts, but to maximise any possible positive impacts too.

If there are fewer Welsh medium pupils as an unintended consequence of any revised Home to School transport policy, this might impact on the

| | | Council's ability to provide services in Welsh way into the future. It is acknowledged Welsh Medium Schools are the pool of future workers to ensure the Council can fulfil and comply with the Welsh Language Standards long term and further grow the language.

If, as a result of any revised Home to School transport policy, learners spend less time with peers whilst travelling, their opportunities to use Welsh during this time may decrease. | | |

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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?
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	Negative	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough has seventeen Welsh medium primary schools, and four Welsh secondary schools located throughout the County Borough. All pupils who attend these schools' study through the medium of Welsh. There is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools, in favour of nearer English medium catchment schools, with a greater risk at the primary school level. Should that happen it may reduce the ability for the Council to achieve certain outcomes in the WESP.	Whilst currently there is little specific data or evidence available to support the overall conclusion the proposal as consulted upon would have a negative impact on the numbers/percentage of Welsh speakers feedback received through the consultation, particularly from key stakeholders such as the Welsh Language Commissioner, suggested this would be the case. The Commissioner expressed a concern the proposal would disproportionately impact learners attending Welsh medium schools and undermine the commitments and targets of the WESP. The Commissioner considers the proposal might lead to the Council incurring increased costs in future if investment is required	Whilst the Council's current Home to School transport policy has a positive impact on access to Welsh medium education it is a component part of the Council's overall ability to meet its targets set out in the WESP. To support achieving the outcomes in the WESP the Council is undertaking a number of schemes/programmes that support the promotion of the Welsh language, and that contribute towards achieving the outcomes within its WESP. These schemes/programmes are as follows:

| | | However, it should be noted that under the proposal the Council would, as part of its discretionary provision, still allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language. On this basis there might be potential for growth in Welsh Medium demand where pupils live under 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or 3 miles (in the case of secondary school pupils) from their nearest suitable English Medium school but live over 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or 3 miles (in the case of secondary school pupils) from their nearest suitable Welsh Medium school. | to mitigate the negative effects of the proposal on the growth of Welsh medium education in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Commissioner believes inequalities exist between those accessing English and Welsh medium education on the basis Welsh medium education is less widely available thus access is more costly and difficult as learners on average will live further from such provision. The Commissioner has stated on average people are more likely to live within walking distance to English medium school than to Welsh medium schools, and that is true in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Whilst acknowledging it is the Council's aim to treat Welsh medium learners no less favourably than English medium learner's the Commissioner considers changing the policy would have a disproportionate impact on those wishing to attend Welsh medium education. The Commissioner further states that as a significant number of learners who would otherwise have received free transport to | 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 pupils to use the Welsh language in different contexts.

The Council adheres 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) along with its supplementary action plan encourages and facilitates long term growth for the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The strategy is closely aligned to the Council's |

| | | | Welsh medium education would no longer be eligible for such transport it is very likely that a substantial number of these learners would reconsider choosing Welsh medium education, choosing instead to attend an English medium school nearer their home which is easier to access and less costly for them.

Should the proposal, as consulted upon., be implemented then as part of its discretionary provision, the Council would allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language should the proposal be implemented.

Out of a total of 3,860 pupils attending Welsh primary schools, 1,272 are currently in receipt of school transport (33%). 242 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 19% of all pupils in receipt of transport, and 6% of the overall number in Welsh primary schools.

Out of a total of 15,961 pupils attending English primary schools, 162 are currently in | WESP and outlines the Council's commitment to working towards the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers.

This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh pupils and improving the Welsh language skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.

An alternative option has been put forward for Cabinet to consider that would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). This option might assist in negating possible negative impacts in relation to |
|---|---|---|---|---|

receipt of school transport (1%). 0 pupils would be affected by this proposal.

Out of a total of 2,526 pupils attending Welsh secondary schools, 1,936 are currently in receipt of school transport (77%). 228 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 12% of all pupils in receipt of transport, and 9% of the overall number in Welsh secondary schools.

Out of a total of 11,653 pupils attending English secondary schools, 4,094 are currently in receipt of school transport (35%). 1,174 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 29% of all pupils in receipt of transport, and 10% of the overall number in English secondary schools.

Whilst the proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, as pupils generally travel further to Welsh Medium schools, only they and primary school pupils attending Faith

outcomes 1 & 2 of the WESP and any consequential effect on the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.

A further option could be considered, which would maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith), and Welsh secondary schools (only). Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. This further option would negate all negative impacts against the WESP outcomes that may arise as a result of implanting the proposal, as consulted upon, and was an option suggested

| | | | schools are impacted. However, as can be seen from the information above, this is reversed for secondary age pupils, where those attending English medium schools are impacted by a far greater number.

In assessing the possible impact of the proposed changes on attendance at Welsh language schools, a comparison of the attendance levels for those learners receiving home to school transport provision was made against those learners who do not use home to school transport to get to school.

The current attendance levels at RCTCBC Welsh language schools receiving school transport are as follows:

Attendance levels of pupils currently making their own way to Welsh language primary school: 92.96%

Attendance levels of pupils who are in receipt of school transport to Welsh language primary school: 92.10% | by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Irrespective of any proposal that is taken forward, as regards a change in the Council's Home to School Transport policy, the Council would, as now, continue to monitor and evaluate the effect of it's Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing |

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| | | | Overall difference: -0.86%

Attendance levels of pupils currently making their own way to Welsh language secondary school: 89.06%

Attendance levels of pupils who are in receipt of school transport to Welsh language secondary school: 87.91%

Overall difference: -1.15%

Attendance data at Welsh language schools therefore suggests that the provision of free transport within 1.5-2 miles for primary schools and 2-3 miles for secondary schools (as is currently the case in Rhondda Cynon Taf) has little impact on attendance.

Whilst there is little specific evidence or data available at present to enable the Council to effectively assess the impact implementation the proposal as consulted upon would have on enabling the Council to achieve the WESP outcomes the potential for it to have a negative impact is | policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education. |

			drawn to Member's attention and should form a consideration as part of its decision making process. At the same time it should be noted that the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy is strongly aligned with the WESP, and so any impact on the WESP would have impact on the Welsh Language Promotional Strategy In terms of adherence to the Welsh Language Measure, the Council must treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English. It could therefore treat Welsh language learners more favourably.	
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 Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time	Neutral	The Welsh language 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 pupils of all ages to develop and use their skills from early years, through every stage of	As part of its discretionary provision, the Council would, as now, allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language should the proposal be implemented – please see data above. The Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (2022 – 2027) along with its supplementary action plan has	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 pupils to use the Welsh language in different contexts.

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compulsory education and post-16 provision.

As mentioned above, there is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools.

The proposal is clear that the Council would, as part of its discretionary provision, still allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language. This is how the Council would meet its duty under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to promote Welsh medium education.

In addition, the introduction of the proposal may result in potential growth in Welsh Medium demand where pupils live under 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or 3 miles (in the case of secondary school pupils) from their nearest suitable English Medium school but live over 2 miles (in the case of primary school pupils) or 3 miles (in the case of secondary school

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 the 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 pupils 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 digital applications being placed on

The Council would 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) along with its supplementary action plan 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 the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers.

The Council would continue to ensure a clear alignment with the

| | | pupils) from their nearest suitable Welsh Medium school.

If these benefits are indeed realised, this would potentially positively impact on our WESP targets and our strategic priorities to increase the number of Welsh language speakers and to growth the number of learners accessing Welsh medium education and opportunities. | every member of staffs' devices to support their linguistic skills and development.

Youth Services:
- Running trips for Welsh medium pupils to provide opportunities to use Welsh in different contexts.
- Creating promotional materials to be placed in youth clubs throughout the County Borough.
- 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 Coleg y Cymoedd campuses.

Leisure Services:
- 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 | Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh pupils and improving the Welsh language skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.

In order to achieve the targets of the WESP the Council 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 pupils, whatever their learning need. This will be done through ongoing |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

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			introduce the Welsh language into leisure sessions. Arts and Culture Services: - 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. Musical Services: - Engaging with both Welsh and English medium schools to encourage an uptake in musical services, pupils who show an aptitude for any instruments are being encouraged and supported into taking part in the Eisteddfod. 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 pupils and improving the Welsh language	distribution of the Council's Being Bilingual booklets and Welsh Language Immersion leaflets at local events, to health visitors, Welsh medium childcare settings and birth registration services. Wider distribution will include all public Council buildings and Welsh medium schools throughout the County Borough. Social media campaigns are run which specifically targets promoting Welsh medium education along with marketing resources in the form of videos, prepared by Welsh Government and Mudiad Meithrin. The Council recognises the importance of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 target and how central the education system in Wales is to achieve its vision.

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| | | | skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025. | The Council's WESP sets out a ten-year vision for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh medium education in order to maximise its contribution of achieving the target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

The Council is aware that Welsh Government are in the process of reviewing its Learner Travel Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council will review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.

An alternative option has been put forward for Cabinet to consider that would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). This option might |
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assist in negating possible negative impacts in relation to outcomes 1 & 2 of the WESP and any consequential effect on the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. It should be acknowledged however that any negative impacts in relation to outcomes 1 & 2 could have corresponding negative impacts on outcomes 3-7 also.

A further option could be considered, which would maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith), and Welsh secondary schools (only). Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh

| | | | | Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. This further option would negate all negative impacts against the WESP outcomes that may arise as a result of implanting the proposal, as consulted upon, and was an option suggested by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Irrespective of any proposal that is taken forward, as regards a change in the Council's Home to School Transport policy, the Council would, as now, continue to monitor and evaluate the effect of its Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the |

| | | | | collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education. |

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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?
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. Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work	Positive	The consultation exercise undertaken on the proposal and production of this Welsh Language Impact Assessment have been completed to achieve and assist with compliance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards. With particular reference to Standard 90 (as applicable to the Council), this states: When you (the Council) formulate a new policy, or review or revise an existing policy, you must consider how the policy could be formulated (or how an existing policy could be changed) so that the policy decision would not have adverse effects, or so that it would have decreased adverse effects, on - (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh	To assist compliance with Standard 90 this impact assessment has been completed, using feedback from responses received through the consultation exercise and other available data/supporting evidence. That information has also been used to complete the appropriate sections of the cabinet report relating to the proposal. Taken together they have been produced in order to assist Members appropriately consider any direct/indirect effects a change in Home to School Transport policy may have on the Welsh language and have due regard to those considerations. Where available this impact assessment and the Cabinet report suggest mitigating actions that might assist Cabinet when considering a change in Home to	The relevant and required statutory consultation was undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to the proposal was produced bilingually. All officers involved with these proposals had an awareness of the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards and ensured compliance with these standards. All public consultation announcements were made bilingually. A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has

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		language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.	School Transport Policy that might have adverse effects on the Welsh language and opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, Contractual arrangements would ensure that all consultations are undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to these proposals would be sent out bilingually with Welsh positioned first.	been produced to aid Cabinet's consideration of the possible effects (indirect and direct) on the Welsh language of a change in the Council's Home to School Transport Policy.
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	Negative.	Whilst the proposed changes woud be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, it is acknowledged that is not the same as treating Welsh no less favourably than English language.	As part of its discretionary provision, the Council would, as now, allow a learner to select their nearest 'suitable school' in accordance with choice of language should the proposal, as consulted upon, be implemented. Out of a total of 3,860 pupils attending Welsh primary schools, 1,272 are currently in receipt of school transport (33%). 242 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 19% of all pupils in receipt of transport. Out of a total of 15,961 pupils attending English primary	Greater promotion of Welsh medium schools across the County Borough. The proposed new Home to School Transport Policy would not change the discretionary elements of entitlement for pupils with Additional Learning Needs. As such there is no negative impact against outcome 6 of the WESP. The Council is aware that Welsh Government

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| | | | schools, 162 are currently in receipt of school transport (1%). 0 pupils would be affected by this proposal.

Out of a total of 2,526 pupils attending Welsh secondary schools, 1,936 are currently in receipt of school transport (77%). 228 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 12% of all pupils in receipt of transport.

Out of a total of 11,653 pupils attending English secondary schools, 4,094 are currently in receipt of school transport (35%). 1,174 pupils would be affected by this proposal. This represents 29% of all pupils in receipt of transport.

Whilst the proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, as pupils generally travel further to Welsh Medium schools, only they and primary school pupils attending Faith schools are impacted. However, as can be seen from the information above, this is | are in the process of reviewing its Learner Travel Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council will review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.

An alternative option has been put forward for Cabinet to consider that would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). This option might assist in negating possible negative impacts in relation to outcomes 1 & 2 of the WESP and any consequential effect on the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy.

A further option could be considered, which would maintain the Council's current discretionary |

				reversed for secondary age pupils, where those attending English medium schools are impacted by a far greater number.	distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith), and Welsh secondary schools (only). Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. This further option would negate all negative impacts against the WESP outcomes that may arise as a result of implanting the proposal, as consulted upon, and was an option suggested by the Welsh Language Commissioner. Irrespective of any proposal that is taken forward, as regards a change in the Council's Home to School Transport policy, the Council would, as now, continue to monitor and

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| | | | | evaluate the effect of its Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education. |

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?
The Council will continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and work towards achieving the goals of Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision by promoting the Welsh language.	Ongoing	Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services.
Encourage contact in Welsh by incorporating an appropriate additional line into correspondence, e.g., "we welcome correspondence in Welsh, which would not lead to a delay in responding".	Ongoing	Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services.
The Council is aware that Welsh Government are in the process of reviewing its Learner Travel Guidance, however it is unclear what, if any, changes will be made. The Council would review any revisions to the Guidance, as and when issued, and consider accordingly.	If, as, and when the Welsh Government make any changes to its Learner Travel Guidance.	The Welsh Government (Review) and then the Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services (Implementation)
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.	Ongoing – the WESP is a ten-year plan; the Council will continue to work with partners on developing and implementing strategies in line with the WESP.	RCT WESP Officer.
An alternative option has been put forward for Cabinet that would maintain the discretionary element of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). This would mean that the 242 pupils impacted highlighted in Stage 2 of this assessment would retain their entitlement, as well as maintain entitlement for future pupils that live within the statutory distance from school. It would also negate the negative impacts against outcomes 1 & 2 of the WESP.	This option has been included within section 14 of the cabinet report.	Cabinet Members.

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Whilst transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh, and Faith) would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, it would nevertheless continue to provide all other areas of its discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum Welsh Government statutory requirement.		
A further option could be considered, which would maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith), and Welsh secondary schools (only). Transport provision to English and Faith schools and colleges would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. This further option would negate all negative impacts against the WESP outcomes that may arise as a result of implanting the proposal, as consulted upon, and was an option suggested by the Welsh Language Commissioner.	This option has been included within section 14 of the cabinet report.	Cabinet Members.
Irrespective of any proposal that is taken forward, as regards a change in the Council's Home to School Transport policy, the Council would, as now, continue to monitor and evaluate the effect of its Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education.	Ongoing	Transportation and Education & Inclusion Services / Cabinet Members/ Scrutiny/ Key Stakeholders including learners, parents/carers

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?

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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
Welsh Language Services welcome the inclusion of two further options for Cabinet to consider, which exempt the Welsh medium sector from these changes, as per our previous advice. If these options are taken forward by Cabinet, particularly the option to exempt both primary and secondary WM pupils, this would assist in mitigating against the negative impacts identified in the impact assessment. If the decision is made to not take either of these options forward, the reasons for such a decision would need to be explained in detail. In such a case, too, the Welsh Language Service consider there is a very significant risk of a challenge under the Welsh Language Measure. We would also advise that Education and Inclusion Services have sight of the latest version of this assessment and report for comment, as these changes could impact upon their services significantly.	7th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review panel and impact assessment process have been included within the Cabinet Report.

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Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
The review panel comments have been incorporated within this assessment.	7th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review panel and impact assessment process have been included within the Cabinet Report.
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
The consultation comments have been incorporated within this assessment.	7th March 2024	Final decision to be made by Cabinet. Additional options for consideration as a result of the review panel and impact assessment process have been included within the Cabinet Report.

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

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

The Council would, as now, continue to monitor and evaluate the effect of its Home to School Transport policy in relation to both its duty to promote Welsh medium education under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and its impact and effect on the WESP and Welsh Language Promotional Strategy. This would be conducted through the collection and analysis of relevant data, engagement with key stakeholders and reporting through the Council's democratic processes such as scrutiny. Cabinet may wish to request following any change to existing policy, that officers bring a further report to a future meeting detailing available evidence at the time of the effect of any policy change has had on the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium education.

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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 -

The proposal seeks to introduce a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy, namely providing mainstream English, Welsh and Faith primary school, secondary school and college transport above statutory distance only and implemented from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. Under the proposed Home to School Transport Policy the discretionary element of allowing a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language would continue.

Whilst the proposed changes will be applied equally to English medium education provision and Welsh medium education provision, as pupils generally travel further to Welsh Medium schools, a greater number of primary age pupils are impacted. However, this is reversed for secondary age pupils, where those attending English medium schools are impacted by a greater number.

The assessment has identified that there is a possibility of impacts on the Welsh language in respect of the preferred option consulted upon. There is a potential that the additional walking distance from home to school may discourage parents from putting their children into Welsh medium schools, in favour of nearer English medium catchment schools, with a greater risk at the primary school level. These risks could be mitigated by a range of actions as detailed in this assessment and with the alternative options explored in further detail at Section 14 of the Cabinet report

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Stage 7 – Sign Off			
Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Geraint Roberts	**Director Name:**	Stephen Williams
Position	Integrated Transport Manager	**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	12th March 2024	**Date**	12th March 2024

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21st December 2023

Re: Scrutiny of Service Changes Subject to Consultation

Dear Cabinet Members,

I have been instructed by this Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to the consultation of **Continuation of Free Breakfast Club Provision in Primary and Special Schools with the Introduction of a Charge for the additional childcare element** and the **Review of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy** before its consideration at the Cabinet meeting on 24th January 2024

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave feedback and comments in respect of the proposal at its meeting on the 13th December 2023. Members undertook a constructive discussion in respect of the recommendations from the Director of Education & Inclusion and the Director Highways, Streetcare and Transportation.

Members can view the full discussion and debate of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in respect of this item of business **here**

In summary, the following points were raised in relation to the Continuation of Free Breakfast Club Provision in Primary and Special Schools with the Introduction of a Charge for the additional childcare element

- Members were reassured that staffing levels will be kept under review and closely monitored to ensure appropriate staffing levels are in place
- Members were concerned that families are already feeling financial pressure due to the cost of living crisis and asked for a review of costs to be undertaken if the proposals are taken forward to allow families to be able to have a more flexible approach to committing to the breakfast clubs, for example, many families do not use the breakfast club 5 days per week, therefore should be offered the opportunity to opt in on a flexible basis.
- Members were reassured to hear that every child will continue to be offered a free breakfast and that the proposed additional charge is in relation to the earlier childcare element.

Members raised the following points in relation to the Review of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy

- Members would like to see further clarification and information shared with residents on what is deemed as a safe walking route.

- Members raised concerns that the proposals may have a detrimental effect on attendance where families will need to travel further or incur costs to travel to their place of learning.
- Members were concerned that the proposal may have a negative impact on the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan as learners may choose to attend an English Medium Education setting that is closer to their home.
- Members asked the effect on the Councils Carbon Footprint also be considered as part of the proposal as this could see an increase in traffic on the roads.

Yours sincerely

Christian Hanagan
Service Director Democratic Services and Communication

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20 MARCH 2024

'WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES'
THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2030

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR ANDREW MORGAN OBE

AUTHOR: Paul Mee

1.   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   The purpose of the report is to set out a new draft Corporate Plan from 2024/25 – 2029/30. The draft Plan provides a Vision for the County Borough for 2030 and sets out the Council's Well-being Objectives and the priorities it will focus upon over the following six years.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1   Review the contents of the draft Corporate Plan 2024-30,

2.2   Consider the outcome of the consultation and engagement process,

2.3   Consider the comments and feedback, following pre-scrutiny by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, attached at Appendix C.

2.4   Subject to 2.1 and 2.2, recommend the draft Corporate Plan to Council for approval at its meeting scheduled for 24th April 2024.

3   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   It is a key element of effective strategic planning and financial and people management for the Council to put in place a Corporate Plan to ensure that it:

- Has a clear strategy and set of priorities for future years.
- Informs and directs all the Council's associated strategies and policies.
- Can use this Plan to allocate its resources and ensure action plans are in place to deliver the agreed Well-being Objectives and achieve the outcomes that will make a difference to the people that live, work and visit the County Borough.

- Is well placed to take advantage of future opportunities and meet risks and challenges, particularly in the context of reductions to local authority funding, changes in demography and in the demand for services and legislation.

4. THE CORPORATE PLAN

4.1 The draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030, attached at Appendix A, seeks to set the overall direction for the Council over the coming six years, describing its vision, purpose and ambition as local authority for the County Borough.

4.2 The Council's proposed vision is for a Rhondda Cynon Taf where:

'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future'.

4.3 The Council's proposed purpose and the reason why it exists is:

'To provide community leadership and deliver high quality public services, working alongside residents, communities and our partners so that people, businesses and the environment can thrive and prosper'.

4.4 It is proposed that the Council is focused on the following four Well-being Objectives

i. **PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES** - Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
ii. **WORK AND BUSINESS** - Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.
iii. **NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT** - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
iv. **CULTURE, HERITAGE AND WELSH LANGUAGE** - Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.

4.5 The new draft Corporate Plan will build on previous Corporate Plans and be a key part of the Council's budget and performance and delivery planning processes. As a result, the draft Corporate Plan must consider the fact that Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and the wider public sector, continues to face significant financial and other challenges. Budgets are under extreme pressure and demands on our services are increasing, particularly in the light of the impact of increasing cost of living and the legacies of the Covid pandemic.

4.6   RCT is also facing…

- A growing and aging population, many of whom may experience poor health with complex care and support needs.
- The need to attract investment, high quality jobs and support the green economy whilst also addressing the skills gap.
- The impact on lives and the risk to homes and businesses from extreme weather events.
- The need to tackle inequalities in health, education, and work and improve life chances.
- Energy costs, uncertain energy security and higher prices because of supply chain disruptions.

4.7   The Corporate Plan addresses these current and future challenges as well as meeting a legal duty to develop and agree a Well-being Plan. As a consequence of the changing environment in which we work, the new plan has a greater focus on creating and strengthening community capacity and resilience so people are better placed to take responsibility for their own well-being; is more closely aligned with the Sustainable Development principles; has embedded climate change into the business of the Council; is delivering additional social value through our contracts and focussing our attention on tackling health inequalities.

4.8   An early draft Plan was informed by feedback from a wide range of engagement activities from across the Council and its services over the last eighteen months, a review of progress over the life of the current Corporate Plan which also features in the Council's 2022/23 Annual Self Assessment and consideration of the current and future challenges we are facing. This early work was the basis of initial engagement through the 'Lets Talk' platform 'Let's Talk about what Matters to You', feedback from the Cabinet and Managers planning discussions in July 2023 and engagement with the staff on the 'Greenspace' Teams channel.

4.9   Subsequent to this, we put in place wider engagement to develop the Plan and in particular the Council's Vision, Purpose, four Well-being Objectives and associated high level priorities and Our commitments to deliver a well-run Council, see report on the engagement findings at Appendix B.

5   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIOECONOMIC DUTY

5.1   There are no specific equality and diversity and socioeconomic duties because of the recommendations within this report. However, the Plan considers the socioeconomic issues within the County Borough and how these will be addressed. Work in this area will continue as part of the further development of the Plan. The Equalities Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment respect of an early draft of the

Corporate Plan was considered by the Review Panel on 7th March and findings are attached at Appendix D.

6   **WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1   The Corporate Plan will be available in Welsh. The Welsh Language Impact Assessment in respect of an early draft of the Corporate Plan was considered by the Review Panel on 7th March and the findings are attached at Appendix E. A suggestion to integrate the Welsh Language into the Culture and Heritage Well-being Objective was reinforced by feedback from Y Fforwm Iaith and Cor Cwm Rhondda and has been taken into account in subsequent drafts, the responses from which are attached in Appendix E(i).

7   **CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT/INVOLVEMENT**

7.1   This draft Corporate Plan has been informed by listening to and hearing what our residents of all ages, communities, partners, and staff have been telling us across a wide range of engagement. This approach will continue during the development of the plan.

7.2   The draft Corporate Plan has been formally subject to two phases of engagement:

   • Phase1 – between 18th September and 4th December 2023
   • Phase 2 – between 8th December and 29th January 2024, which also included an invitation to all elected Members to engage more widely through an item in the Members' Newsletter 18th December edition and also consideration by the Council's Joint Consultative Committee at its meeting on 20th December 2023.

7.3   The feedback from the engagement is set out in Appendix B. Council staff were encouraged to feedback their thoughts on the draft Corporate Plan via the Council's intranet site, via their line managers and in team meetings which a staff survey indicated was their preference.

7.4   The Overview & Scrutiny Committee pre-scrutinised an early draft of the new Corporate Plan at its meeting on 29th January 2024. There was a constructive and productive debate, and the feedback has been considered as part of the development of the draft Corporate Plan.

7.5   The feedback from the engagement in respect of the high-level strategy was positive with a clear mandate that supports the Council's Vision and a move to four Well-being Objectives, which align with the four pillars of Sustainable Development.

7.6   It was also clear that residents value their public services and some expressed concern about the high level of ambition within the Plan given

resources available. Some responses indicated that they would like to see more detail, which we will make available during the life of the Plan. Other key feedback themes emerging were the Environment, Infrastructure, Community and Education. Responses also contained suggestions that will inform our work as we continue to progress the detailed work to deliver our plan and we will continue to engage with people and communities of interest.

7.7 Feedback also included general comments about the Council, how it works and communicates and engages with residents and communities.

7.8 The feedback to date has been considered in the continuing development of the Plan and because of this feedback, the content of the Corporate Plan has evolved to incorporate the salient points raised. We are continuing to consider any feedback received following the end of the formal engagement.

8   FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 The draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 will be set within the context of the budget setting process for 2024/25. Any investments set out in the Plan will be considered as part of Medium-Term Financial Planning arrangements to ensure that spending priorities are aligned, where appropriate, with the Plan.

9   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Cabinet has responsibility for the overall strategic direction of the Council and for formulating the Corporate Plan and duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

10   LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 This report proposes a new set of corporate priorities, i.e. our Well-being Objectives, which will drive the work of the Council between 2024/25 and 2029/30.

10.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act focuses on improving the Social, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Well-being of Wales. The Act makes public bodies, such as the Council, think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. The proposed new Well-being Objectives and Priorities within the draft Corporate Plan strengthens the integration with Act. This will enable the Council to further embed the requirements of the Act into its arrangements, and to demonstrate how it is meeting its statutory duties.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 Cabinet is recommended to endorse the four Well-being Objectives and to approve the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 for consideration at full Council.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

20 MARCH 2024

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR ANDREW MORGAN)

Item:

THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2030

Background Papers:

**Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030
Draft Report of Engagement Findings
Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 29 January 2024**

Officer to contact: Paul Mee

tudalen wag

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2030

Working with our Communities

Design in hand

The Council's Corporate Plan is the Well-being Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Leader's Statement

I am delighted to introduce the Council's third Corporate Plan. This plan builds on the strong foundations of our previous plans and at the same time recognises the changes we need to make to meet the unprecedented service and financial challenges ahead.

When we put in place our second Corporate Plan in 2020, [Making a Difference](#) we could not have foreseen the challenges that faced our residents, communities and businesses in the years that followed as a consequence of Storm Dennis and the Covid pandemic that closely followed. During this time, we have seen the strength and resilience of our communities and have worked alongside community and voluntary sector, business and public sector partners to keep our residents safe and supported.

Many different legacies of the 2020 floods and the Covid pandemic already affecting our residents and businesses will remain with us for years to come. Alongside the pandemic, the impact of global conflict and economic instability on our energy costs, the continuing cost of living crisis and an increased demand for our major services means we are moving into further extremely challenging times.

Despite these challenges, we have delivered most of what we set out to achieve in 2020 and at the same time invested over £450 million (2019/20 -2022/23). We have been able to

PEOPLE: open new Extra Care housing at 'Cwrt Yr Orsaf' Pontypridd, with Porth and Gelli Extra Care under way, complete the George V Athletics Track, continue with 3G pitches, play areas and parks and Community Hubs.

PLACES: continue our roads and bridges programme including the Mountain Ash Cross Valley link and A4119 dualling, repair and renew flood defences across the County Borough, improve Ynysangharad and Dare Valley Country Parks, develop the Porth Transport Hub and the Material Recycling Facility in Bryn Pica,

PROSPERITY: continue to improve school buildings and facilities through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, complete our award winning Llys Cadwyn development, including the new footbridge, in Pontypridd and new Industrial Units in Coed Ely and Robertstown.

More detail about our achievements since 2020 can be seen in [the Council's Annual Self-Assessment report](#) 2022/23.

Rhondda Cynon Taf remains a great place to live, enjoy and do business. A County Borough of strong and vibrant communities, enthusiastic and talented people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds and rich and varied landscapes with huge potential to take advantage of growing green and sustainable economy.

The Council's Plan focuses on our four Well-being Objectives

1. **PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES**

2. **WORK AND BUSINESS**
3. **NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**
4. **CULTURE, HERITAGE and WELSH LANGUAGE**

We are building on the partnerships we have developed, strengthening relationships where we can support our people, communities and the many different community-based groups. Together we can create solutions that will help to deliver better outcomes and can share the responsibility for supporting people in our communities who need help. By doing so, we can focus our support on those in the greatest need of care and support to help build their resilience so that they are able to make better choices for themselves and help our young people to achieve their potential.

One of our biggest challenges is preparing for and tackling the impact of Climate Change. The steps to meet this challenge are complex and interconnected but we are committed to reducing carbon across the Council and County Borough, continuing to embed energy saving and carbon reduction into everything we do. Our contributions to tackling the Welsh Government declared climate and nature emergencies is becoming business as usual in all our services. This includes what we buy or commission on behalf of the Council and in our work with Welsh Government, regional and local partners.

Climate Change is only one of the key challenges we face as we tackle the priorities that emerged from our Self-Assessment. These challenges include managing our way through the current and future financial difficulties whilst keeping experienced and skilled staff, particularly in our social care sector, as we face growing demands from a population with more complex and connected needs.

Whilst we will do everything we can to keep our own costs as low as we can, meet our statutory duties and regulatory expectations, there is no escaping the tough decisions that must be taken to ensure a sustainable future for the Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf.

It is clear that for the Council to continue to provide its essential services, valued by the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf, we will need to change the way we engage and work with our residents, communities and businesses to understand what matters to them and change the way services are provided. At the same time, residents can help by playing their part at home and in their communities.

Introduction

Welcome to the Council's third Corporate Plan. The plan sets out where will we focus our work up until 2030, and the outcomes you can expect to see, because of our work as a Council and also in our work with other partners and stakeholders.

The Plan is structured around four Well-being objectives which will help us to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Rhondda Cynon Taf

1. **PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES** - Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
2. **WORK AND BUSINESS** - Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy.
3. **NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT** - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
4. **CULTURE, HERITAGE AND WELSH LANGUAGE** Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.

No single plan can set out the vast range of services the Council delivers, procures, or commissions, either as a single organisation or in partnership with others. Our work is governed by many laws and regulations that, for example, check that we spend our money wisely and that we work with other public bodies to improve outcomes for residents. The work in this plan will be reflected in and aligned to other Council plans, strategies, and policies, those that are most relevant are included in Appendix *** for information.

In setting our Well-being Objectives, we have made sure that our plans to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Rhondda Cynon Taf today, take account of the impact they will have on people living their lives in the future. We have done this by applying 'five ways of working' in our planning, i.e.

- **Involving:** local people, a range of stakeholders and Councillors in shaping our plan. We have been listening to and hearing what our residents of all ages, communities, partners, and staff are telling us what matters to them. This will continue as we develop future actions. We also looked at information and feedback from a range of surveys, engagement events and ongoing conversations held across our services over the eighteen months so that we made best use of the information you have already told us. Our Plan provides a snapshot of the information we have used.
- **Working with others:** where we can and seeking further opportunities as we implement the Plan over the coming years. Our Plan provides some examples of where we are already working with partners and more detail will be visible in our annual plans.
- **Looking ahead:** at our challenges and opportunities. We have used the best data and information we can find and sought advice about how we consider the challenges and opportunities ahead. There is uncertainty about the long term, but we have included some of the information we have used to inform our objectives and to safeguard the future.
- **Integration:** As we developed our Plan, we considered the work of other organisations so that we complement and do not contradict or duplicate. In particular, Welsh Government

laws and plans and those of our local and regional partners. We have included some of these 'national drivers' that we need to consider.

- **Preventing:** We looked at how we can prevent problems from occurring or getting worse across each of our Well-being Objectives as we prepare for the future. A good example of this is working with partners to help to keep people well and reduce inequalities in health so that they are at less risk of disease and ill health. Much of our detailed work will be contained in the annual plans.

These 'ways of working' help us to show that we are meeting the Sustainable Development principle required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Act also asks that we show how our work contributes to the seven national Well-being goals for Wales. You can see these national goals have shaped our work and how our Well-being Objectives will meet them in Appendix ??

We also

- **looked** for and examined the best information and data available about the County Borough, residents and communities in the context of the current significant and competing local, regional, national and global priorities.
- **researched** best practice to challenge what we do as we strive to deliver quality services with and for our residents and communities.
- **reviewed** our own achievements and progress over the life of our previous Corporate Plan 2020 -24 'Making A Difference', our strategic risks and our annual Self-Assessment and considered our quarterly reports of progress. The Self-Assessment also includes consideration of evaluations of all our services and an assessment of our corporate functions.
- **considered** those areas of work that we legally must deliver and those we have committed to through partnerships, including through the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Plan 2023-28.

This plan provides the framework that will guide and shape what we do, direct how and where we spend our budgets, manage, and mitigate strategic risks and inform how we train and develop our staff and Councillors to meet current and future challenges. Challenges like

- Growing vulnerability and complexity of need across our population, many of whom may experience poor health with complex care and support needs.
- The need to attract investment, high quality jobs and support the green economy whilst addressing the skills gap.
- Tackling inequalities in health, education, work and improving life chances of all our residents, no matter their background or circumstances.
- The impact on lives and the risk to homes and businesses from extreme weather events.
- Dealing with rising energy costs, uncertain energy security and higher prices because of supply chain disruptions.

Rhondda Cynon Taf is the third largest Council area in Wales made up of communities with different needs and aspirations. The area includes a relatively high proportion of our population living within the 10% most deprived local areas in Wales. We also have more affluent areas across a diverse geographical and cultural landscape. We know from the many hundreds of conversations and survey responses we have from residents, community groups, businesses, visitors and partners, there are many hundreds of points of view, ideas, competing needs and expectations to manage. With budgets under pressure and demands on our services increasing, we recognise the need to develop and manage realistic expectations through a strengthened partnership approach.

Our plans must also recognise the shorter term nature of our financial planning. We are currently as clear as we can be about the available budgets and resources we have available in setting our priorities, our detailed actions and targets will be reviewed and revised annually in line with our Medium Term Financial Plans. We will also continue to seek any opportunities for grant funding that can help us to do more.

However, we remain ambitious, and we know we can continue to improve by doing things differently and making better use of data and information available to focus more on outcomes for our residents and communities. Doing things differently means inviting everyone that visits, lives, and works in Rhondda Cynon Taf to play a part so that everyone can benefit.

By working more closely together, empowering, and enabling communities and working with our public sector partners, we can deliver more of what matters, support better outcomes for those in most need of our help and continue to support the economic, social, cultural, and environmental well-being of the County Borough. This approach builds on our work over the last few years that has already seen:

- parks and green spaces, leisure, and fitness facilities that people can use to keep active and healthy and well.
- creative and community spaces that support individual well-being and help to reduce health, social and economic inequalities.
- facilities where people can recycle more of their waste and send what they no longer need for other people to reuse.
- early years support that helps parents get children nursery and school ready so they can benefit from the opportunities to learn through play.
- Town Centre developments where people can live, work, visit and shop locally and support local businesses and the local economy.

About the County Borough RCT graphic map type to present RCT specific data
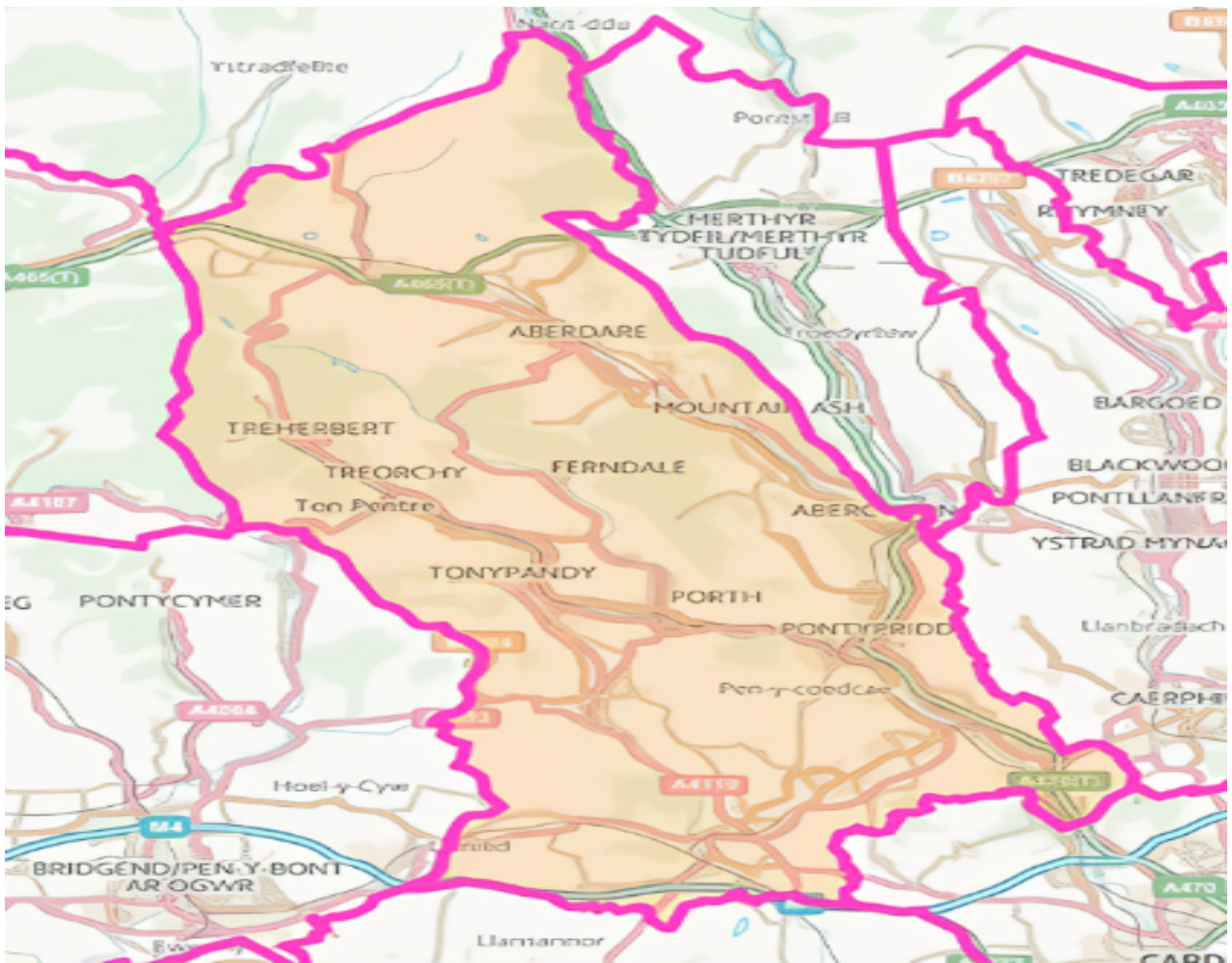
People & Communities – Potential information for inclusion

- Population: 237,497 (2021 Census), Male - 116,230 (49%)/Female - 121,267 (51%)
- Ageing Population: 46,787 (19.7%) aged 64+
- Schools: 38,497 pupils across 115 schools of which 17 are Welsh-medium
- Leisure: 12 leisure facilities including 8 swimming pools from which 335 fitness classes and activities are offered each week,
- Grounds: 25 artificial pitches, 3 synthetic running tracks, 97 grass pitches, 24 bowling greens, 3 indoor bowling halls, 11 cricket pitches and 216 playgrounds
- Community Centres: 27
- Community Recreational Centres: 3
- Extra Care Homes: 3 with 4 in development

Work & Business Potential information for inclusion

- Town Centres: 7 town centres all have free Wi-Fi
- 114 EV charging bays installed and ready to use, 10 awaiting connection and 10 connected and awaiting commissioning.
- Public Transport: awaiting info on routes and users TBC
- Reuse shops: 6

Nature & Environment   Potential information for inclusion

- Biodiversity/nature: Around 33% of RCT is tree covered with 18.5% tree cover in our urban areas.
- 4556 MWh of renewable energy generated since 2019 equalling 1,025 tonnes of CO_2 emissions saved.
- Community Recycling Centres: 6 CRCs, 2022/23 recycling rate 64.97%
- Green Flag Award for RCTCBC: 4
- Green Flag Award for RCT Community: 9
- Active Travel Routes (km): 109km of on and off road active travel routes.

Culture & Heritage Potential information for inclusion

- Welsh Language: 43,179 (18.2%) can speak, read, write or understand Welsh
- Community Hubs: 7
- Theatres: 3
- Museums: 3
- Libraries: 13
- Walking Trails: 10
- POI: 19 places of interest

The Council's Corporate Plan 2024-30

The Council's Vision is for a Rhondda Cynon Taf where:

All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future.

The Council's purpose and the reason it exists is:

To provide community leadership and deliver high quality public services, working alongside residents, communities and our partners so that people, businesses, and the environment can thrive and prosper.

Our Approach

Our new Plan builds on the strong platform put in place by our previous two Plans. To deliver what our new Plan sets out, we need our staff, Councillors, residents, communities, and partners working in the same direction to deliver our shared vision. The future challenges faced across the Council's services mean that now more than ever, we need well trained, informed, and supported staff and councillors who can respond to the challenges ahead within an ambitious programme of work. As public sector budgets remain under pressure and the demands on our services increase, the need to work with communities and across organisational boundaries to deliver the best outcomes for our residents, both now and in the future, has never been greater.

Our Values

We take pride in our work and set ourselves high standards and ambitions to deliver and have a positive impact for all in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Our role in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (CTMPSB)

As an active member of the CTMPSB, we work with our local public sector partners to deliver the two Well-being Objectives agreed by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB in the [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well- being Plan - Cwm Taf Morgannwg (ourcwmtaf.wales)](#)

1. Healthy Local Neighbourhoods**:** - A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported, and valued.
2. Sustainable and Resilient Local Neighbourhoods – A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities. To do this we must value, manage and enjoy our green and blue spaces responsibly.

Other examples of where we work in partnership with others can be found in our '[Working With Others](#)' web page.

Listening to and hearing what you say

We regularly seek the views and opinions of our residents of all ages, community groups, businesses and staff as we conduct the business of the Council. This means we have information and feedback from the many conversations and surveys we have held over the last year or so that have helped to inform and shape this Plan. For example, feedback and views about the Council's budget setting for 2023/24; the Council's Local Development Plan 2022-37, Flood Risk Strategy, the place based Aberdare Town Centre Strategy, co production proposals for day service following 'My Day, My Way', 'Your Voice' survey of young people, our 'Climate Conversation', the wide ranging engagement as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment, as well as many service specific engagement events and surveys.

What we did
We used the information you had already given us as a starting point to start to shape our Plan. We put in place a new conversation 'Let's Talk about what matters to you' to check out that we were on the right track and then we put in place wider ranging opportunities for everyone to consider the detail. Of the responses we received, the majority, over 87%, thought that our areas of focus were right/correct or almost right/correct but could be improved. What we learned from this conversation gave us some assurance that we had a made a solid start from that point in time.

Using this feedback and other information, we drafted the outline of a new Corporate Plan including a new Vision, Well-being Objectives and commitments to residents. Our outline Corporate Plan formed the basis of wide ranging engagement with our residents, representative groups, and stakeholders including staff, Councillors, Trade Unions and partners. The engagement comprised online surveys, face to face discussions in our Town Centres, focus groups and discussions as part of regular network meetings for which we provided standard, bilingual and easy read 'engagement packs' to assist. Our approach and detailed findings can be found in the accompanying report to Cabinet when final.

What you told us
Feedback from the conversations, meetings and surveys showed us how strongly you feel about public services generally and how much they are valued within communities.

The majority of responses supported our Vision and Well-being Objectives. However, we have also taken account of feedback that sought to include Welsh Language in our Well-being Objective for Culture and Heritage to further demonstrate our strong commitment to the Welsh language. This feedback has given us assurance about our draft Vision, the four Well-being Objectives and Priorities and the commitments to our residents, but we are not complacent. Responses also indicated some concern about whether the Plan was over ambitious given the financial challenges ahead and also the need to see more information as the detail of the plans emerges. A minority of responses indicated that of the four Well-being Objectives, People and Communities and Work and Business should be prioritised over Nature and Environment and Culture and Heritage. Despite our best efforts, some representative groups did not participate in the engagement, and we will continue to seek their involvement as we develop the detailed actions for the plan.

Summary feedback is considered alongside each of the Well-being Objectives. Detailed feedback and suggestions for more general improvements will be considered as we develop the detailed actions to deliver the plan over the next six years. We will also continue to engage with our residents and stakeholders as part of this work, and also seek their views on whether our work has made the difference and impact intended.

As a result of what we have learned, we have committed to focusing on the four Well-being objectives that you have told us matter most to you, and that will better prepare us all for the future:

Our Well-being Objectives:

1. **PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES** - Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
2. **WORK AND BUSINESS** - Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.
3. **NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT** - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
4. **CULTURE, HERITAGE AND WELSH LANGUAGE** - Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.

In guiding and shaping our work for the next six years the detailed action plans that will help us monitor our progress, will embed those big issues that affect every service. For example, tackling all forms of poverty, treating people fairly, mitigating and adapting to the impacts of the changing climate, and importantly, keeping our children, young people and adults at risk safe and protected from harm.

We know that many of these big issues will have the biggest impact on groups of people who are already at a disadvantage. For example, older and vulnerable people are more likely to be affected by the impacts of climate change, such as heat waves, air pollution and other extreme weather events, due to a combination of age, health issues and greater social isolation. Poverty has a significant impact on health and well-being, educational and other outcomes in the lives of children and families. People with disabilities are less likely to be in employment and those on low incomes experience more housing problems. When developing and delivering our detailed plans, we will be aware of these issues and will listen to and work with our residents and communities, particularly those who are seldom heard and/or in the greatest need.

The four Well-being Objectives deliberately cut across all services. Many of the supporting priorities they contain will benefit more than one Well-being objective as our services work together to deliver our Vision for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

We are also preparing our services to meet new laws that we are expecting to be implemented in the coming months, for example Eliminating profit from care for children looked after, Coal Tip Safety and the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) Bill.

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Now[1]

People
Total population: 237,497[2]
- Aged 0-15   43,680 (18.4%)
- Aged 16-64   147,030 (61.8%)
- Aged 64+   46,787 (19.7%)

32,170 people live alone, including 14,049 over the age of 66.

Health

Life expectancy[3]
Male 77.0 years
Male healthy life expectancy 57.1 years
Female 80.5 years
Female healthy life expectancy 60.7 years

12.0% of people in RCT said they had disabilities which limited them a lot in their daily lives.

11.2% of people in RCT provide unpaid care for family members or friends.

Housing
68.5% of people in RCT own their own home (with or without a mortgage)
13.7% rent social housing.
17.7% rent private housing.

8,461 pupils in RCT (22.0%) are eligible for free school meals (20.3% in Wales)
Data from January 2023 School Census Results, Welsh Government
- Attendance rates 2022/3
  - Primary School learners - 91%
  - eFSM learners - 86.8%
  - Secondary School learners - 85.8%
  - eFSM learners - 77%

Looking Ahead

People
4.1% increase in population to 2030 with RCT projected to remain 3rd largest LA by population in Wales.

By 2030: *compared to MYE on left*
Aged 0-15   42,861 (1.9% decrease)
Aged 16-64   151,377 (3% increase)
Aged 65+   52,884 (13.% increase)
of which Aged 85+   6573 (25.4% increase)

Health projections for Wales.[4]
33% increase in the prevalence of stroke by 2035
22% increase in people living with diabetes by 2036
70% increase in people living with dementia by 2040
25% increase in people diagnosed with cancer per year by 2040

Housing
27% increase in single person households in 2043
25% increase of 1 adult households with children and a 16% reduction in 2 adult households with children

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[1] All data refers to RCT and is taken from the 2021 Census unless stated otherwise
[2] Mid year population estimates 2022 Stats Wales
[3] Healthy life expectancy is the proportion of life in good health, data for RCT – ONS
[4] Wales Online referencing report of the chief scientific advisor NHS in 10+ years: An examination of the projected impact of Long-Term Conditions and Risk Factors in Wales

Some of our National Drivers -*This information will be available through hyperlink in final version*

- [Children and young people's plan](#) What we will do to support children and young people who are growing up, living and working in Wales.
- [Child Poverty Strategy for Wales 2024](#) Welsh Government's updated Strategy
- [Age Friendly Wales](#) – Strategy for an Ageing Society
- [Decarbonising Social Care in Wales 2022-27](#)
- [Ending homelessness:](#) A high level action plan – 2021-2026
- [Tackling Fuel Poverty](#) 2021 to 2035
- [Our National Mission: High Standards and Aspirations for All](#) 2022 – 2026 A plan to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment and supporting every learner.
- [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#) Guidance on Local Authority's developing their WESP.
- [Healthy Weight Wales Strategy](#) to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales
- A [Healthier Wales](#): Long Term Plan for Health & Social Care -2018
- [Public Health Wales' Strategic Plan](#) 2022-2025
- [Sport Wales Strategy: Enabling Sport in Wales to Thrive](#)

Our residents told us that 'What Matters to them is ………' the care and support of our young and older people, and that access to good quality education for all continues to be a priority. They also wanted to see community development with local accessible services and help to improve individual health and well-being. They wanted to see good quality homes, and improved affordability and energy efficiency in existing homes.

PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES

In People and Communities our priorities are:

1. **Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow safely,**
2. **Residents can take care of their health & well-being so they can live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives,**
3. **Safeguarding our most vulnerable residents of all ages, providing protection, care and support when they need it most so that they can maximise their potential, and**
4. **Residents will have access to affordable, good quality and energy efficient homes.**

1   Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow safely.
   a) Supporting children and families in their early years to have the best opportunities to develop, be healthy, and enjoy a range of programmes and activities in our libraries and Community Hubs.
   b) Helping children of all abilities and backgrounds to do the very best they can in school by ensuring that we have a relentless focus on securing continuous school improvement and high standards in our schools.
   c) Ensuring access to timely intervention and advice so that the needs of learners and their families are identified swiftly and early intervention provided.

d) Providing great learning environments through our new and improved early years settings and schools including a new Special school and making Welsh medium education accessible to all.

e) Supporting children and young people of all abilities and backgrounds to overcome barriers to learning, including those experiencing poverty, so that they can achieve the best educational outcomes that they are capable of.

f) Ensuring that children, young people and their families have a voice and help us to shape and further improve our services and educational experiences.

2. **Residents can take care of their health & well-being so they can live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives.**

a) Helping our residents to keep healthy, active and well; fulfilling their potential and strengthening local communities through opportunities to participate in learning, leisure, physical and creative activities that are accessible to all.

b) Considering the implications of the [National Framework for Social Prescribing.](#)

c) Implementing the five year Health Determinate Research Collaboration in order to tackle health inequalities in RCT and address wider health determinants that directly affect the life chances of our residents.

d) Enabling people to be engaged in resilient communities, strengthening connections between community groups, providing opportunities to lead and influence community developments and be involved in volunteering.

e) Working with residents and partners to keep our communities safe and free from crime.

f) Developing connections so that communities and the third and business sectors can work together to source sustainable and healthy food and develop horticulture and other technical skills that support the growth of sustainable food.

g) Developing community focused schools, that provide a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.

3 **Safeguarding our most vulnerable residents of all ages, providing protection, care and support when they need it most so that they can maximise their potential.**

a) Enabling people to live independently in their community and close to home by providing the right support and care at the right time.

b) Providing modern accommodation that meets the needs of people who can no longer live at home.

c) Protecting children, young people and adults at risk from harm, neglect and exploitation.

d) Supporting people affected by/experiencing domestic violence and addiction.

e) Giving vulnerable children and young people the best possible opportunities in life and ensuring access to safe and supportive environments suitable to their needs, to improve their well-being.

4   Residents will have access to affordable, good quality and energy efficient homes

   a) Working with partners to enable the supply of affordable and sustainable homes across our communities, including supporting those people who are homeless and bringing empty properties back into use.

   b) Enabling more people to live in warm and energy efficient homes to improve their health and wellbeing and enable them to live more sustainably.

Some of the outcomes we expect to see by 2030

- Attendance, exclusions and attainment in all our schools will continue to show strong progress, compare favourably with other parts of Wales, with improved educational outcomes, work and training opportunities for our school leavers.
- Families will have greater resilience: fewer children will be 'looked after' in our care and will have improved life chances.
- More of our residents will use the opportunities available across the County Borough to keep active, healthy and well and reduce their risk of disease and ill health.
- Children in our care will be looked after closer to their home and stay connected to families, friends and communities.
- Better joined up services across health and social care so that people get the right care in the right place at the right time.
- Fewer people affected by/experiencing domestic violence and addiction.
- More affordable homes and fewer empty homes.
- Fewer homes in RCT will have energy ratings below Energy Performance Certificate D.

Working in partnership
with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and other partners to improve the health and well-being of our residents, including joining up the health and social care they receive. By strengthening joint working we want to see fewer people going into hospital and those that do need care, receive it promptly within their communities and spend less time in hospital.
with South Wales Police, Probation and other partners to reduce crime and disorder in our area so that our communities are free from crime and free from the fear of crime.

WORK AND BUSINESS

Now	Looking Ahead
People and Skills 26.7% have a degree or equivalent Level 4 qualification. 72.4% of Key Stage 4 learners achieved A*-C grades in their GCSE in 2023 24.2% of people have no qualifications. 25.8% of people in work are employed in the public sector. 29.6% of RCT residents work in routine or semi-routine jobs. 23.8% of people aged 16 to 64 in RCT are economically inactive (not in or looking for work) 9% of adults are digitally excluded. 23.8% of children are in relative low income families (22.1% in Wales) and 15.3% in absolute low income families (14.8% in Wales) **Businesses** - Currently 7,020 active businesses and 169 Social Enterprises operating in RCT[5] - In 2021, 1,280 businesses started up in RCT and 845 ceased to trade. **Transport** 43,100 people travel outside RCT to work. 21.8% of people work mainly from home, 66.7% commute by driving. 1.31 billion vehicle miles were travelled on roads in Rhondda, Cynon, Taf in 2022[6] Prioritisation of road and train travel over buses has widened inequalities in access to essential services, employment and social interactions.[7] 22.2% of households do not have a car or van. This rises to over 30% in some areas of RCT (Treherbert, Ferndale and Maerdy) 19% of Welsh speakers always speak Welsh with colleagues. 11% of Welsh speakers speak Welsh with colleagues usually, but not always. 21% of Welsh speakers speak Welsh with colleagues sometimes.	After 2028, the number of economically active people is forecast to decrease, while the overall population will continue to increase in size. Increase in automation may make a growing share of low skilled workers unemployable, as whatever work they are (or could become) qualified to do could be done cheaper, faster or more reliably by robots or computers. Between 100 and 500 billion devices will be connected to the internet by 2030, between 12 and 60 times as many as the number of people in the world. Development of the service economy and moving away from personal ownership to accessing service e.g. car clubs and media streaming Increasing importance of biotechnology to tackle challenges including pollution, climate change and food security. **Transport** Road traffic in England and Wales could grow by up to 54% between 2025 and 2060(+4%) [8].

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[5] Business births, deaths and active enterprises, Stats Wales and Social Enterprises in RCT, Cwmpas

[6] Department of Transport - Road Traffic Statistics for RCT

[7] The Marmot Review – 10 Years on

[8] Department of Transport - National Road Traffic Projections 2022

Some of our National Drivers - *This information will be available through hyperlink in final version*

- WG Employability Plan
- Stronger Fairer Greener Wales: a plan for Employability & Skills
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
- Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021
- Wales Infrastructure Investment Strategy
- A shared strategic vision for the retail sector
- Wales Procurement Policy Statement 2022-2028
- Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023
- Digital Strategy for Wales – Delivery Plan 2021

Our residents told us that 'What Matters to them is ………'. accessible opportunities for secure work, training and support for people to be self-employed. They want to see joined up methods of public transport. They also wanted to see improvements across all our Town Centres so that they are more attractive and encourage more people to visit. Things like making use of empty properties and supporting small local businesses to thrive.

WORK and BUSINESS
In Work and Business our priorities are:

1. **Supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work.**
2. **Supporting businesses to prosper and be sustainable.**
3. **Thriving town centres, and**
4. **A well-connected County Borough.**

1   Supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work
  a) Supporting people of all ages to gain the skills they need for jobs in our local communities and working with local businesses and training providers to identify appropriate opportunities for them.
  b) Supporting people experiencing 'in work' poverty to find more rewarding and secure work.
  c) Providing individual support and solutions for people experiencing barriers to work to gain or make progress into jobs or volunteering.
  d) Leading by example by providing experience, work and training opportunities within the Council particularly for young people and those experiencing barriers to work.
  e) Working with our suppliers to increase the Social Value and Community benefits from all our contracts, for example through jobs, work experience and training.
  f) Working as part of Cardiff Capital Region to identify and support jobs and skills development in regionally defined priority areas e.g. new and emerging technologies.

2   Supporting businesses to prosper and be sustainable.
  a) Enabling businesses to find the right advice and support to help them modernise, be sustainable and take advantage of new opportunities and emerging markets.
  b) Increasing our local 'spend' and supporting social enterprises.

c) Building on our natural landscape and heritage to promote new tourism opportunities in the County Borough and support sustainable growth in the sector.

d) Supporting the development of the circular economy across the County Borough, so that residents are able to share, reuse, repair and recycle existing materials and products for as long as possible.

e) Working with Higher and Further Education, business and the third sector to share knowledge and support business innovation and sustainability.

3   Thriving town centres

a) Delivering regeneration projects to enable vibrant town centres and good quality public spaces where businesses thrive and people want to visit.

b) Taking opportunities to develop high quality public spaces and enhance existing town centre areas as part of our town centre strategies, which includes tree planting and other sustainable green spaces that support improved health, well-being and increased biodiversity.

c) Widening our Town Centre 'offer', including local events and celebrating culture and heritage.

d) Putting in place amenities that our residents can use to enhance their visits to Town Centres.

4   A well-connected County Borough

a) Supporting the development of low carbon travel and public transport, including publicly accessible infrastructure such as Electric Vehicle charging.

b) Seeking and maximising available funding to support local/community transport routes where conditions allow.

c) Encouraging and enabling active travel so more journeys are made by walking, cycling and public transport, supporting healthy lifestyles and improving air quality.

d) Maintaining and improving our highways infrastructure so that it is fit for the future, keeping people and communities connected, able to socialise and learn and businesses moving.

e) Improving e digital connectivity across the County Borough, embracing changing work patterns and lifestyles.

Some of the outcomes we expect to see by 2030

- Town centres with thriving businesses that help support the economy.
- Public transport infrastructure and systems are more joined up and encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport to get about.
- More accessible publicly available EV charging points at Council locations that support low carbon travel.
- More businesses supported to develop, modernise and grow.
- More people in RCT will have the skills they need to find and progress in work.
- More people will visit RCT from outside the County Borough and enjoy the cultural, nature, activity and adventure tourism RCT has to offer.

Working in partnership with the Councils in the [Cardiff Capital Region](#) City Deal and its Joint Committee and businesses to promote economic well-being across the Capital Region, and working more locally with businesses through the Business Improvement Districts to encourage Town Centre businesses to be more sustainable and promote the use of the circular economy.

NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Now.	Looking Ahead
64.97% of waste recycled in 2022/23.	Wales projections:
16 Air Quality Monitoring Areas (AQMAs)	• average summer temperatures increasing by 1.34°C by 2050 and 3.03°C by 2080.
Air pollutant concentrations are currently higher in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage[8]	• precipitation levels projected to increase overall by 5% by 2050 and 9% 2080.
38.5% of people live in a flood risk areas.	• Rainfall will increase overall, but with less rainfall in the summer and more in the winter. Summer rainfall will decrease by 16% by 2050 and 23% by 2080.
There are 131 allotments and community growing spaces in RCT.	
Carbon emissions 3.8 tCO2e per resident,	
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	The Rhondda Valleys have the highest level of social flood risk in Wales.
• **14** Sites	
• **2** Special Areas of Conservation	
• **8** Other Areas shared with other LAs.	Climate change may have a serious impact on our ability to grow enough food.
During the five 'heat-periods' between June and August 2022, 3,535 deaths were registered in Wales. 258 excess deaths (7.3%) above the five-year average.	
Children and young people, older adults and those with respiratory conditions are more susceptible to poor air quality[9]	

Some of our National Drivers - *This information will be available through hyperlink in final version*

- Biodiversity Duty obligations under s.6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016: waste
- The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales
- Beyond Recycling A strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality.
- The Clean Air Plan for Wales Healthy Air, Healthy Wales
- Prosperity For All: A Low Carbon Wales
- Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021-25)
- The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024 new, enacted 14 Feb 2024

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[9] PHW – Climate Change in Wales: Health Impact Assessment
[9] ONS – Excess mortality during heat-periods

> **Our residents confirmed that 'What Matters to them is ……'** improvements in the cleanliness of streets across the County Borough, including taking stronger steps to tackle environmental crimes like littering, irresponsible dog owners and fly tipping. They wanted to see public bins emptied more regularly to encourage good citizenship. Respondents also wanted to see improved green spaces, clean rivers, increased biodiversity, low carbon transport and fewer trees cut down

NATURE and the ENVIRONMENT

For Nature and the Environment our priorities are:

1. **Protecting and enhancing the natural environment**
2. **Clean, Safe and Sustainable RCT**
3. **Using Natures Assets to benefit people and communities.**

1   Protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
 a) Protecting and enhancing biodiversity: working with nature to tackle both the Climate and Nature emergencies,
 b) Protecting existing trees, supporting woodland expansion though natural regeneration and urban tree planting
 c) Rewetting and restoring peat bogs: reducing carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity and carbon sequestration.
 d) Improving air quality including through implementing local and national Welsh Government traffic management requirements, encouraging shift to low carbon travel options and implementing the requirements of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024.
 e) Managing public sector land to generate and support sustainable projects including green energy/carbon storage projects, managing flood risk and increasing food biodiversity and community growing.

2   Clean, Safe and Sustainable RCT
 a) Keeping the County Borough clean and healthy and our streets free from litter, dog fouling and continuing to strengthen our response to environmental crime.
 b) Working with partners to maximise opportunities to make repairs, recycle and reduce and reuse waste.
 c) Providing creative opportunities for people to contribute to clean and sustainable communities.
 d) Signposting to more and better information on how residents can use less and waste less.
 e) Making sure that the methods of disposal for materials recovered from our waste are environmentally and ethically sustainable.
 f) Continuing to work with Welsh Government and partners to manage coal tip safety.
 g) Managing the impact of severe weather on our local environments.

3   Using Natures Assets to benefit people and communities

   a) Maximising our use of sustainable solutions and green infrastructure to support flood mitigation, reduce pollution and manage surface water.

   b) Continuing to invest in solar energy across our schools and Council buildings and also developing energy generation through solar, wind, hydro-electric and geothermal/mine water, to heat and cool homes and businesses.

   c) Working with partners and the Cardiff Capital Region to create and deliver a Local Area Energy Plan to inform decision making on the supply and use of different energy sources.

   d) Providing opportunities for residents and communities to 'grow your own' through allotments and community gardens.

   e) Providing a range of quality green spaces for people and communities to enjoy.

Some of the outcomes we expect to see by 2030.

- Improved air quality across the County Borough.
- People and communities able to keep active and well in our green spaces.
- Wildlife will thrive on positively managed council land.
- Communities supported to do more to reduce, reuse and recycle and live sustainably.
- People enjoying clean streets, free from environmental crime.
- Increased green energy produced from 'renewables'.

Working as part of

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board to put in place a Cwm Taf Morgannwg Climate Risk Assessment so that we can better assess local risks likely to arise as a result of a changing climate.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Nature Partnership to plan and deliver action for nature across the County Borough.

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND WELSH LANGUAGE

Now	Looking Ahead

43,179 people can either speak, read, write or understand Welsh, while 187,137 have no Welsh language skills.
 	
The majority of people in RCT (133,483) did not identify as having any religion. 86,474 consider themselves Christian, with 2,866 belonging to other religions including Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh.
 	
58% of RCT residents attend or participate in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year[10]
 	
81 Council funded memorial plaques: located across the County Borough (at Mar-24)
 	
Approximately 35,000 objects forming Rhondda Cynon Taf 'collections' i.e.:
  - 12,500+ in the Rhondda Heritage Park Museum collection.
  - 21,500+ in the Cynon Valley Museum collection and
  - A small collection of fewer than 100 objects in the National Lido Wales/Lido Ponty.
 	
3.9% of RCT Residents are Armed Forces Veterans[11] -7,506 people (2021 data)
1,595 Referrals were received by the Veterans Advice Service (to Sept-23)
 	
Community Benefits
-   284 Social Value outcomes from 46 active Council contracts (at Dec-23)
Library usage
-   724,066 Physical and virtual visits to Council libraries during 2022/23
Arts Events as at Dec 2023
-   37,550 individuals attended Arts events (RCT Theatres and Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre
	The rate of Growth of Welsh speakers is highest in South and South East Wales local authorities
	
	Ageing population may result in new roles for heritage, particularly around healthcare, memory and inclusion, and more opportunities for volunteering.
	
	Globally, increasing loneliness and disconnection are reducing civic engagement, weaking social cohesion and making people more vulnerable to polarisation

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[10] National Survey for Wales – Arts, Museums, Libraries and Historic Places (2022-23)
[11] Nomis Data – TS071 – Previously served in UK and Armed Forces (2021)

| - 6,868 individuals participated in arts activities
- 22 RCT based artists and artistic organisations were supported | |

Some of our National Drivers - *This information will be available through hyperlink in final version*

- [Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011](#)
- [Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers](#)
- [The Historic Environment Wales Act 2016](#)
- Welsh Parliament LG and Housing Cttee [Local Authority Leisure and Library Services Report 2023](#)
- [Connected and Ambitious Libraries 2017-2020 – update imminent.](#)
- [Theatre Green Book -arrangements for theatres to work more sustainably.](#)

Our residents confirmed that 'What Matters to them is…….' a recognition that culture and heritage cuts across everything we do, supports all aspects of well-being and brings people and communities together. It matters that we remember and protect the traditions of the past but also create exciting new opportunities for people to enjoy today and in the future. Feedback suggested that Welsh Language could be included to the original Well-being Objective of Culture and Heritage.

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND WELSH LANGUAGE

In Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language our priorities are:

1. **An RCT where culture and heritage is vibrant and difference is celebrated in strong communities that enhance well-being.**
2. **Celebrating and preserving the historical, cultural, industrial and sporting heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf.**

We recognise and celebrate RCT's past, enjoy the present and embrace a future where:

1. **Culture and heritage is vibrant and difference is celebrated in strong communities that enhance well-being, by**
   a) Building on the legacy of the Eisteddfod to benefit our communities and businesses.
   b) Continuing to grow the use of the Welsh language so that it thrives in our homes, communities and work.
   c) Recognising and improving our awareness of diversity in our communities so that we strengthen community cohesion and better meet needs of our residents of all backgrounds.
   d) Engaging with communities to jointly develop activity within our theatres, museums and other creative spaces through an accessible and inclusive approach that embraces all cultures.

e) Developing stronger cross sector partnerships that value the positive impacts of culture and heritage including on health and well-being, skills, work and community life.

f) Developing Intergenerational Projects to promote learning and shared skills, encouraging intergenerational friendships and helping to reduce loneliness.

g) Working with a range of public, private and third sector partners to consider the cultural offer across our Town Centres, developing and promoting a range of inclusive Arts and Cultural Events that will serve local and wider communities across South East Wales.

h) Strengthening RCT's Community Armed Forces Covenant.

2   Celebrating and preserving the historical, cultural, industrial and sporting heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf by

a) Protecting and promote the history of RCT for future generations through education, conservation and commemoration by:
- o Identifying, recording and sharing the history of RCT
- o Recognising, preserving, protecting and embracing RCTs industrial heritage including through digitisation, management of artifacts and protecting monuments.

b) Connecting communities through heritage and local history.

c) Shining a light on past and present inspirational people from Rhondda Cynon Taf to encourage aspiration and ambition in our children and young people.

Some of the outcomes we expect to see by 2030

- More people are confident to use Welsh in their everyday lives and more learners access Welsh medium education.
- People feel that they 'belong' in their communities, get along well and treat each other with respect.
- More opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds to 'connect' through arts, libraries and community activities and events.
- Opportunities for residents to promote and express their culture, heritage and share commitment to sustainable lives through a thriving arts community.
- More people identify with the history that shaped the Rhondda Cynon Taf of today and have a connection with the past.
- An Armed Forces community is supported by the wider community.

Working in Partnership with

Arts Council for Wales to connect with communities, make arts available to people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy and take part.

Cardiff Capital City Region, Creative Cardiff and University of South Wales to increase creative sector skills within RCT.

Awen Cultural Trust to deliver the redevelopment of 'Y Muni', Muni Arts Centre in Pontypridd and support local and national creative industries.

A well-run Council…

Our four Well-being objectives and our priorities can only be delivered by a well-run Council. By this we mean a Council that has a positive organisational culture, that values its staff, manages its resources sustainably and wisely and looks to continually improve what we do to have the biggest impact for residents.

Our commitments to you
- We will deliver our improvement priorities and strive to meet all our targets and you will be able to hold us to account through good governance and local democracy.
- We will lead by example, show strong community leadership and be open about the challenges we face and the tough decisions we have to make.
- We will put residents and customers at the centre of all that we do and the decisions we make through more meaningful involvement and engagement.
- We will work with partners in all sectors so that we join up our services, make life easier for our residents and communities and deliver better outcomes for them.
- We will work together with residents and communities on solutions that better meet their needs and share responsibility deliver better outcomes together.
- We will manage our workforce, budgets, land, buildings, fleet and information to maximise our efficiency and make the biggest difference to our communities, nature and the environment.
- We will reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint and be a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.
- We will be honest with our residents and regulators about where we are doing well and where we need to do better.
- We will put in place plans to care and support communities in emergency situations when they happen.
- We will take action against those who do not act in ways that support our residents to enjoy a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough.
- We will treat all people with respect regardless of their background.
- We will treat Welsh and English languages equally and deliver services to users in their language of choice.
- We will work with local communities and community groups to make our services as accessible as possible.

Our commitment to staff
We will provide equality of opportunity for all, so that staff feel valued and can reach their full potential. The Council's commitment to its staff and our communities is set out in full in our Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Plan.

Our commitment to partners
We will be committed and active partners in our work with others, seeking and challenging where we can add more and better outcomes for our residents, communities and businesses by working together. You can see more about our work with others.

How we will deliver and monitor progress of our Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan gives life to our Vision and Purpose, by setting out our four Well-being Objectives with more detailed priorities about how will deliver them, setting a clear direction for the Council's work up to 2030. The plan sets a direction and focus on the high-level ambitions and priorities for the Council which all staff and managers can see, understand and work towards. Our progress in delivering our high-level Well-being Objectives will be set out in our Annual Plans. Our progress in delivering these annual plans will be through our actions and a range of different measures, depending on the complexity of the item. For example, through clear longer term numerical targets/outcomes to be achieved or through a 'direction of travel' for which progress can be monitored and evidenced by robust data items. All our measures will be subject annual 'in-year' review to establish relevant short-term targets subject to progress.

Delivery of the priorities will be led by a senior officer. However, they involve and depend on all our services working together and not in traditional 'silos' to deliver creative and sustainable solutions. Some of the work we do is grant funded and so is required to meet grant conditions outside our control or influence.

The detailed plans to deliver our Well-being Objectives will be monitored and scrutinised by Councillors Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees as part of the Performance and Resources Reports. Those aspects of our work which are dependent upon grant funding will also subject to rigorous monitoring by the funding body e.g. Welsh Government.

The Council's priorities are cascaded into services' Delivery plans; they shape and inform Council policy, strategy and spend, help manage risks as well as inform discussions about development opportunities for staff. These performance arrangements are set out in the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Our Performance Management Framework will not, in itself, manage or improve performance. However, the steps it sets out help to create, develop and maintain a strong performance culture and puts the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf at the heart of our business. It also allows us to answer three simple questions:
- How are services performing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do to improve them?

This strong Performance culture is supported by:
1. Reinforcing accountability through Challenge and Support by Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team.
2. Strong and effective Scrutiny.
3. Being honest and self-aware.
4. Focusing on delivery and improvement.
5. Managing, as well as measuring performance.
6. Setting aspirational targets.

7. Making best and sustainable use of resources.
8. Empowering and supporting staff to do the right thing.
9. Involving our residents in decision that affect them.

Outcomes, Measures and Targets – awaiting confirmation of further targets

Information/data will inform the new Corporate Reporting Dashboard from 2024

People and Communities	• Increased % attendance in primary/secondary schools and PRU/EOTAS provision. • Reduced no. of fixed term and permanent exclusions in primary/secondary phase. • More school leavers are in Education, Training or Employment. • Improved Educational outcomes for Care experienced children and young people. • Increase in the number of affordable homes. • Decrease in the number of empty properties.
Work and Business	• More people helped into work • Fewer vacant premises in our town centres • More people visiting our town centres (increased footfall) • Increased kms of active travel routes within the County Borough • Increased availability of publicly accessible EV charging points
Nature and the Environment	30% of RCT to be in positive management for wildlife *(this is UN 2022 Framework for Biodiversity 30 by 30 target that WG is promoting) Biodiversity deep dive: recommendations|GOV.WALES* • Increase the amount of waste recycled and decrease the amount sent to landfill • Increased local renewable energy generated from Council land or buildings
Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language	Contributing to Welsh Government's national target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050, as set out in Cymraeg 2050. Increasing the number of Welsh speakers in RCT from 12.4% *(2021 census)*
Effective and Efficient Council	By 2030 we will • be a Carbon Neutral Council • contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition for a Net Zero Public Sector.

There will be a hyperlink to this section in final version of the Plan

Aligning Strategic Support and Regional Strategies In progress list of Corporate and Service specific policies/strategies assigned to four Well-being Objectives

Well-being Objective	Council strategies
PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES- Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives,	Corporate Safeguarding Policy 2024 Digital Strategy for schools 2020-25 Education Strategic Plan 2022-25 RCT Children's Services Workforce Strategy 2021-24 RCT Empty Homes Strategy 2022-25 RCT Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26 RCT Local Housing Market Assessment 2022 - 2037 RCT Looked After Children Prevention Strategy 2022-25 RCT Looked After Children: Residential Transformation Strategy 2022-27 RCT Private Rented Sector Strategy 2023 - 2026 RCT Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022-27 Warmer Homes: A Fuel Poverty Strategy 2019 - 2023 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-2027 RCT Housing Strategy 2024-29 – in progress Community Safety Strategy pending
WORK AND BUSINESS - Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy.	Active Travel Report 2021-22 Commissioning, Socially Responsible Procurement & Contract Management Strategy 2021-24 Local Development Plan 2006-2021 and the Revised Local Development Plan 2022-2037 Preferred Strategy Consultation webpage on RLDP 2022-2037 Preferred Strategy Regeneration Strategies: • Aberdare Town Centre Strategy 2023-24 (Draft) • Porth Town Centre Strategy 2018-19 • Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan 2022 (Draft) • Town Centre Strategies 2023
NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.	Air Quality Progress Report 2023 Biodiversity Duty Report 2019-22 Climate Change Engagement Plan 2023-25 Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-30 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan 2024 (Draft) Tree & Woodland Strategy 2022-32 Waste Management Strategy 2023
CULTURE, HERITAGE and WELSH LANGUAGE Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.	Library Service Strategy 2022-25 Tourism Strategy 2021 Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2022-27 and action plan Heritage Strategy in development

Well-being Objective	Council strategies
Well run Council	Annual Risk Based Internal Audit Plan 2023-24
	Climate Change Strategy 2022-25 – 'Think Climate RCT' – *will be subsumed by new Corporate Plan*
	Council's Decarbonisation Strategy 2023-25
	Commissioning, Socially Responsible Procurement & Contract Management Strategy 2021-24
	Corporate Asset Management Plan 2018-23
	Digital Strategy 2022-26
	Human Resources Strategy 2023-28
	Workforce Plan 2023-28
	Involvement and Engagement Framework 2020-24
	Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27
	Public Participation Strategy 2023
	Risk Management Strategy 2023
	Strategic Equality Plan 2019-2022 – MW
	Council's Operating Model and Working Arrangements Policy
	Others?
	Regional Plans • Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Plan 2023-2028 • Cwm Taf Morgannwg Area Plan 2023-28 • Others
	CCRCD Cardiff Capital Region – The City Deal • South Wales Metro - Transport for Wales

Examples of how the draft Corporate Plan priorities could contribute to the seven national Well-being Goals.

A PROSPEROUS WALES - An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives	WORK and BUSINESS Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy	NATURE and the ENVIRONMENT A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature	CULTURE, HERITAGE and WELSH LANGUAGE Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future
• Providing great learning environments through our new and improved early years settings and schools including a new Special school and making Welsh medium education accessible to all. • Working with partners to enable the supply of affordable and sustainable homes across our communities, including supporting those people who are homeless and bringing empty properties back into use.	• Supporting people of all ages to gain the skills they need for jobs in our local communities and working with local businesses and training providers to identify appropriate opportunities for them. • Working as part of Cardiff Capital Region to identify and support jobs and skills development in regionally defined priority areas e.g. new and emerging technologies • Delivering regeneration projects to enable vibrant town centres and good quality public spaces where businesses thrive and people want to visit.	• Working with partners and the Cardiff Capital Region to create and deliver a Local Area Energy Plan to inform decision making on the supply and use of different energy sources.	• Building on the legacy of the Eisteddfod to benefit our communities and businesses. • Shining a light on past and present inspirational people from Rhondda Cynon Taf to encourage aspiration and ambition in our children and young people.

Tudalen 228

A RESILIENT WALES - A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).

PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives	WORK and BUSINESS Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy	NATURE and the ENVIRONMENT A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature	CULTURE, HERITAGE and WELSH LANGUAGE Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future
• Developing connections so that communities and the third and business sectors can work together to source sustainable and healthy food and develop horticulture and other technical skills that support the growth of sustainable food.	• Working with Higher and Further Education, business and the third sector to share knowledge and support business innovation and sustainability. • Supporting the development of low carbon travel and public transport, including publicly accessible infrastructure such as Electric Vehicle charging.	• Protecting existing trees, supporting woodland expansion though natural regeneration and urban tree planting • Rewetting and restoring peat bogs: reducing carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity and carbon sequestration. • Managing public sector land to generate and support sustainable projects including green energy/carbon storage projects, managing flood risk and increasing food biodiversity and community growing. • Continuing to work with Welsh Government and partners to manage coal tip safety.	• Developing Intergenerational Projects to promote learning and shared skills

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A HEALTHIER WALES - A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood			
PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives	**WORK and BUSINESS** Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy	**NATURE and the ENVIRONMENT** A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature	**CULTURE, HERITAGE and WELSH LANGUAGE** Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future
• Helping our residents to keep healthy, active and well; fulfilling their potential and strengthening local communities through opportunities to participate in learning, leisure, physical and creative activities that are accessible to all. • Enabling people to live independently in their community and close to home by providing the right support and care at the right time. • Providing modern accommodation that meets the needs of people who can no longer live at home. • Protecting children, young people and adults at risk from harm, neglect and exploitation. • Supporting people affected by/experiencing domestic violence and addiction.	• Taking opportunities to develop high quality public spaces and enhance existing town centre areas as part of our town centre strategies, which includes tree planting and other sustainable green spaces that support improved health, well-being and increased biodiversity • Putting in place amenities that our residents can use to enhance their visits to Town Centres. • Encouraging and enabling active travel so more journeys are made by walking, cycling and public transport, supporting healthy lifestyles and improving air quality.	• Improving air quality including through implementing local and national Welsh Government traffic management requirements, encouraging shift to low carbon travel options and implementing the requirements of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024. • Providing a range of quality green spaces for people and communities to enjoy.	• Developing stronger cross sector partnerships that value the positive impacts of culture and heritage including on health and well-being, skills, work and community life.

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A MORE EQUAL WALES - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).			
PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives	**WORK and BUSINESS** Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy	**NATURE and the ENVIRONMENT** A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature	**CULTURE, HERITAGE and WELSH LANGUAGE** Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future
• Helping children of all abilities and backgrounds to do the very best they can in school by ensuring that we have a relentless focus on securing continuous school improvement and high standards in our schools. • Supporting children and young people of all abilities and backgrounds to overcome barriers to learning, including those experiencing poverty, so that they can achieve the best educational outcomes that they are capable of. • Implementing the five year Health Determinate Research Collaboration in order to tackle health inequalities in RCT and address wider health determinants that directly affect the life chances of our residents. • Giving vulnerable children and young people the best possible opportunities in life and ensuring access to safe and supportive environments suitable to their needs, to improve their well-being.	• Supporting people experiencing 'in work' poverty to find more rewarding and secure work.	• Managing the impact of severe weather on our local environments. • Providing opportunities for residents and communities to 'grow your own' through allotments and community gardens.	• Recognising and improving our awareness of diversity in our communities so that we strengthen community cohesion and better meet needs of our residents of all backgrounds. • Strengthening RCT's Community Armed Forces Covenant.

A WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES - Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities			
PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives	**WORK and BUSINESS** Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy	**NATURE and the ENVIRONMENT** A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature	**CULTURE, HERITAGE and WELSH LANGUAGE** Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future
• Supporting children and families in their early years to have the best opportunities to develop, be healthy, and enjoy a range of programmes and activities in our libraries and Community Hubs. • Considering the implications of the National Framework for Social Prescribing. • Enabling people to be engaged in resilient communities, strengthening connections between community groups, providing opportunities to lead and influence community developments and be involved in volunteering. • Working with residents and partners to keep our communities safe and free from crime. • Developing community focused schools, that provide a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.	• Working with our suppliers to increase the Social Value and Community benefits from all our contracts, for example through jobs, work experience and training. • Seeking and maximising available funding to support local/community transport routes where conditions allow.	• Keeping the County Borough clean and healthy and our streets free from litter, dog fouling and continuing to strengthen our response to environmental crime.	• Engaging with communities to jointly develop activity within our theatres, museums and other creative spaces through an accessible and inclusive approach that embraces all cultures. • Developing Intergenerational Projects, encouraging intergenerational friendships and helping to reduce loneliness. • Working with a range of public, private and third sector partners to consider the cultural offer across our Town Centres, developing and promoting a range of inclusive Arts and Cultural Events that will serve local and wider communities across South East Wales. • Connecting communities through heritage and local history.
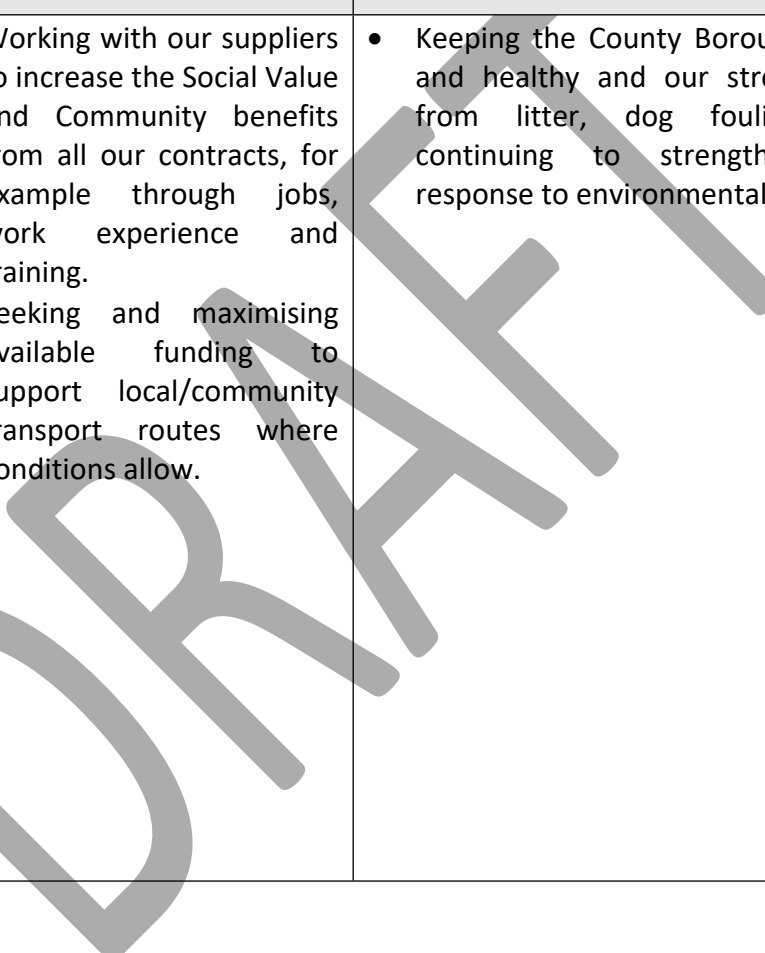
A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE & WELSH LANGUAGE - A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.			
PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives	**WORK and BUSINESS** Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy	**NATURE and the ENVIRONMENT** A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature	**CULTURE, HERITAGE** and **WELSH LANGUAGE** Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future
• Providing great learning environments through our new and improved early years settings and schools including a new Special school and making Welsh medium education accessible to all.	• Widening our Town Centre 'offer', including local events and celebrating culture and heritage.	• Providing creative opportunities for people to contribute to clean and sustainable communities.	• Continuing to grow the use of the Welsh language so that it thrives in our homes, communities and work. • Developing stronger cross sector partnerships that value the positive impacts of culture and heritage including on health and well-being, skills, work and community life.

A GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES - A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being			
PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives	**WORK and BUSINESS** Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's Economy	**NATURE and the ENVIRONMENT** A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature	**CULTURE, HERITAGE and WELSH LANGUAGE** Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future
• Enabling more people to live in warm and energy efficient homes to improve their health and wellbeing and enable them to live more sustainably.	• Supporting the development of the circular economy across the County Borough, so that residents are able to share, reuse, repair and recycle existing materials and products for as long as possible.	• Protecting and enhancing biodiversity: working with nature to tackle both the Climate and Nature emergencies, • Working with partners to maximise opportunities to make repairs, recycle and reduce and reuse waste. • Making sure that the methods of disposal for materials recovered from our waste are environmentally and ethically sustainable.	• Protecting and promote the history of RCT for future generations through education, conservation and commemoration by: - Identifying, recording and sharing the history of RCT - Recognising, preserving, protecting and embracing RCTs industrial heritage including through digitisation, management of artifacts and protecting monuments.
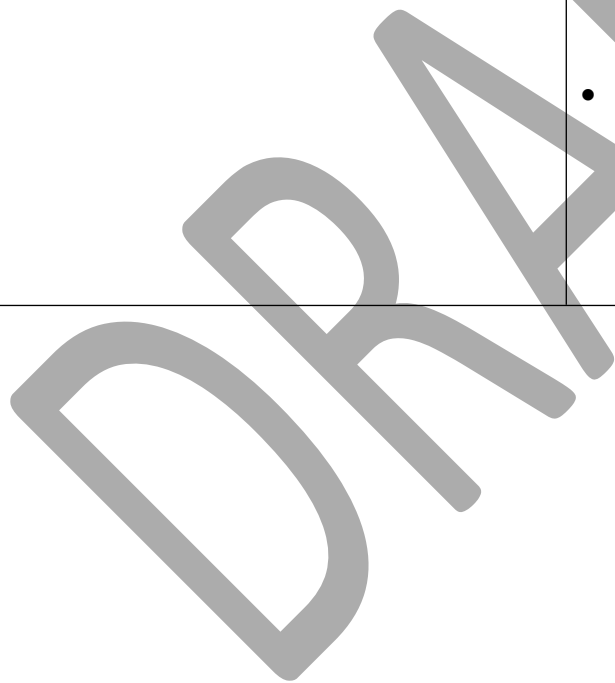
THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2024-2030 'WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES'

ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024

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EXECTUTIVE SUMMARY -

- This report details the main findings from the Phase Two engagement with a wide range of stakeholders conducted between December 8th 2023 – January 29th 2024, to inform the development of the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2030 – 'Working with our Communities'.

- A number of different engagement methodologies were used to engage with stakeholders:
  - on line and paper based survey forms,
  - face to face engagement in town centre 'drop in' events.
  - Focus Group approach with established networks.
  - Direct contact through email to stakeholders and partners.

- To support engagement and responses, a standard pack of engagement materials were made available for anyone to consider and use. This included, standard presentation, discussion guide and a standard response form to aid discussion and collection of feedback. All engagement materials, including, the standard engagement pack was available through the 'Let's Talk' platform and supported by regular social media 'comms' which linked directly to 'Let's Talk' platform.

- Both the survey and the network feedback form were the main data collection methods used to gather stakeholder opinions, views and information. Both engagement tools focused on whether participants agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments and if not, what could be added, taken away or improved to better embed what matters to our key stakeholders.

- In total, there were 546 participants in the consultation. The survey received 303 responses and a further 19 networks engaged in meetings, completing the network feedback forms via facilitated discussions which included 243 participants.

- The majority of online survey respondents were happy and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments:
  - Our Vision: 238 (78.5%) agreed
  - People and Communities: 226 (74.6%) agreed
  - Work and Business: 227 (74.9%) agreed
  - Nature and the Environment: 229 (75.6%) agreed
  - Culture and Heritage: 223 (73.6%) agreed
  - Our Commitments: 227 (74.9%) agreed

- There were 22 feedback themes identified in response to the 6 questions asked. The questions received 326 comments in total with 644 references to the feedback themes identified. The most common feedback themes identified from the survey were:
  - Environment (56)
  - Financial concerns (50)
  - Too ambitious (49)
  - More detail needed (47)
  - Infrastructure (44)
  - Community (42)
  - Education (40)

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- Through the online survey, respondents suggested improvements that could be made to the Plan. A common theme throughout the responses was that respondents want the Council to take a balanced approach towards social, economic and environmental issues with a focus on areas in RCT that need the most support such as community, infrastructure and education. Within these themes, issues such as protecting our most vulnerable and those in, or at risk of, falling into poverty were common, as well as repurposing empty buildings and protecting old buildings of heritage and prioritising education, ensuring young people are protected and given the best start in life.

- The majority of respondents within Networks were happy and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments:
  - Our Vision: 176 (72.4%) agreed
  - People and Communities: 231 (95.1%) agreed
  - Work and Business: 208 (85.6%) agreed
  - Nature and the Environment: 237 (97.5%) agreed
  - Culture and Heritage: 158 (65%) agreed
  - Our Commitments: 114 (76.5%) agreed

- There were 17 feedback themes identified in response to the 6 questions asked. The questions received a range of comments with 695 references to the themes identified. A breakdown of the networks that took part and their attendance can be found, in Appendix 3. The main themes identified from network improvement feedback were:
  - Culture (135)
  - Travel and Transport (68)
  - Community (64)
  - Environment (52)
  - Safety (49)
  - Infrastructure (46)

- Feedback from Networks that responded indicated that they were generally happy with the Plan but also made suggestions about how it could be improved. A common theme throughout was the importance of supporting communities and enriching the culture within those communities. Empowering communities, promoting the Welsh Language and improving community links were common topics of conversation which also encompassed points around safe, clean and litter free places.

- Network discussions also highlighted how many different areas are interconnected and by enhancing one area will lead to improvements in another. For example, investing in and improving connectivity and public transport around the County Borough will lead to increased employment, thriving town centres and fewer empty properties.

- There were also many responses, in the online survey and network feedback, that wanted to see more detailed plans to show how the Council will achieve its proposals given the current budget constraints and financial difficulties the Council faces. Fears of over ambition were common.

- All the findings, opinions and information obtained from key stakeholders during this consultation will be used to inform and develop the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030

ensuring that all stakeholders including residents, staff, service users, businesses, young people, third sector, partners, visitors and the wider community have a voice telling the Council what matters to them.

- *N.b. The findings from Phase 1 have not formally been reported. However, the findings were used to gather a better understanding of whether participants agreed with the Council's direction of travel with regard to what priorities could be included in the Corporate Plan 2024-30. In total, over 87% of respondents either thought that the priorities listed were right/correct or almost right/correct but could be improved. For more information please go to the '[Let's Talk About What Matters To You](#)' engagement page.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents the findings of the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 – 'Working with our Communities' consultation.

1.2 Section 2 outlines the background around previous engagement for the Council's next Corporate Plan, why the Council are developing a new Corporate Plan and what the Council propose to be included in the next Corporate Plan.

1.3 Section 3 details the methodology including engagement tools used, promotion methods, network engagement and who was involved in the consultation.

1.4 Section 4 provides the results and key findings from the online survey engagement tool.

1.5 Section 5 provides the results and key findings from all guided facilitated discussions via network groups.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The new draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030, attached at <mark>Appendix A</mark>, seeks to build on the progress of the previous Corporate Plan(s) and has revisited its Vision, Purpose and ambition as local authority for the County Borough. The Council's approach to engagement for extended over two phases. Information on the performance and delivery of the current Corporate Plan 2020-2024 can be found in the [Annual Self-Assessment 2022/23](#).

2.2 We regularly seek the views and opinions of our residents of all ages, community groups, businesses and staff as we conduct the business of the Council. This means we have information and feedback from the many conversations and surveys, as well as from the findings of [Phase 1 engagement](#), held over the last year or so that have helped to inform and shape the proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. For example, feedback and views about the [Council's budget setting for 2023/24;](#) the Council's [Local Development Plan 2022-37](#), [Flood Risk Strategy](#), the place based [Aberdare Town Centre Strategy](#), co production proposals for day service following '[My Day, My Way](#)', 'Your Voice' survey of young people, our '[Climate Conversation](#)', the wide ranging engagement as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg [Well-being Assessment](#), as well as many [service specific engagement events and surveys.](#)

2.3 A report of the early engagement findings conducted via Phase 1 of engagement can be found on the '[Let's Talk About What Matters To You](#)' engagement page. The findings of early engagement were used to better understand whether participants agreed with what the Council direction of travel with regard to what priorities could be included in the Corporate Plan 2024-30. In total, over 87% of respondents either thought that the priorities listed were right/correct or almost right/correct but could be improved. What we learned from this conversation gave us some assurance that we had made a solid start from that point in time.

2.4 Using this feedback and other information, we drafted an outline of a new Corporate Plan including a new Vision, Well-being Objectives and commitments to residents. Our outline Corporate Plan formed the basis of Phase 2 consultation and focused on engaging a wide range of key stakeholders

2.5 Phase 2 of the consultation '[Continuing to Talk About What Matters to You](#)' ran from the 8th December 2023 to 29th January 2024 following Phase 1, see para 2.3 above.

2.6 The draft outline of the Plan on which we engaged can be seen in Appendix 2.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 The consultation for the Corporate Plan 2024-30 – 'Working with our Communities' set out quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods primarily through a survey tool for individuals to complete via the [Let's Talk website](#) and through network feedback forms to facilitate group discussions between network groups.

3.2 Both the survey and the network feedback form focused on whether participants agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments and if not, what could be added, taken away or improved to better embed what matters to our key stakeholders.

3.3 The same quantitative and qualitative methods were used in both the survey and the network feedback form to ensure that all findings can be compared and accumulated whether it be sourced from an individual or group.
   - Quantitative: multiple choice close-ended questions to understand whether respondents agreed with the proposals.
   - Qualitative: text box open ended feedback questions to understand what stakeholders thought could be improved.

3.4 The survey was made available through the 'Continuing to Talk About What Matters to You' engagement page which received 303 responses.
   - 845 people were aware of the project and made at least one visit to the page.
   - 505 people were informed on the page meaning that they clicked and engaged in the content of the page (viewed documents and multiple pages).
   - 299 participants who were engaged and completed the engagement tools on the page.
   - Some surveys were completed using the same device by officers engaging residents in public.

3.5 The network feedback form yielded 19 group/network responses from a possible 30 networks invited to participate in the engagement. A total of 243 participants engaged in guided facilitated discussions as a part of the network meetings. Many networks such as 'Housing Leaders' and 'Valley Veterans Networks (3)' encouraged their members to complete the online survey as individuals, so did not submit a network response. A list of the networks that responded can be found in Appendix 3. We also emailed members of the Council's Citizens' Panel, Community and Town Councils, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (PSB), MPs/MSs, Trade Unions and all other Welsh Local Authorities to encourage them to share with their Networks and to complete the survey.

3.6 The consultation was promoted digitally and in person. Officers engaged with residents through library drop-in days at Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd, Aberdare Library and Treorchy Library. Digitally, the Council's corporate pages on Facebook and Twitter were used to increase online reach. Social posts were scheduled twice a week on both apps for the full consultation period. In total, 28 posts were shared making 40,600 impressions and 423 clicks to the consultation. The posts also received 38 likes, 45 comments and 33 shares.

3.7 Staff engagement was promoted during Phase 1 for early engagement which included a prior Cabinet/Management Planning session in July 2023. Then in Phase 2, two 'RCT Staff

Updates' emails were sent out during the consultation period. The Council also reached out to staff through the climate change forum 'Green Space' on MS Teams, through managers to contact non-email staff and through Officer/Cabinet engagement. All Councillors were also made aware via the Members Weekly Bulletin.

4. KEY FINDINGS - SURVEY

4.1 There were 303 responses to the survey. The majority of respondents were happy and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments:
- Our Vision: 238 (78.5%) agreed
- People and Communities: 226 (74.6%) agreed
- Work and Business: 227 (74.9%) agreed
- Nature and the Environment: 229 (75.6%) agreed
- Culture and Heritage: 223 (73.6%) agreed
- Our Commitments: 227 (74.9%) agreed

4.2 There were 22 feedback themes identified in response to the 6 questions asked. The questions received 326 comments in total with 644 references to the feedback themes identified. The most common feedback themes identified from the survey were:
- Environment (56)
- Financial concerns (50)
- Too ambitious (49)
- More detail needed (47)
- Infrastructure (44)
- Community (42)
- Education (40)

4.3 Examples of feedback received, and themes identified within each response have been analysed for each question.

4.4 Although the majority of respondents have agreed with the Council's proposals, all highlighted areas for improvement must be considered when developing the final Corporate Plan 2024-30. The Corporate Plan 2024-30 will include a summary of feedback for each Well-being Objective identifying what our stakeholders have told us that they would like to see included in the plan.

4.5 It must be recognised that many responses were concerned around a balanced approach towards social, economic and environmental issues with many respondents wanting the Council to focus on areas in RCT that need the most support such as community, infrastructure and education. Within these themes, issues such as protecting our most vulnerable and those in or at risk of falling into poverty were common; as well as repurposing empty buildings and protecting old buildings of heritage; and ensuring education and young people are protected and given the best start in life.

4.6 There were also many responses that wanted to see more detailed plans to show how the Council will achieve its proposals given the current budget constraints and financial difficulties the Council faces. Fears of over ambition were common.

Our Vision

4.7 Survey responses for Vision:
- 238 (78.5%) agree with the Council's proposed Vision.
- 34 (11.2%) unsure on whether they agree with the Council's proposed Vision.
- 31 (10.2%) disagree with the Council's proposed Vision.

Do you agree with the Council's proposed Vision?

Question options
■ Yes   ■ Not sure   ■ No
Mandatory Question (303 responses)
Question type: Radio Button Question
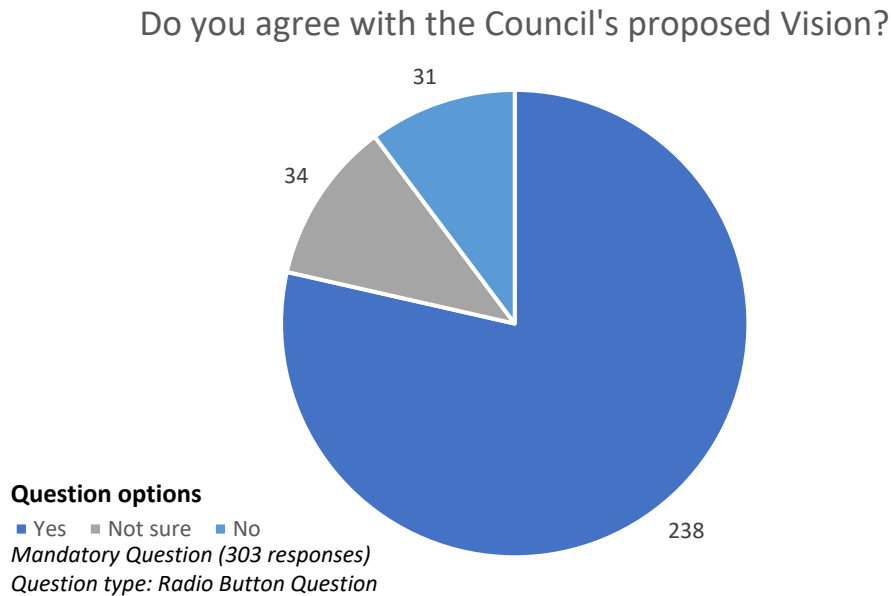
Figure 1. *Our Vision: Online Survey Responses*

4.8 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Vision received 62 responses and 101 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 2. The most popular themes for improvement included:
- Environment (13)
- Financial concerns (10)
- More detail needed (8)
- Social Care (8)
- Travel and Transport (8)
- Education (8)

4.9 Many of the feedback responses incorporated more than one of the themes identified above. Respondents want the Council's vision to take a balanced approach towards society, economy and the environment, but also prioritise areas in RCT that need the most support given the current financial concerns around the Council's budget and wider political and socioeconomic issues. Particularly, respondents want the Council's vision to support the most vulnerable and those who are in or at risk of being in poverty. They also want the Council to focus on improving connectivity and transport around the County Borough and to improve education and support for young people. Examples:

"Needs to be less of a focus on 'net zero' and more of a focus on providing basic services such as efficient refuse services, road maintenance etc".

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"How are you going to pay for this ideal world? I am uncertain of how you are going to even get close to this aim".

"Transport needs to be improved massively".
"Not charging extra for service already in place."

"Sounds good on paper but is there anything really being done for a sustainable future that individuals do not have to fund".

"Children and young people need to be in your vision".

Our Vision: Feedback Themes (101)

Theme	Value
Environment	13
Financial Concerns	10
More detail needed	8
Social Care	8
Travel and Transport	8
Education	8
Council Communication	7
Young People	6
Too ambitious	5
Infrastructure	5
Town Centres	5
Safety	4
Economy	3
Council Operations	3
Community	3
No Improvements	2
Housing	2
Health	1
Disagree with priority	0
Equality	0
Culture	0
Employment	0

■ Our Vision: Improvement Themes (101)

Figure 2. *Our Vision: Thematic Content Analysis*

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Well-being Objective: People and Communities

4.10 Survey responses for People and Communities:
- 226 (74.6%) agree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - People and Communities.
- 36 (11.9%) unsure on whether they agree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - People and Communities.
- 41 (13.5%) disagree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - People and Communities.

Do you agree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - People and Communities?

Question options
- Yes ■ Not sure ■ No

Mandatory Question (303 responses)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Figure 3. *People and Communities: Online Survey Responses*

4.11 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Well-being Objective – People and Communities received 68 responses and 127 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 4. The most popular themes for improvement included:
- Social Care (16)
- Housing (14)
- Education (14)
- Young People (12)
- Community (12)

4.12 Many of the feedback responses incorporated more than one of the themes identified above. Respondents wanted education prioritised including better support for children and adults with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). This also included better care for the elderly, young people and improved management and protection of schools. Community development and improving people's well-being were also popular themes as well as improving housing, particularly the energy efficiency and affordability of existing housing. Examples:

"Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow their

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confidence and aspirations".

"There needs to be more opportunities for people with learning disabilities and their families. There needs to be holiday provision for parents to work and children to have a routine. Also, for adults with learning difficulties there needs to be more daytime ops in groups".

"More provision for children with ALN is required. Children with ALN are losing out on education due to schools not being able to provide the required support".

"More support needed with rising costs too many us in poverty".

"As well as affordable homes, what about affordable childcare and a safe place for children to play? Play and youth services to support young people as early as possible live and learn how to be healthy, independent and fulfil their potential".

"This area needs far more than just individual supposed living it needs community service community centres and a whole lot of advertising to bring people together please stop catering for individual people where no one is treated equally and address communities".

"Energy efficient homes should prioritise improving the terraced housing that's already here rather than new builds popping everywhere that look out of character with the area".

People and Communities: Feedback Themes (127)

Theme	Value
Social Care	16
Housing	14
Education	14
Young People	12
Community	12
Health	11
Financial Concerns	7
Environment	7
More detail needed	6
Infrastructure	6
Travel and Transport	4
Disagree with priority	4
Council Operations	3
Council Communication	3
Too ambitious	2
Safety	2
No Improvements	2
Equality	1
Employment	1
Town Centres	0
Economy	0
Culture	0

■ People and Communities: Improvement Themes (127)

Figure 4. *People and Communities: Thematic Content Analysis*

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Well-being Objective: Work and Business

4.13 Survey responses for Work and Business:
- 227 (74.9%) agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Work and Business.
- 33 (10.9%) unsure on whether they agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Work and Business.
- 41 (14.2%) disagree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Work and Business.

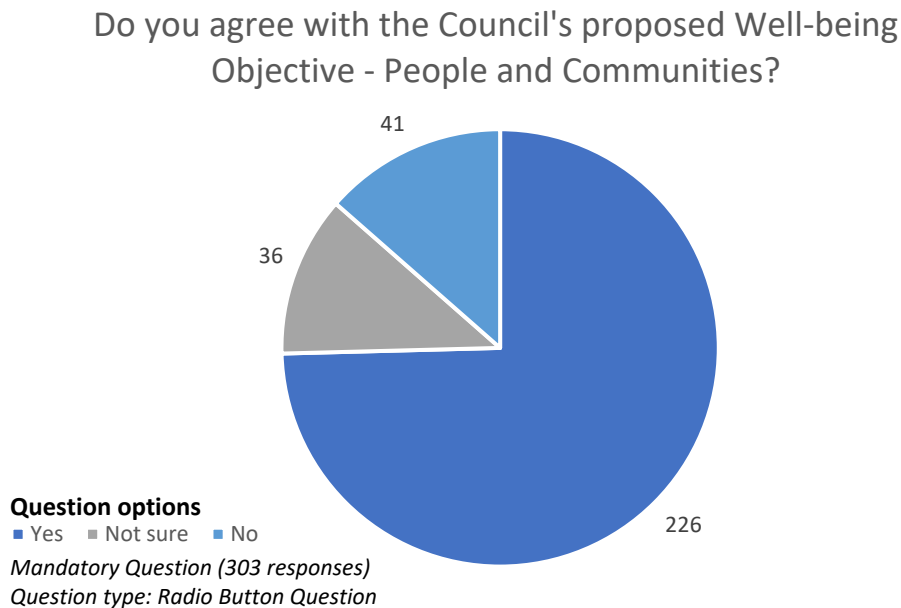Do you agree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - People and Communities?
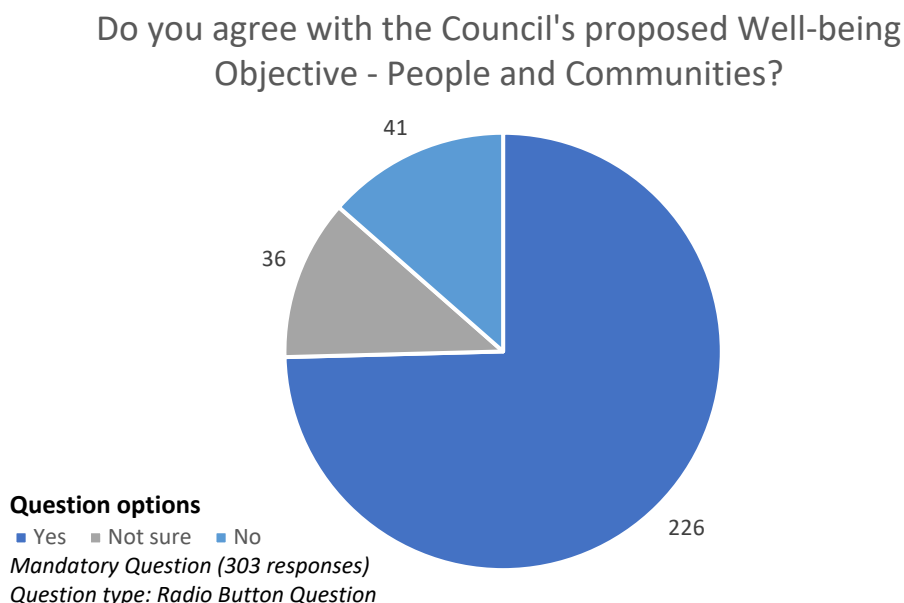
Figure 5. *People and Communities: Thematic Content Analysis*

4.14 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Well-being Objective – Work and Business received 71 responses and 125 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 6. The most popular themes for improvement included:
- Town Centres (24)
- Economy (17)
- Infrastructure (14)
- Travel and Transport (11)
- Community (11)

4.15 Many of the feedback responses incorporated more than one of the themes identified above. Respondents wanted to see improvements across all town centres including repurposing empty properties, supporting local businesses and developing infrastructure that will entice residents and visitors into visiting our town centres. Many responses were concerned about how the Council will support business, commerce and economy across the County Borough including the need for better transport and public transport links. Examples:

"The infrastructure needs to be improved to allow for "thriving town centres". To increase the volume of people coming into town there needs to be adequate and affordable public transport, parking and or traffic measures."

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"The bus services and train links need improvement. I'm currently working from home because it would take two hours of commuting to get to the office."

"I've been trying to start a new business for years but cannot find premises. Why don't you convert unused buildings etc to units for new startups?"

"It seems a little unrealistic. How will this be financially viable? Certain town centres don't even have basic facilities?"

"More needs to be done to keep our small businesses open and not just huge chains."

"I would like to see opportunities for people to gain self-employment skills, combined with opportunities to rent empty town centre shops at very low cost to encourage independent businesses and brave ideas."

"Raising shop rates and increasing charges for commercial waste disposal isn't helping small businesses stay financially viable."

"The public transport system does not support residence into better working opportunities. This then leads to greater traffic congestion due to the amount of cars on the road during peak times. Those on low income remain stuck in local poor employment."

Work and Business: Feedback Themes (125)

Theme	Count
Town Centres	24
Economy	17
Infrastructure	14
Travel and Transport	11
Community	11
Employment	8
Financial Concerns	7
Environment	5
Young People	3
Social Care	3
Education	3
Council Operations	3
Council Communication	3
Safety	2
More detail needed	2
Health	2
Disagree with priority	2
Too ambitious	1
No Improvements	1
Housing	1
Equality	1
Culture	1

■ Work and Business: Improvement Theme (125)

Figure 6. *Work and Business: Thematic Content Analysis*

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Well-being Objective: Nature and the Environment

4.16 Survey responses for Nature and the Environment:
- 229 (75.6%) agree with the proposed Well-being Ojective – Nature and the Environment.
- 38 (12.5%) unsure on whether they agree with the proposed Well-being Ojective – Nature and the Environment.
- 36 (11.9%) disagree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Nature and the Environment.

Do you agree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - Nature and the Environment?

Question options
- Yes - Not sure - No
Mandatory Question (303 responses)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Figure 7. Nature and the Environment: Online Survey Responses

4.17 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Well-being Objective – Nature and the Environment received 59 responses and 70 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 8. The most popular themes for improvement included:
- Environment (20)
- Disagree with priority (9)
- Council Communication (7)
- Travel and Transport (6)
- Too ambitious (6)
- More detail needed (6)

4.18 Respondents wanted to see more sustainable actions that improve the cleanliness and biodiversity of the County Borough including restoring and protecting green spaces and rivers, cleaning the streets of dog fouling and litter whilst ensuring bins are regularly emptied, stopping or reducing the amount of trees that are being cut down and more opportunities for sustainable living and community growing. Respondents also wanted more sustainable transport options and active travel routes.

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4.19 There were also some responses that indicated that they did not agree with the priority or that it was too ambitious and believe that the Council should prioritise other services before nature and the environment. Some of the respondents wanted more information about the priority and better communication from the Council making them unsure on whether they agreed. Examples:

"Encouraging people to use transport other than cars - walking, cycling, public transport, but they will only do so if it's safe and economical".

"Restoring green spaces and rivers. The river taff and river bank is in a bad state. Restored would mean removing rubbish and cleaning river and stopping water companies dumping sewage".

"Too many trees (not those that are diseased) being cut down and previously 'green' spaces being left devastated. Currently, not much evidence of planting going on. Roundabouts unkempt but could be better planted to help contribute to a greener RCT".

"Protect all aspects of biodiversity especially in our parks".

"Clean environment ... full of fly tipped rubbish because of further cost cutting of services from last proposal".

"I'm all for your targets in theory but in reality I think there are much more pressing issues".

"This isn't a priority for me".

"You haven't said what you are going to do to achieve this".

"Need details on how this can be done, and how to get people on board. Many say they are concerned about Nature etc., but do very little to support it e.g., installation of wood stoves, outdoor burning, littering etc".

Nature and the Environment: Feedback Themes (70)

Theme	Value
Environment	20
Disagree with priority	9
Council Communication	7
Travel and Transport	6
Too ambitious	6
More detail needed	6
Infrastructure	4
Community	3
No Improvements	2
Housing	2
Financial Concerns	2
Safety	1
Education	1
Council Operations	1
Young People	0
Town Centres	0
Social Care	0
Health	0
Equality	0
Employment	0
Economy	0
Culture	0

■ Nature and the Environment: Improvement Themes (70)

Figure 8. *Nature and the Environment: Thematic Content Analysis*

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Well-being Objective: Culture and Heritage

4.20 Survey responses for Culture and Heritage:
- 223 (73.6%) agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage.
- 42 (13.9%) unsure on whether they agree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage.
- 38 (12.5%) disagree with the proposed Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage.

Do you agree with the Council's proposed Well-being Objective - Culture and Heritage?

Question options
■ Yes ■ Not sure ■ No
Mandatory Question (303 responses)
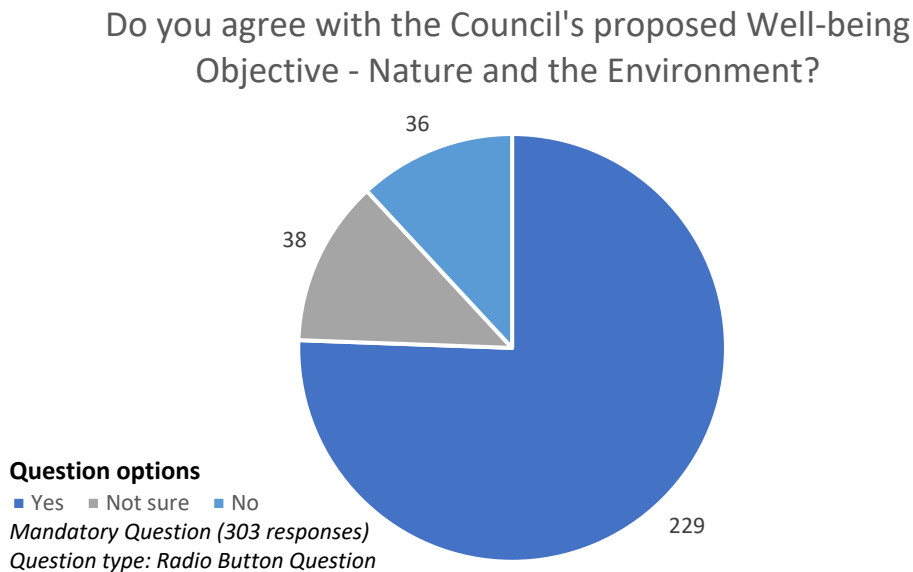*Question type: Radio Button Question*
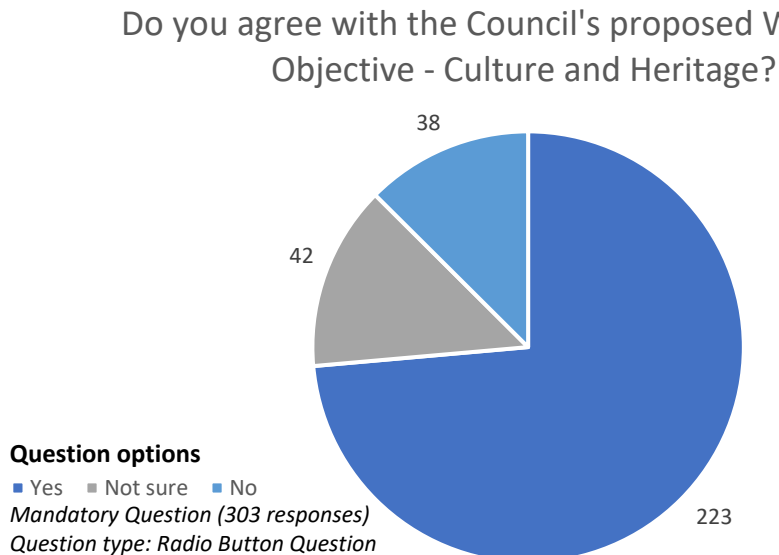
Figure 9. *Culture and Heritage: Online Survey Responses*

4.21 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage received 59 responses and 70 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 10. The most popular themes for improvement included:
- Culture (24)
- Too ambitious (16)
- Infrastructure (11)
- Financial concerns (11)
- Education (11)

4.22 Many of the feedback responses incorporated more than one of the themes identified above. Respondents identified that culture and heritage is cross-cutting across many areas and wanted to see the Council support it through its actions and operations. They wanted this done through preserving and enhancing existing buildings and infrastructure and by protecting local communities. Education and support of local, traditional and Welsh culture and heritage were common variables that respondents want the Council to focus on.

4.23 There were also some responses that indicated that this Well-being Objective may be too ambitious, had financial concerns and wanted the Council to prioritise other areas before highlighting culture and heritage as a key area of sustainable improvement. Examples:

21

"Preserve our history by not selling off our historical buildings, i.e., school buildings. Superschools are definitely not the way forward in my opinion".

"There are more important things to be proactive on. Culture and heritage is important, but it doesn't help solve today's issues".

"I do agree but have a suggestion. One of the world's biggest stars, Tom Jones was born in RCT. Could something be developed i.e., a museum in the locality? I think this could potentially be a great investment, attracting many visitors to Pontypridd".

"Local heritage should be taught more in our local schools as there was a lot of Heritage in our valleys".

"Stop demolishing our old buildings, reinvest in them. Too many new developments are going up and out culture is disappearing".

"Priorities should be health, education and cost of living".

"I think with all the challenges that face the authority this has to be way down the list of what is important".

"This depends on costings and whether funding is taken from places that need it more".

Culture & Heritage: Feedback Themes (115)

Theme	Value
Culture	24
Too ambitious	16
Infrastructure	11
Financial Concerns	11
Education	11
Council Communication	7
Community	7
Disagree with priority	6
More detail needed	4
Equality	4
Town Centres	3
Social Care	3
No Improvements	3
Housing	1
Health	1
Environment	1
Economy	1
Council Operations	1
Young People	0
Travel and Transport	0
Safety	0
Employment	0

■ Culture & Heritage: Improvements Theme (115)

Figure 10. Culture and Heritage: Thematic Content Analysis

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Our Commitments

4.24 Survey responses for Our Commitments:
- 227 (74.9%) agree with the proposed Commitments.
- 29 (9.6%) unsure on whether they agree with the proposed Commitments.
- 47 (15.5%) disagree with the proposed Commitments.

Do you agree with the Council's proposed Commitments

47

29

Question options
■ Yes ■ Not sure ■ No
Mandatory Question (303 responses)
Question type: Radio Button Question

227
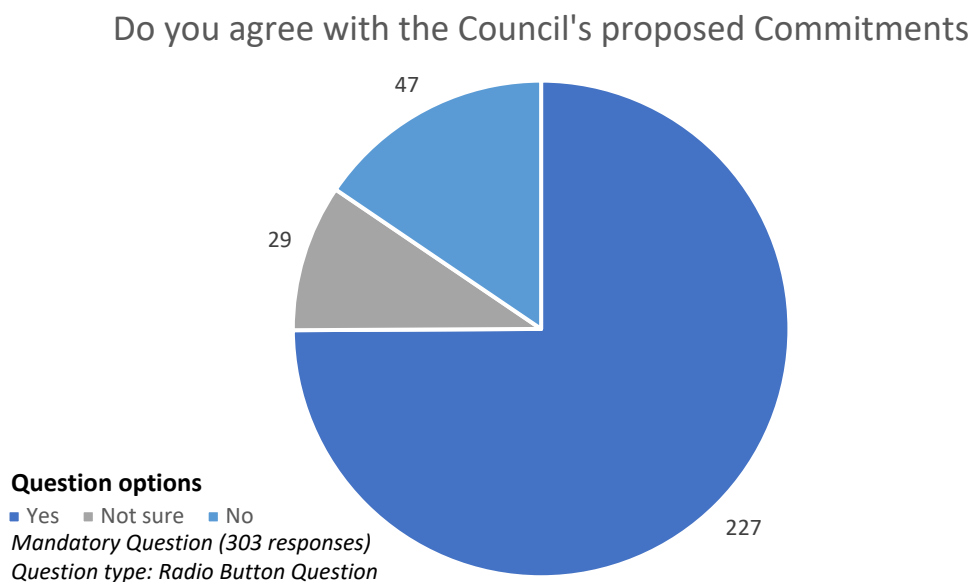
Figure 11. *Our Commitments: Online Survey Responses*

4.25 Feedback responses for the Council's proposed Commitments received 73 responses and 106 themes were identified as seen, in Figure 12. The most popular themes for improvement included:
- More detail needed (21)
- Too ambitious (19)
- Financial Concerns (13)
- Environment (10)
- Council Communication (9)

4.26 Respondents were concerned about whether the Council's proposed commitments were financially viable or achievable given the Council's current budget restraints. They want to see more detailed plans about how the Council will achieve the priorities and commitments highlighted including actions which are costed. Similarly to the Council's vision, respondents also want to see a balanced approach towards society, economy and the environment in our commitments and they also want to see the Council improve how it engages and communicates with residents. Examples:

"I can't see how all these objectives are to be obtained. It's all very well having the right ideals, but how will they be financed?"

"More detail is needed, specifically on carbon future and carbon neutral council and what it entails".

"I feel that although the proposal is acceptable, what is not clear is how this will be achieved. How residents' money is going to be spent to achieve these objectives is far more of concern".

"How can you deliver these proposed Commitments with all the cut back the Senedd are demanding RCT councils make?"

"The Council need to get out and speak to the community more. Obtain community points of view and discuss key issues".

"Seems like a lot to achieve, in the current climate and budgets the way they are".

"I cannot disagree with any of the proposals; however I have major concerns that they will not be achieved due to budget constraints".

Our Commitments: Feedback Themes (106)

Theme	Value
More detail needed	21
Too ambitious	19
Financial Concerns	13
Environment	10
Council Communication	9
No Improvements	8
Community	6
Travel and Transport	4
Infrastructure	4
Education	3
Council Operations	3
Social Care	2
Culture	2
Safety	1
Employment	1
Young People	0
Town Centres	0
Housing	0
Health	0
Equality	0
Economy	0
Disagree with priority	0

■ Our Commitments: Improvement Theme (106)

Figure 12. *Our Commitments: Thematic Content Analysis*

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5. KEY FINDINGS – NETWORK/GROUP FEEDBACK

5.1 The majority of respondents within Networks were happy and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments:
- Our Vision: 176 (72.4%) agreed
- People and Communities: 231 (95.1%) agreed
- Work and Business: 208 (85.6%) agreed
- Nature and the Environment: 237 (97.5%) agreed
- Culture and Heritage: 158 (65%) agreed
- Our Commitments: 114 (76.5%) agreed
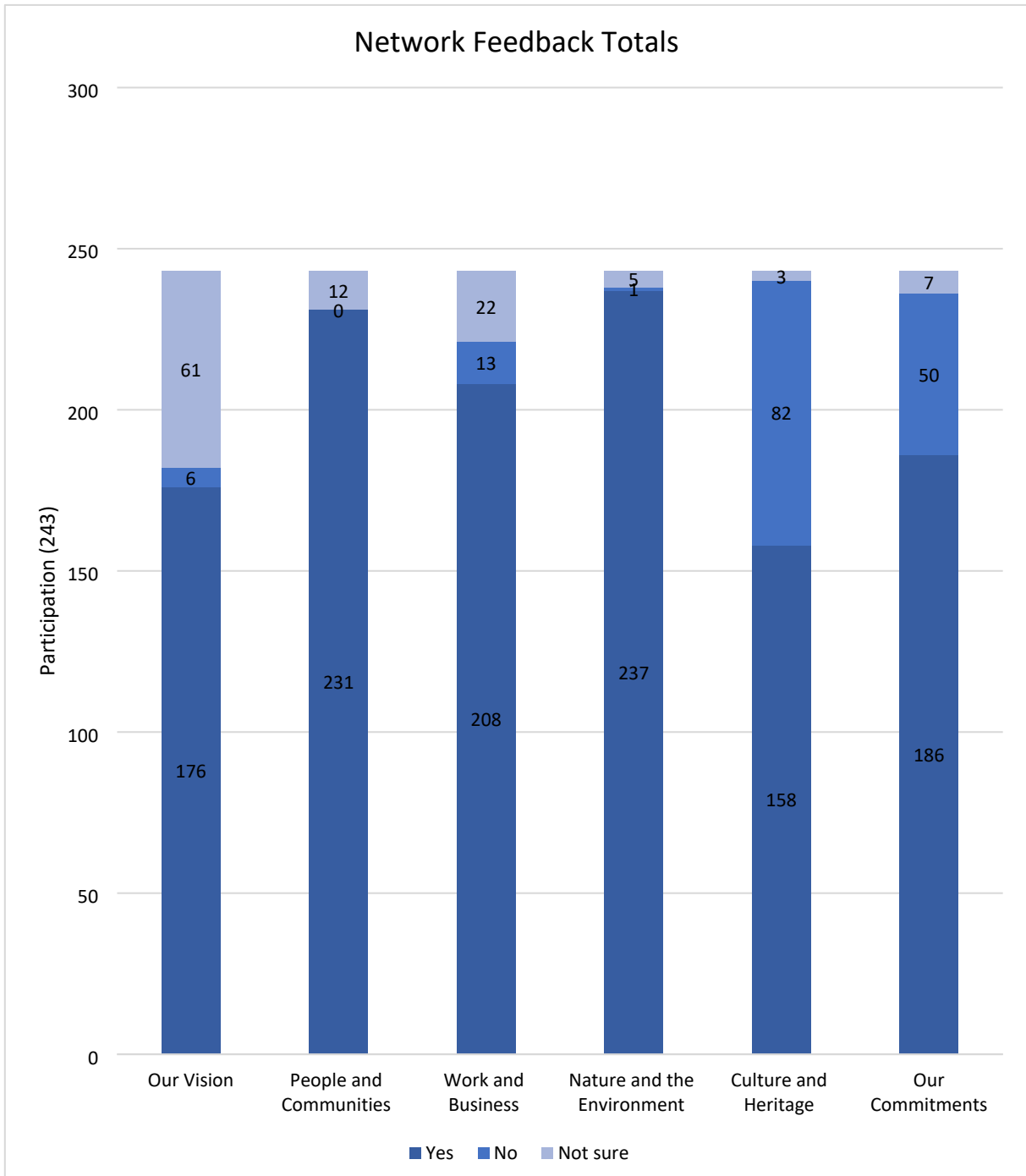
Figure 13. *Network Feedback Totals*

Tudalen 261

5.2 There were 17 feedback themes identified in response to the 6 questions asked. The questions received a range of comments with 695 references to the themes identified. The main themes identified from network improvement feedback were:
- Culture (135)
- Travel and Transport (68)
- Community (64)
- Environment (52)
- Safety (49)
- Infrastructure (46)

5.3 Examples of feedback received, and themes identified within each response have been analysed for each question.

5.4 Although the majority of respondents have agreed with the Council's proposals, all highlighted areas for improvement must be considered when developing the final Corporate Plan 2024-30. The Corporate Plan 2024-30 will include a summary of feedback for each Well-being Objective identifying what our stakeholders have told us that they would like to see included in the plan.

5.5 Through the network feedback responses, different groups suggested detailed improvements that could be made to the Plan but also told us how they were happy with the Plan. A common theme throughout was the importance of supporting communities and enriching the culture within those communities. Empowering communities, promoting the Welsh Language and improving community links were common topics of conversation which also encompassed points around safe, clean and litter free places.

5.6 Network discussions also highlighted how many different areas are interconnected and by enhancing one area will lead to improvements in another. For example, investing in and improving connectivity and public transport around the County Borough will lead to increased employment, thriving town centres and fewer empty properties.

5.7 There were also many responses wanted to see more detailed plans to show how the Council will achieve its proposals given the current budget constraints and financial difficulties the Council faces. Respondents also expressed concern that the Plan was overambitious.

Cwmparc Neighbourhood Network

5.8 Agreed overall with the Council's proposed Vision and Well-being Objectives but disagreed with the Council's proposed Commitments due to fears of financial constraints. All in attendance (9) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'Social Care', 'Travel and Transport' and 'Young People'.

"Help strengthen the link between RCTCBC and community groups (3rd Sector). Empower pride in our communities".

"Raise communities out of deprivation. Loneliness and isolation is a big issue for many in RCT and there needs to be better community/public transport so residents can get about the County Borough more easily".

"Youth Provision including activities, events and engagement need to improve".

Maerdy Ferndale Neighbourhood Network

5.9 Agreed overall with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments but thought there could be improvements, particularly to 'People and Communities' and 'Work and Business'. All in attendance (9) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Employment', 'Health', 'Young People' and 'Infrastructure'.

"There should be a whole objective on health. People and Communities does not go far enough. We would like to see more 'Flying Start' schemes, better housing provision for the homeless and support for people's well-being".

"We need to create more employment. If we want to encourage employers to the Rhondda, especially the Fach, the infrastructure must be upgraded to attract investment in and encourage residents to stay".

"There also appears to be a lack of opportunity and provision for Young People".

Mid Rhondda Neighbourhood Network

5.10 Responded that they were not sure whether they agreed or disagreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Commitments and Well-being Objectives for People and Communities and Work and Business. Concerns were raised around whether the priorities were realistic or achievable in the next six years. The network wanted to see more detailed plans about how the Council would accomplish the detail set out in the proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives for 'People and Communities', 'Work and Business' and Commitments All in attendance (4) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Social Care', 'Council Communication',' Culture' and 'Travel and Transport'.

"Welsh language needs to be used and encouraged more to really promote culture and heritage across RCT".

"Helping to tackle loneliness and isolation, especially for older residents should be a key priority for the Council".

"We would like to see better communication about how successful the previous Corporate Plan was. How do we know that we are headed in the right direction with the new well-being objectives?".

"Leisure services e.g., Libraries and keeping them accessible to children need to be prioritised as well as social/intergenerational connections and digital inclusion".

North Cynon Neighbourhood Network

5.11 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments but thought there could be improvements, particularly relating to whether the plans are achievable, a lack of Welsh Language and concerns around the Eisteddfod 2024. All in attendance (10) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'Culture', 'Travel and Transport', 'Financial Concerns' and 'Infrastructure'.

"It's impossible to disagree with the wellbeing objectives, however how doable are they? How will RCTCBC do this with the current cut backs?"

"Travel services are poor, no mention of it improving. The Eisteddfod will drive footfall and encourage people to travel to RCT, but public transport needs to be improved. People won't be able to attend from some areas of RCT currently as things are. Ease of travel/accessibility/better links needs to be a priority".

"No mention of the Welsh Language".

"Make use of the buildings we have and don't let them get into a state of disrepair, and then being demolished. Feel like RCTCBC have been left behind with regards to development".

Pentre Neighbourhood Network

5.12 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (2) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'Young People', 'Culture' and 'Environment'.

"Having a safe place for the community to meet is important. We need to redevelop community spirit, which many feel has been on decline for some years. This includes providing support for vulnerable community members, community activities for residents of all ages, transport and access to services and long term funding for community groups / organisations".

"The Council need to ensure young people are gaining good, safe employment and good wages. Many young people are moving away, and communities are getting older".

"Need to ensure there is a legacy after the Eisteddfod. Support for local groups to come together to share their memories and better promotion of a Valleys brand for tourism".

"Parks need to be kept in good order, cutting down too many trees is a concern".

Porth Plaza Neighbourhood Network

5.13 Responded that they were not sure whether they agreed or disagreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Commitments or Well-being Objective for Culture and Heritage. The network wanted further ambition in the Vision with reference to residents of RCT 'prospering' or 'thriving'. They also wanted to see the Corporate Plan be more community focused and the County Borough's future prioritised. All in attendance (6) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'Employment' and 'Culture'.

"The word 'corporate' is a poor choice as it doesn't feel like the plan relates to us. Naming the Council's Corporate Plan: 'Councils plan for the people' makes it sound more interesting and about our lives".

"It is important to protect what we have e.g., park and dare, museum etc but it is just as important not to dwell on the past and to focus on the future".

"The community is always changing. Be more specific on what you mean by 'community".

"Need to focus on opportunities and employment. Lack of opportunities leads to a community in decline due to young people leaving. They will search for their own opportunities".

South Cynon Neighbourhood Network

5.14 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision and Well-being Objectives for People and Communities and Nature and the Environment. However, they disagreed with Well-being Objectives Work and Business, Culture and Heritage and the Council's proposed Commitments. All in attendance (12) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'More detail needed', 'Council Communication', 'Culture' and 'Social Care'.

"Will there be regular feedback? This was promised previously and would it be possible to given feedback for the current Corporate Plan. Was previous feedback used for this current vision, where is the evidence of that?".

"The arts need to be prioritised in Culture and Heritage. This includes mental health and well-being through the arts, inclusion, accessibility for all and funding to help develop creativity".

"How will the Council achieve the proposed Well-being Objectives?"

"Caring for our most vulnerable should be a priority such as combatting loneliness, inspiring people to learn, preventing anxiety and distress in people and essentially enabling all people / residents and supporting those who are in crisis".

Tylorstown Neighbourhood Network

5.15 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (11) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Environment', 'Safety', 'Transport and Travel', 'Community'.

"Environment – more needs to be done with wind energy and hydro energy. Wind turbines are producing too much energy and are being switched off, but this could be used to provide cheaper electricity for communities. Should be using our water to power the grid as we certainly have enough rainfall, and this would be ideal to power RCT".

"Antisocial behaviour on the increase due to lack of community facilities".

"Buses are stopping and not being replaced… local transport is not suitable or often enough. Transport to the forgotten valley is vital – which needs to be accessible and affordable …cost is extortionate for short journeys £2.70 one way to go 4 stops".

"Help strengthen the link between RCTCBC and community groups through introducing more activities, events, workshops, support networks which will rejuvenate pride in our Communities. Raise communities out of deprivation".

RCT Climate Action Network

5.16 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (15) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Environment', 'Housing', 'Infrastructure', 'Culture' and 'Economy'.

"Energy efficient homes are important as many private landlords are not providing good quality and affordable homes within most areas of RCT. Mortgaged homes for low income families have no to little support".

"Need to fund and support creative spaces, food places, the arts, innovative and vibrant spaces etc in town centres to get a more diverse and engaging business community".

"There is also the cost of buildings for commercial use being high even when the buildings have been disused for more than 12 months".

Cwm Taf People First

5.17 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (14) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Health', 'Safety', 'Travel and Transport', 'Economy' and 'Town Centres'.

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"It is important that good health is maintained as this will keep people out of hospital. It should also be easier to get a GP appointment".

"There needs to be more Safe Places for people. Our communities need to be cleaner from dog mess and litter".

"Improvements are needed for more accessible transport. More opportunities for people to get out and about in their local community will lead to better health and well-being and equally business for our town centres".

Community Focused Schools

5.18 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments, apart from the WBO - Work and Business, where they thought it could be improved. All in attendance (15) provided feedback on an area of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below the feedback received. The response can be categorised by the feedback theme, 'Education' especially in the Work and Business section.

"It would better if it included a school element - about strengthening careers, work related experiences and raising aspirations for all".

Fforwm Iaith

5.19 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments, apart from the Well-being Objective - Culture and Heritage, where they thought it could be improved. All in attendance (40) provided feedback on an area of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below the feedback received. The response can be categorised by the feedback theme 'Culture' with a focus on the 'Welsh Language'.

"This needs to explicitly mention the Welsh Language as a priority area, to read Culture, Heritage and the Welsh Language / Diwylliant, Treftadaeth a'r Iaith Gymraeg. It should be mentioned as part of the Council's commitment and aspiration for the Welsh Language - to tie in with both statutory duties and wider commitment to Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Standards, WESP 2022-2032 etc".

"If one specific policy area is mentioned (Carbon Neutral by 2030) there should be parity with other essential policy areas / aspirations".

Our Aberdare BID and Love Treorchy BID

5.20 Sent a joint response and agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (9) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Culture', 'Safety', 'Community' and 'Town Centres'.

"We have so much history here in RCT however we are very poor at celebrating it! We could be doing so much more to use it to our benefit and that in turn would attract visitors,

give people a reason to visit but most of all instil pride in our communities based on our incredible history".

"All components of the plan are interlinked; you provide people with a town/community they are proud of then standards across the board rise. People have more pride and so they take care of things, they are proud of their towns and communities and so they visit and shop, spending more time enjoying their surroundings. Lack of education around heritage and culture compound the anti-social behaviour and we are forever battling against vandalism and bad behaviour and this for me will be the biggest challenge".

Our Pontypridd BID

5.21 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments, apart from the Well-being Objective - Work and Business where they thought it could be improved. All in attendance (7) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Culture', 'Education', 'Employment', 'Environment', 'Safety', 'Town Centres' and 'Travel and Transport'.

"There will need to a clear vision for sustainable transport and an increase in electric charging points. In Pontypridd in particular, there are many areas where pollution is high due to increased levels of traffic due to its position…"

"Supporting people into work is very key, especially for the town centres".

"Would like to see more encouragement of litter picking in the town centre and park area, it will encourage people to have more pride in their community and care more about the look and feel of the town".

"We can work on encouraging schools to visit the town and learn about the rich history of the town, birthplace of the national anthem etc. This will help create proud communities and encourage people to create more history in the town".

Sustainable Food Network

5.22 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (5) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Community', 'Economy', 'Environment' and 'Travel and Transport'.

"We want fair food for all. This includes access to land for community use and the Council leading by example by serving environmentally friendly food in all Council premises and services".

"Access (including public transport) to acquire food. All residents should be able to access affordable, healthy and sustainable food".

"We would also like to see more opportunities for very small scale producers to be able to supply in the future. Business opportunities/reduced rates for businesses that demonstrate clear sustainable ideas".

Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG) Committee

5.23 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision and Well-being Objectives but were unsure whether they agreed with Commitments. All in attendance (8) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Housing', 'Transport and Travel', 'Safety' and 'Social Care'.

"To live in warm, energy efficient homes and to be able to use public transport for social gatherings and shopping without being in fear of antisocial behaviour".

County Youth Forum

5.24 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (12) provided feedback on areas of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below examples of feedback received. These responses can be categorised by the feedback themes 'Employment', 'Infrastructure', 'Housing', 'Environment' and 'Council Communication'.

"Supporting people into rewarding and secure work whilst also enhancing infrastructure, including green infrastructure and prioritising affordable housing".

"The Vision could be shorter, catchier and more engaging for young people and other groups. More pictures and visuals would also improve the Plan as well as better social media on it".

Cor Cwm Rhondda

5.25 Responded that they were unsure whether they agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, but they agreed with Well-being Objectives and Commitments. However, they did disagree with the Council's Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage. All in attendance (50) provided feedback on an area of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below the feedback received. The response can be categorised by the feedback theme 'Culture' with a focus on the Welsh Language.

"We feel the statement could acknowledge that we are in Wales/a Welsh area, and that Welsh language is used here. We also feel it could include reference to being a welcoming area to people of all backgrounds".

"We feel the Welsh language must be acknowledged more explicitly here, especially if we want to maximise the legacy of the Eisteddfod. We'd like to see the objective renamed as 'Culture, Heritage and the Welsh Language' to ensure the Welsh language is at the forefront of council strategy and normalised within the borough at all levels. We'd like to see 'linguistic'

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heritage added to the second bullet point too. We feel these changes would be more in line with the Well-being goals of the Future Generations Act itself too".

Upper Rhondda 50+ Network

5.26 Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. All in attendance (25) agreed they have no concerns with what the Council have proposed in the Plan, nor were any particular issues raised by individuals. The Network recognise that Council is generally doing a good job with limited resources and trust that the particular needs of older people are recognised and given the attention that is needed.

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Appendix 1: *Feedback Theme Definitions*

Feedback Theme (22)	Definition *(Summary of comments by theme)*
Community	References to people and relationships within a social context.
Council Communication	Responses related to the passing of information between the Council and its stakeholders.
Council Operations	References to Council systems and processes which may influence the wider community.
Culture	Any responses related to the protection or promotion of meaningful social traditions, heritage, Welsh Language or the arts.
Disagree with priority	Any responses that offered no improvement suggestion and completely disagreed with the Well-being Objective and priorities.
Economy	Factors affecting the conduct of business and commerce throughout the County Borough.
Education	References to both schools and opportunities for additional learning.
Employment	Responses related to rates of employment and factors that may improve it.
Environment	References relating to the natural physical environment and factors that may affect its current or future state.
Equality	Factors affecting the ability of all peoples within the County Borough to develop and succeed equally.
Financial Concerns	References to where there are concerns around funding or costing of the Well-being Objective and priorities.
Health	Responses related to any aspect of a person's health, physical, mental or otherwise.
Housing	Factors relating to the residences and accommodation of people within Rhondda Cynon Taf.
Infrastructure	Factors relating to physical structures within Rhondda Cynon Taf, new and old and their impacts.
More detail needed	Any responses that require more detail to fully understand the benefits of the Well-being Objective and priorities.
No Improvements	Responses that didn't offer any improvement comments.
Safety	Factors relating to the sense of safety and security experienced by residents.
Social Care	References to additional care and support services, particularly the recipient has a recognised vulnerability.
Too ambitious	Any responses that relate to the Well-being Objective and priorities being unachievable.
Town Centres	References to the condition of Rhondda Cynon Taf's town centres including local business commercial centres, any public facilities and other amenities.
Travel and Transport	References to factors affecting the movement of people throughout the County Borough.
Young People	Factors relating to the futures, safety and livelihoods of young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Appendix 2: *Draft outline of Corporate Plan 2024-2030 – 'Working with our Communities'* n.b. version as of 8th December 2023 subsequently reviewed by O&S Committee 29th January 2024.

The Council's Vision is for a Rhondda Cynon Taf where:
People, communities, and business can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future.

The Council's purpose and the reason it exists is to:
To provide community leadership and deliver high quality public services, working alongside residents, communities and our partners for people, businesses, and the environment to prosper.

Our Approach:
Our new Plan builds on the strong platform put in place by our previous two Plans. To deliver what our new Plan sets out, we need our staff, Councillors, residents, communities, and partners working in the same direction to deliver our shared vision. The future challenges faced across the Council's services mean that now more than ever, we need well trained, informed, and supported staff and councillors who can respond to the challenges ahead within an ambitious programme of work. As public sector budgets remain under pressure and the demands on our services increase, the need to work with communities and across organisational boundaries to deliver the best outcomes for our residents, both now and in the future, has never been greater.

As a result of what we have learned so far, we are proposing four Well-being objectives that you have told us matter most to you now and that will better prepare us all for the future:

Our four Well-being Objectives:

1. **PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES** - *Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. This includes:*
   - Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow safely,
   - Residents can take care of their health & well-being so they can live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives,
   - Residents having access to affordable, good quality and energy efficient homes,
   - Safeguarding our most vulnerable residents of all ages, providing protection, care and support when they need it most so that they can maximise their potential.

2. **WORK AND BUSINESS** - *Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy. This includes:*
   - Supporting people into rewarding and secure work,
   - Supporting businesses to prosper and be sustainable,
   - Thriving town centres, and
   - A well-connected County Borough.

3. **NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT** - *A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature. This includes:*
   - Protecting and enhancing the natural environment,
   - Clean, Safe and Sustainable RCT,
   - Using Natures Assets to benefit people and communities.

4. **CULTURE AND HERITAGE** - *Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future where:*

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- Culture and heritage is vibrant, and difference is celebrated in strong communities that enhance well-being.
- We celebrate and preserve the cultural, industrial and sporting heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

A well-run Council…

Our four Well-being objectives and our priorities can only be delivered by a well-run Council. By this we mean a Council that has a positive organisational culture, that values its staff, manages its resources sustainably and wisely and looks to continually improve what we do to have the biggest impact for residents.

Our commitments to you
- We will deliver our improvement priorities and strive to meet all our targets and you will be able to hold us to account through good governance and local democracy.
- We will lead by example, show strong community leadership and be open about the challenges we face and the tough decisions we have to make.
- We will put residents and customers at the centre of all that we do and the decisions we make through more meaningful, involvement and engagement.
- We will work with partners in all sectors so that we join up our services, make life easier for our residents and communities and deliver better outcomes for them.
- We will work together with residents and communities on solutions that better meet their needs and share responsibility deliver better outcomes together.
- We will manage our workforce, budgets, land, buildings, fleet and information to maximise our efficiency and make the biggest difference to our communities, nature and the environment.
- We will reduce the Council's Carbon Footprint and be a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.
- We will be honest with our residents and regulators about where we are doing well and where we need to do better.
- We will put in place plans to care and support communities in emergency situations when they happen.

Our commitment to staff
We will provide equality of opportunity for all, so that staff feel valued and can reach their full potential. The Council's commitment to its staff and our communities is set out in full in our Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Plan.

Our commitment to partners
We will be committed and active partners in our work with others, seeking and challenging where we can add more and better outcomes for our residents, communities and businesses by working together. You can see more about our work with others.

Appendix 3: *Network Feedback Table*

Network Response (19)	Attendance
RCT Climate Action Network (15)	15
Community Focused Schools (15)	15
Cwm Taf People First (10)	10
Our Pontypridd BID (7)	7
Our Aberdare BID/ Love Treorchy BID (9)	9
Sustainable Food Network (5)	5
Fforwm Iaith (40)	40
OPAG Committee (7)	7
Neighbourhood Network – Cwmparc (9)	9
Neighbourhood Network – Maerdy Ferndale (9)	9
Neighbourhood Network – Mid Rhondda (4)	4
Neighbourhood Network – North Cynon (10)	10
Neighbourhood Network – Pentre (2)	2
Neighbourhood Network – Porth Plaza (6)	6
Neighbourhood Network – South Cynon (12)	12
Neighbourhood Network – Tylorstown (11)	11
County Youth Forum (12)	12
Upper Rhondda 50+ Network (25)	25
Cor Cwm Rhondda (50)	50

30 January 2024

Dear Cabinet Members

Re: Pre-Scrutiny of the Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030

I have been instructed by this Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to the Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee were provided with the opportunity, by the Council's Chief Executive, to pre-scrutinise the Draft Corporate Plan at its meeting on the 29th January 2024. Members undertook a constructive discussion in respect of the draft plan, which I have summarised below:

Vision

Members welcomed and supported the content of the proposed Vision statement, which they determined demonstrates ambition, while also highlighting the challenges the Council and its communities will face over the next six years. A number of Committee Members suggested strengthening the 'inclusivity' within the Vision, by the inclusion of the word such as "All" at the beginning of the statement and there forward in the wider document.

Despite the likely challenges ahead, members acknowledge the importance of remaining to be ambitious and setting an aspiration vision for the County Borough.

Members then took the opportunity to focus and comment upon the specific wellbeing objectives contained within the plan.

Wellbeing Objective – People and Communities

Members were pleased to see the continued focus upon school attendance, noting the continued priority placed upon this by the Council's Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee. Many members cited the importance place standards and attainment will play increase opportunities for young people and reducing poverty into the future. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also considered that there needed to be more explicit reference to Child Poverty within the Plan as well as a need to build aspiration for communities and young people in particular. Members reaffirmed their wish to be provided with the opportunity to influence this specific aspect of the corporate plan moving forward. Some Members raised concerns at the use of hyperlinks throughout the Plan and recommended that the use of these are reviewed and used only where necessary to ensure the plan is accessible and easy for the public to read and understand.

Wellbeing Objective - Work and Business

Members expressed their broad support for this objective but raised concerns more widely, at the lack of employment opportunities available, in particular apprenticeships available outside of the public sector. Members urged that the availability of apprenticeships and broader skills development is reviewed to ensure that placements are available to inspire people to train and secure skilled work after college. Likewise members also acknowledged the positive benefits this could delivery in attracting investment and job creation to South Wales. Members questioned whether the plan could influence current and future national apprenticeship programmes, which some members deemed to be inflexible, which in turn deters smaller businesses based in RCT from participating. Members also indicated that they would like to see reference to high skilled work and also supporting people into rewarding career paths and not just jobs. Members noted the need to focus on attracted large high skilled employment back to the South Wales Valleys.

A member highlighted a general concern in respect of traffic issues and mobility across the County Borough, including the Town centres and in particular East -West connectivity in the south of the County. All members acknowledged that communities need to be well connected with improved infrastructure and accessible, affordable public transport.

Members also noted the value in local opportunities for residents to shop in smaller local retail areas, not just the focus on Town Centres, would bring wider economic benefits and enhance communities in RCT.

Wellbeing Objective – Nature and the Environment

The Committee highlighted the issues the Council faced with increased problems with litter and fly tipping throughout the whole of the County Borough and the unsightliness which this thus creates. The Committee sought stronger wording throughout the Plan to highlight the importance of the public taking responsibility for disposing of their rubbish and taking personal responsibility for the wider environment. They also recommended that there needs to be more education around the dangers and health impacts of litter, while noting the good work which already takes place to combat these issues. The Committee was keen to ensure cleaner streets across RCT and pride in our communities, should form a key plank of this specific objective.

Wellbeing Objective – Culture and Heritage

Many members acknowledge the yet unlocked tourism potential of the County Borough. Some members noted that a vision for the future, should include reference to the significance of the rich industrial heritage and also earlier history. A member requested reference to wider history, including the Iron Age, of Rhondda Cynon Taf and would like to see this considered throughout the Plan.

All members noted the important role the natural landscape should play in promote the history and culture of the area. Members also acknowledged the opportunity which will be created by the hosting of the National Eisteddfod in 2024.

Following consideration of the specific objectives, members noted some of the general themes and information contained within the draft plan. These included noting the stark health statistics in the data sections of the Plan both now and in the future, for health conditions particularly for obesity, noting that it would a concerted effort by all of the public sector to redress these issues, over future generations, and not just in the course of this draft plan. They indicated that they would like to see more emphasis on the Council's partnership working, particularly with the Local Health Board and the existing health initiatives, such as Healthy Weight Wales etc to demonstrate how the Authority is working to address these concerns.

Members also acknowledged the range and scale of challenges identified by the data, and wider breadth of challenges facing communities from health inequalities to economic deprivation and inactivity, made worse by the cost of living. Members noted the diverse difference in such challenges when comparing the South of the County Borough to the North, and how this would be considered in the context of future service delivery. Members noted the volume of data within the Plan but also noted that this needs to be utilised to inform work on the plan moving forward Whilst acknowledging that the Plan contained the 'what' will be delivered, there was also a need to be clear about 'how' the priorities will be delivered, which in turn will help to identify the Outcomes.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were grateful for the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the draft Corporate Plan. A copy of the recording of the meeting can be found here

Yours sincerely,

Christian Hanagan
Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

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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.

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SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Lesley Lawson

Service Director: Paul Mee

Service Area: Chief Executive

Date: 26 February 2024

1.a)   What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
x	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.b)   **What is the name of the proposal?** The Council's Corporate Plan 2024-30

1.c)   Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.
The Council's Corporate Plan will be in place for 6 years from 2024-30. By putting in place this plan the Council is meeting its requirements to set Well-being Objectives, show its contribution to seven national Well-being goals, meet the four pillars of Sustainable Development and other requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 relevant to individual public bodies. It also requires Public Bodies to demonstrate this by applying 5 Ways of Working. Overview and Scrutiny Committee pre-scrutinised the draft version Plan available at the time at its meeting on 29 January.

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's strategic vision, Well-being Objectives, priorities, approach and commitments and sets the framework to direct our work. All Council's strategies/policies etc. reflect the Corporate Plan and how they contribute to delivering the Council's priorities. How this fits together can be seen in the Council's Performance Management Framework.

The Plan is also part of the evidence that enables the Council to demonstrates it is meeting its Performance and Governance requirements under Part 6 Chapter 1 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, in summary to

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

The EIA has asked for information about Engagement findings. The responses contained within the EIA focused on the direct engagement in respect of the Outline/draft of the Plan in Phase 2. However, other sources of engagement were used to start to shape this work pre September 2023, as refenced within the Plan…'…….*have information and feedback from the many conversations and surveys we have held over the last year or so that have helped to inform and shape this Plan. For example, feedback and views about the Council's budget setting for 2023/24; the Council's Local Development Plan 2022-37, Flood Risk Strategy, the place based Aberdare Town Centre Strategy, co production proposals for day service following 'My Day, My Way', 'Your Voice' survey of young people, our 'Climate Conversation', the wide ranging engagement as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Well-being Assessment, as well as many service specific engagement events and surveys'.*

1.d) **Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice**.
Given the breadth of the Plan, the delivery of the proposals will be affected by numerous legislative requirements which are contained within the draft Plan. A list of these legislative and other drivers are included in the Plan and organised by Well-being themes. The list is not exhaustive but provides an illustration of the breadth of activity.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:
- o Service users   x
- o Employees   x
- o Wider community   x

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.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age *(Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people)*	Select from the following: Positive	The priorities outlined within the Corporate Plan will positively impact on people of all ages from birth to old age. For example, people across all age groups accessing services to improve health and well-being; children and young people supported to overcome barriers to learning and fulfil their potential in school; vulnerable young people provided with safe and supportive environments suitable to their needs; better joined up health and social care so people can get the right care in the right place at the right time, which will particularly positively impact older people.	Total population: 237,497[1] • Age 0-15 43,680 (18.4%) • Age 16-64 147,030 (61.8%) • Age 64+ 46,787 (19.7%) [1] *Mid year population estimates 2022* Stats Wales **Consultation Response:** Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas

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Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		However, the requirements of the WFG Act also require the Council to think longer term as one of the pillars of Sustainable Development and population projections based on age have also been reflected in the data used to develop the draft plan. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these will have specific impacts on people in different age groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement. Specific stakeholder group responses relating to age included: **Consultation Response: Older Persons Advisory Group** - agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, and Well-being Objectives but were not sure whether they agreed with the Commitments. Extract/feedback on a key area of importance for the network and its members: "To live in warm, energy efficient

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			homes and to be able to use public transport for social gatherings and shopping without being in fear of antisocial behaviour". *Nb Network response received following formal consultation deadline.* **Consultation Response: County Youth Forum a**greed with the Council's proposed Visions, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. Extract/Feedback on a key area of importance for the Forum: "Supporting people into rewarding and secure work whilst also enhancing infrastructure, including green infrastructure and prioritising affordable housing". *Network response received following consultation deadline* Projected population data not required for the EIA, has been included in the draft plan.

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Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Disability *(people with visible and non- visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)*	Select from the following: Positive	All people, regardless of protected characteristics, will be impacted by the priorities either directly or indirectly. Data shows that RCT has a higher proportion of people who consider themselves disabled than across Wales, and over 45% have a longstanding illness or health condition. The Well-being Objectives in the Corporate Plan aim to support all people to access service that best meet their needs and aims to tackle the growing vulnerability and complexity of need across our population, many of whom may experience poor health with complex care and support needs. A commitment in the Corporate Plan for '*Better joined up Health and Social Care so people can get the tight care in the right place at the right time'* will positively impact people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. However, the requirements of the WFG Act also require the Council to think longer term as one of the pillars of Sustainable Development and projected data in respect of health conditions within the population	Life expectancy [1] Male 77.0 years Male healthy life expectancy 57.1 years Female 80.5 years Female healthy life expectancy 60.7 years 12.0% of people in RCT said they had disabilities which limited them a lot in their daily lives. People describe their health as Good or very good health - 76.0% (Male 76.9%, female 75.3%), Wales 79.1%) *Census* Disability (self described) not disabled 76.2%, (Wales 78.9%) disabled and limited a lot in their daily lives 12.0%, males 11.5%, females 12.5% (10.0% Wales) disabled and limited a little in their day to day activities 11.8% (11.1% Wales)

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Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		has also been reflected in the data used to develop the draft plan. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on people with disabilities or long term health conditions. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	(Census 2021) People suffering from longstanding illnesses (self described)[2] Any longstanding illness 45.9% Limited by longstanding illness 35.2% Musculoskeletal complaints 13.6% Mental health condition 14.6% Heart/circulatory complaints 10.0% Respiratory system complaints 6.6% Endocrine/metabolic diseases 7.6% 1 in 7 people aged 65+ claim Attendance Allowance across Cwm Taf Morgannwg (payable to people over 65 who are so severely disabled, physically, or mentally, that they need a great deal of health with personal care or supervision). (Cwm Taf Needs Assessment, pg. 10) **Consultation Response:** Wide-ranging engagement was

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[2] Adult general health and illness by local authority and health board 2020-21 onwards StatsWales

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views and Welsh and English Easy Read versions of the material was made available. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement. Specific stakeholder group responses relating to disability included: **Consultation Response: Cwm Taf People First (People with Learning Disabilities) –**agreed with the Council's proposed Vision,

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			Well-being Objectives and Commitments. Extract/Feedback on a key area of importance for the network: "Maintain good health and keep people out of hospital. Also, more safe places for people with no dog mess or litter and better access to public transport".
Gender Reassignment *(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)*	Select from the following: Positive	The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. In addition, there may be some specific positive impacts for people within different gender identities through *Recognising and improving our awareness of diversity in our communities so that we strengthen community cohesion and better meet needs of our residents of all backgrounds.* Improved community cohesion may have a positive impact in reducing levels of hate crime. The Corporate Plan makes a commitment to treating all people with dignity and respect and taking into account their cultural, social and religious needs.	0.07% (128) of people aged 16 years and over in RCT are a trans woman (0.07% Wales) 0.07% (134) of people aged 16 years and over in RCT are a trans man (0.08% Wales) 0.05% (97) of people aged 16 years and over in RCT are non-binary (0.06% Wales) 0.03% (57) of people aged 16 years and over in RCT are another gender identity (0.04% Wales) 0.14% (281)of people aged 16 and over in RCT have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth but no specific identity given (0.16% Wales). Not answered 6% (11,540) (6.3%

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Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	Wales) Census 2021 4,355 recorded gender identity hate crimes in England and Wales Hate crime in England and Wales 2021-22, Home Office

Protected Characteristics	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 *(people who are married or in a civil partnership)*	Select from the following: Positive	The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. The Corporate plan makes a commitment to treating all people with dignity and respect and taking into account their cultural, social and religious needs. No differential impacts have been identified according to marriage or civil partnership for actions in the strategy. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	42.4% (82,170) of people in RCT are Married or in a Civil Partnership (43.8% Wales): 42.2% (81,828) are married (43.6% Wales) 0.2% (342) are in a civil partnership (0.2% Wales) Census 2021 **Consultation Response:** Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision,

			Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement.
Pregnancy and Maternity *(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)*	Select from the following: Positive	The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. In addition, there may be some specific positive impacts for woman who are pregnant/on maternity leave through *Giving vulnerable children and young people the best possible opportunities in life and ensuring access to safe and supportive environments suitable to their needs, to improve their well-being*. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	**Consultation Response:** Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement.

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| Race
(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers) | Select from the following: | The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT.

The Corporate plan makes a commitment to treating all people with dignity and respect and taking into account their cultural, social and religious needs. NB *Version subsequent to O&S pre scrutiny*

In addition, there may be some specific positive impacts for people from different ethnic and racial groups through *Recognising and improving our awareness of diversity in our communities so that we strengthen community cohesion and better meet needs of our residents of all backgrounds.*

In addition, people in some ethnic minority groups are disproportionately more likely to be on low incomes, and therefore may be more likely to benefit positively from certain actions within the strategy e.g. Supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work.

People in some ethnic minority groups are disproportionately at risk of transport poverty and will be benefitted by actions in the strategy which focus on improving public transport infrastructure and active travel.

As more operational actions are developed to | Ethnic population of RCT
White British - 226,123 (95.1%)
White non-British - 3,800 (1.6%)
Non White - (7,730 (3.3%)
Mixed - 2,469 (1%)
Asian - 3,506 (1.5%)
Black - 997 (0.4%)
Other Ethnic Group - 758 (0.3%)
Census 2021

People from ethnic minorities, young people not in education, employment or training, students, older people and women were all reported to be particularly at risk of transport poverty.
Transport and inequality: An evidence review for the department of transport

109,843 race hate crimes in England and Wales
Hate crime, England and Wales, 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Consultation Response:
Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with |

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		deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement.
Religion or Belief *(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)*	Select from following:	The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. In addition, there may be some specific positive impacts for people with different religions or beliefs through *Recognising and improving our awareness of diversity in our communities so that we strengthen community cohesion and better meet needs of our residents of all backgrounds.* Improved	No religion – 56.2% (133,486) (46.5% Wales) Christian – 36.4% (86,474) (43.6% Wales) Buddhist – 0.2% (588) (0.3% Wales) Hindu – 0.2% (497) (0.4% Wales) Jewish – 0% (72) 0.1% Wales) Muslim – 0.6% (378) 2.2%

| | | community cohesion may have a positive impact in reducing levels of hate crime. | Wales) |
| | | As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant. | Sikh – 0.1% (248) (0.1% Wales) Other religion – 0.5% (1,083) (0.5% Wales) Census question not answered – 5.8% (13,826) (6.3% Wales) Census 2021 8,730 religion hate crimes in England and Wales Hate crime, England and Wales, 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) **Consultation Response:** Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, |

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Sex _(women and men, girls and boys)_	Select from the following: Positive	Women in the UK are disproportionately more likely to be on low incomes and therefore may be more likely to benefit positively from certain actions within the strategy e.g. Supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work. Women are more likely than men to walk or take public transport. Their travel is also more likely to involve 'trip chaining', a travel pattern of smaller interconnected trips. Women are also disproportionately at risk of transport poverty. Therefore, they will be benefitted by actions in the strategy which focus on improving public transport infrastructure and active travel and planning policy which considers the co-location of public amenities. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement. People from ethnic minorities, young people not in education, employment or training, students, older people and women were all reported to be particularly at risk of transport poverty. [Transport and inequality: An evidence review for the department of transport](#) Women are more likely than men to walk and take public transport. Women do 75% of the world's unpaid care work and this affects their travel needs [Invisible Women: Caroline Criado Perez](#) **Consultation Response:** Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder

| | | | groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement. |
| **Sexual Orientation** *(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)* | Select from the following: Positive | The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. In addition, there may be some specific positive impacts for people with sexual orientation through *Recognising and improving our awareness of diversity in our communities so that we strengthen community cohesion and better meet needs of our residents of all backgrounds.* As more operational actions are developed to | % and number of people in RCT aged 16 years and over who identify as: Straight 90.1% (174,581) (89.4% Wales) Gay or Lesbian 1.5% (2,947) (1.5% Wales) Bisexual 1.1% (2,158) (1.2% Wales) Pansexual 0.1% (180) (0.1% Wales) Asexual 0.1% (100) (0.1% |

| | | deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant. | Wales) Queer 0% (38) (0% Wales) All other sexual orientations 0.1% (100) (0.1% Wales) Not answered 7.6% (13,742) (7.6% Wales) Census 2021

26,152 sexual orientation hate crimes in England and Wales Hate crime in England and Wales 2021-22, Home Office

Consultation Response: Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The |

			engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement.

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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 *(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)*	Select from the following: Positive	The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. In addition, there will be specific positive outcomes for the armed forces community through strengthening RCT's Community Armed Forces Covenant. This will be kept under review as more operational actions are developed to deliver the aims of the strategy.	3.9% of RCT Residents are Armed Forces Veterans -7,506 people Nomis Data – TS071 – Previously served in UK and Armed Forces (2021) **Consultation Response:** Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The

			engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement. Specific stakeholder group responses relating to armed forces community included: **Consultation Response: (3 Valley Veteran Groups) -** Three separate focus groups were conducted with Valley Veterans, Cynon Valley Veterans and Taf Ely Veterans. All responses to the emerging from these groups were from individuals via the online survey.
Carers *(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)*	Select from the following: Positive	The Well-being Objectives in the Corporate Plan aim to support all people to access service that best meet their needs and aims to tackle the growing vulnerability and complexity of need across our population, many of whom may experience poor health with complex care and support needs. This will be kept under review as more operational actions are developed to deliver the aims of the strategy.	People aged 5 years and over who provide unpaid care Provides no unpaid care - 88.8% Provides 19 or less hours a week - 4.5% Provides 20 to 49 hours a week - 2.5% Provides 50 or more hours a week - 4.2% **Consultation Response:** Wide-ranging engagement was undertaken including with residents, businesses and other stakeholders. 35 Stakeholder

			groups that included representation across protected characteristic and geographic areas were targeted directly as part of engagement. Many respondents responded to the online survey where stakeholders of this characteristic were enabled and encouraged to share their views. The majority of respondents agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. The engagement project made 40,600 digital impressions, highlighting the reach of the comms campaign which supported the engagement.

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: Lesley Lawson

Position: Performance Manager

Date: 26 February 2024

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 <u>Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty</u> 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

Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/Income Poverty *(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)*	Select from the following: Positive	There is a high level of socio-economic disadvantage within RCT relative to Wales and the UK. The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. There are additionally, a number of areas within the Well-being Objectives which will have particular or more significant benefits for people on low incomes/in income poverty. These include support for children young people to overcome barriers to learning; support for health and wellbeing; support for our most vulnerable residents; supply of affordable and sustainable homes; supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work; and supporting local/community transport and active travel. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have	20.6% of households in RCT are non working (Wales 17.2%) (NOMIS). 23.8% of children in RCT are in relative low income families (22.1% in Wales) and 15.3% in absolute low income families (14.8% in Wales) Children in Low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2022 In October 2021, 14% of all Welsh households, 14% of vulnerable Welsh households and 59% of lower income Welsh households were estimated to be living in fuel poverty. Fuel Poverty Estimates for Wales, Welsh Government 9% of adults are digitally excluded (7% Wales Average) Census 2021 Car ownership by household No car or van - 22.2%

		specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	1 car or van or more - 77.8% Households without a car or van rises to 30% in some areas of RCT (Treherbert, Ferndale and Maerdy) Census 2021
Low and / or No Wealth *(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)*	Select from the following: Positive	The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. There are additionally a number of areas within the Well-being Objectives which will have particular or more significant benefits for people with no/low wealth. These include support for children young people to overcome barriers to learning; support for health and wellbeing; support for our most vulnerable residents; supply of affordable and sustainable homes; supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work; and supporting local/community transport and active travel. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering	20.6% of households in RCT are non working (Wales 17.2%) (NOMIS). 23.8% of children in RCT are in relative low income families (22.1% in Wales) and 15.3% in absolute low income families (14.8% in Wales) Children in Low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2022 In October 2021, 14% of all Welsh households, 14% of vulnerable Welsh households and 59% of lower income Welsh households were estimated to be living in fuel poverty. Fuel Poverty Estimates for Wales, Welsh Government 9% of adults are digitally excluded (7% Wales Average) Census 2021

		these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	Car ownership by household No car or van - 22.2% 1 car or van or more - 77.8% Households without a car or van rises to 30% in some areas of RCT (Treherbert, Ferndale and Maerdy) Census 2021
Material Deprivation *(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)*	Select from the following: Positive	The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. There are additionally a number of areas within the Well-being Objectives which will have particular or more significant benefits for people in material depravation. These include support for children young people to overcome barriers to learning; support for health and wellbeing; support for our most vulnerable residents; supply of affordable and sustainable homes; supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work; and supporting local/community transport and active travel. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the	20.6% of households in RCT are non working (Wales 17.2%) (NOMIS). 23.8% of children in RCT are in relative low income families (22.1% in Wales) and 15.3% in absolute low income families (14.8% in Wales) Children in Low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2022 In October 2021, 14% of all Welsh households, 14% of vulnerable Welsh households and 59% of lower income Welsh households were estimated to be living in fuel poverty. Fuel Poverty Estimates for Wales, Welsh Government

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		Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant.	9% of adults are digitally excluded (7% Wales Average) Census 2021 Car ownership by household No car or van - 22.2% 1 car or van or more - 77.8% Households without a car or van rises to 30% in some areas of RCT (Treherbert, Ferndale and Maerdy) Census 2021

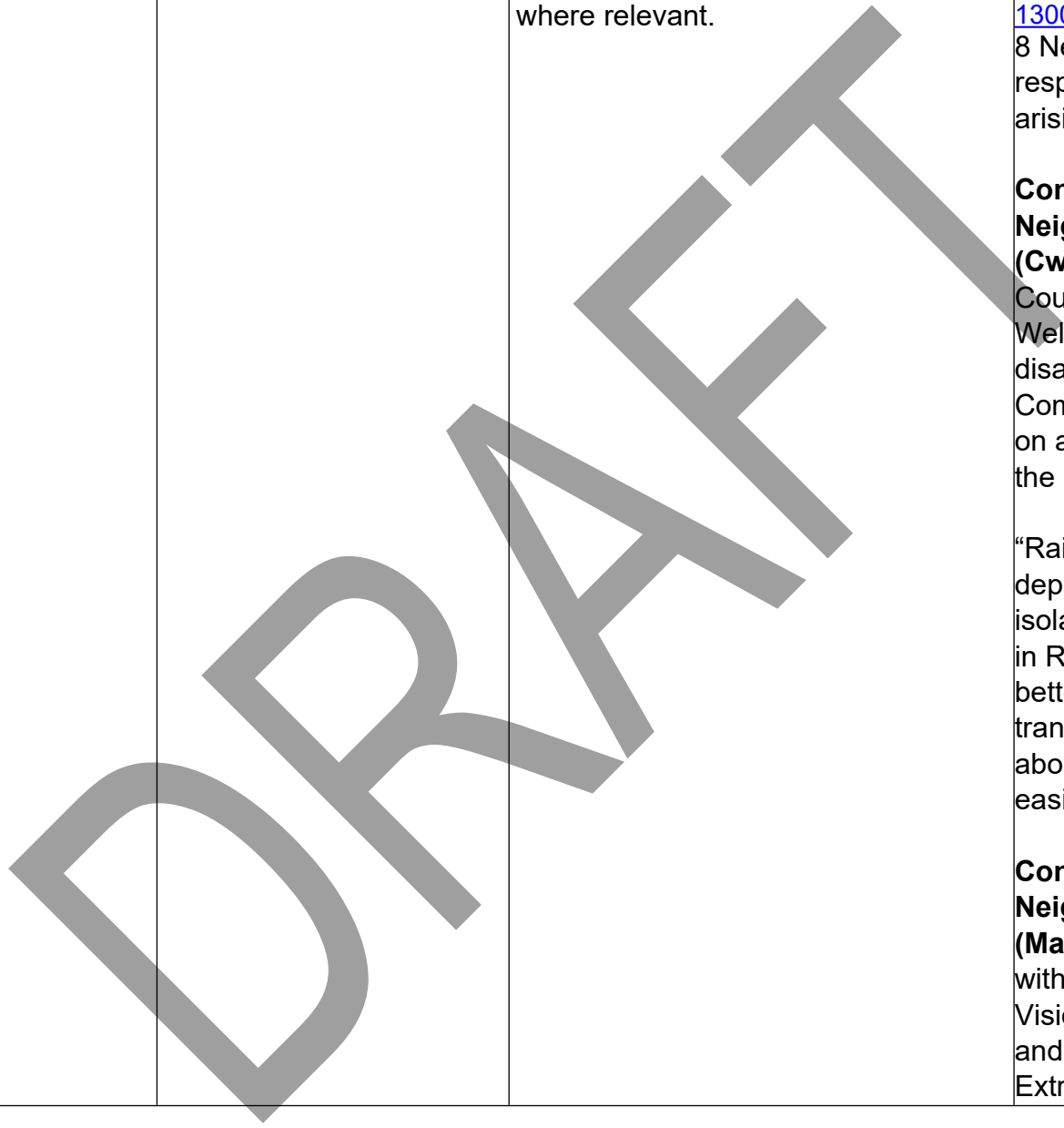| Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Area Deprivation *(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)*	Select from the following: Positive	The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. There are additionally a number of areas within the Well-being Objectives which will have particular or more significant benefits for people in area deprivation. These include actions relating to strengthening local communities and providing opportunities for involvement in learning, leisure, creative activities and volunteering; actions supporting local employment and economy; supporting the development of low carbon travel and public transport; and improving the local environment e.g. air quality and coal tip safety. As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken	Car ownership by household No car or van - 22.2% 1 car or van or more - 77.8% Households without a car or van rises to 30% in some areas of RCT (Treherbert, Ferndale and Maerdy) Census 2021 The Rhondda Valleys have the highest level of social flood risk in Wales Every time in rains – British Red Cross research on flooding in the UK Air pollutant concentrations are currently higher in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage PHW – Climate Change in Wales: Health Impact Assessment Increasing intensity and frequency of rainfall projected as a result of climate change in Wales is highly likely to increase the risk of landslides in vulnerable locations PHW-Climate-Change-HIA-Summary-Report-E-17_07-FINAL-

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		where relevant.	1300.pdf (phwwhocc.co.uk)
			8 Neighbourhood Networks responded. Relevant points arising are set out below.
			Consultation Response: Neighbourhood Network (Cwmparc) - agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, and Well-being Objectives but disagreed with the proposed Commitments. Extract/feedback on a key area of importance for the network and its members:
			"Raise communities out of deprivation. Loneliness and isolation is a big issue for many in RCT and there needs to be better community/public transport so residents can get about the County Borough more easily".
			Consultation Response: Neighbourhood Network (Maerdy Ferndale) – agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. Extract/feedback on a key area

			of importance for the network and its members:
			"Create more employment. If we want to encourage employers to the Rhondda, especially the Fach, the infrastructure must be upgraded to attract investment in and encourage residents to stay eliminating deprivation".
			Consultation Response: Neighbourhood Network (North Cynon) – agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. Extract/feedback of key area of importance for the network and its members:
			"The Eisteddfod will drive footfall and encourage people to travel to RCT, but public transport needs to be improved. People won't be able to attend from some areas of RCT currently as things are. Ease of travel/accessibility/better links needs to be a priority".

| Socio-economic background *(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)* | Select from the following: Positive | The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. There are additionally a number of areas within the Well-being Objectives which will have particular or more significant benefits for people disadvantaged through socio-economic background. These include support for children young people to overcome barriers to learning; support for health and wellbeing; support for our most vulnerable residents; supply of affordable and sustainable homes; supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work.

As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where relevant. | 24.2% of people in RCT have no formal qualifications Census 2021

20.6% of households in RCT are non working (Wales 17.2%) ([NOMIS](#)).

23.8% of children in RCT are in relative low income families (22.1% in Wales) and 15.3% in absolute low income families (14.8% in Wales) [Children in Low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2022](#)

8 Neighbourhood Networks responded. Relevant points arising are set out below.

Consultation Response: Neighbourhood Network (Pentre) – agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments. Extract/feedback of a key area of importance for the network and its members:

"The Council need to ensure |
|---|---|---|---|

young people are gaining good, safe employment and good wages. Many young people are moving away, and communities are getting older".

Consultation Response: Neighbourhood Network (Porth Plaza) – responded that they were not sure whether they agreed or disagreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Commitments or Well-being Objective for Culture and Heritage and needed more information to consider to form a view. They agreed with the other Well-being Objectives. Extract/feedback of a key area of importance for the network:

"Focus on opportunities and employment. Lack of opportunities leads to a community in decline due to young people leaving. They will search for their own opportunities".

| **Socio-economic disadvantage**

(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) | Select from the following:
Positive | There is a high level of socio-economic disadvantage within RCT relative to Wales and the UK.

The intention is for the Corporate Plan to impact positively on all service users, employees and the wider community in RCT. There are additionally a number of areas within the Well-being objectives which will have particular or more significant benefits for people in socio economic disadvantage. These include support for children, young people to overcome barriers to learning; support for health and wellbeing; support for our most vulnerable residents; supply of affordable and sustainable homes; supporting people into rewarding career pathways, skilled and secure work; and supporting local/community transport and active travel.

As more operational actions are developed to deliver the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan, these may have specific impacts on specific groups. These will be reviewed by the relevant service areas delivering these actions, with separate Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where | 24.2% of people in RCT have no formal qualifications Census 2021

20.6% of households in RCT are non working (Wales 17.2%) (NOMIS).

23.8% of children in RCT are in relative low income families (22.1% in Wales) and 15.3% in absolute low income families (14.8% in Wales)
Children in Low income families: local area statistics 2014 to 2022

Car ownership by household
No car or van - 22.2%
1 car or van or more - 77.8%

Households without a car or van rises to 30% in some areas of RCT (Treherbert, Ferndale and Maerdy)
Census 2021

In October 2021, 14% of all Welsh households, 14% of vulnerable Welsh households and 59% of lower income Welsh households were estimated to be living in fuel poverty. |

		relevant.

8 Neighbourhood Networks responded. Relevant points arising are set out below.

Consultation Response: Neighbourhood Network (Maerdy Ferndale) – Agreed overall with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments but thought there could be improvements, particularly to 'People and Communities' and 'Work and Business'. Extract/feedback on a key area of importance for the network:

"Helping to tackle loneliness and isolation, especially for older residents and those who are disadvantaged should be a key priority for the Council".

Consultation Response: Neighbourhood Network (South Cynon) - agreed with the Council's proposed Vision and Well-being Objectives for People and Communities and |

Nature and the Environment. However, they disagreed with Well-being Objective Work and Business, Culture and Heritage and the Council's proposed Commitments. The network wanted to see more detail in these areas and raised financial concerns and questions on whether the Commitments and Well-being Objectives were achievable or too ambitious. Extract/feedback on a key area of importance for the network:

"Caring for our most vulnerable should be a priority such as combatting loneliness, inspiring people to learn, preventing anxiety and distress in people and essentially enabling all people / residents and supporting those who are in crisis".

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 ☐

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SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

5a)   **Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:**
Progress against the Well-being Objectives contained within the Corporate Plan will be monitored through regular reporting to and challenge by Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet and various Scrutiny Committees.

5b)   **When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?**
The final evaluation will take place at the end of the Plan in 2030. However, the impact and outcomes for communities will be established as Improvement Themes within the Plan are progressed or completed as part of the monitoring above.

5c)   **Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?**
The Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team.

5d)   **How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals**?
To be determined following implementation, monitoring and evaluation as set out above.

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
- It was recognised that the plan is high level and therefore focuses on a high level demographic across all of RCT; and that the work translates into individual action plans and Impact Assessments; - It demonstrates the due regard has been paid; - It was noted that the Council is working towards better use of engagement/continuous conversations from the service areas rather than just consultations	7th March 2024	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**

As outlined within the Consultation Feedback report.	7th March 2024	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.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer: Lesley Lawson

Position: Performance Manager

Date: March 2024

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: Paul Mee

Position: Chief Executive

Date: March 2024

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:	Working with Our Communities – The Council's draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030
Department	Performance Management
Service Director	Paul Griffiths
Officer Completing the WLIA	Lesley Lawson
Email	lesley.a.lawson@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	
Brief Description	This is the Council's draft Corporate Plan which sets out our Strategic direction and our Well-being objectives for the next six years. *The Council's Corporate Plan is considered to be the Well-being Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf for the purpose of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.* *Draft version of the Plan considered for pre Scrutiny by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2024, has been hyperlinked throughout for completeness/reference.*
Date	February 2024

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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.

Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Service Users, Employees, Wider Community, Visitors, Residents, Businesses and Third Sector.

What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	This is the Council's draft Corporate Plan which sets out our strategic direction and our Well-being objectives for the next six years. The Council's Corporate Plan is the Well-being Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and in particular supports the four Pillars of Sustainable Development i.e. Social, Economic, Environment and Cultural Well-being.
	
	'Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation' is one of the seven National Well-being goals to which Public Bodies are required to contribute. One of the draft Corporate Plan's four Well-being objectives is 'Culture and Heritage' - recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.
	
	Welsh language is also embedded in the other Well-being Objectives and priorities contained within the draft Plan, particularly:
	  - 'People and Communities' - *supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.*
	  - 'Work and Business' - *helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.*
	
	The fourth Well-being Objective 'Nature and the Environment' – *a green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature* is less focused around Welsh language but focuses more upon climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation.
	
	The Corporate Plan recognises the importance of [Cymraeg 2050](#), the vision of a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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.

Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups?
If so, list them here.
	Once agreed, the Corporate Plan will benefit the population of RCT, as well as businesses, third sector organisations, people who work in the County borough, visitors and Council employees.
	
	Some of the specific Improvement Themes will particularly benefit Welsh speakers/learners including
	    a) Building on the legacy of the Eisteddfod to benefit our communities and businesses.
	    b) Continuing to grow the use of the Welsh language so that it thrives in our homes, communities and work.
	
	In addition to directly benefitting Welsh-speaking groups, including learners, it is envisaged that there will be a number of positive effects more generally on non-Welsh speaking groups and settings as a result of continued normalisation of the Welsh language within our communities. .e.g. giving confidence and creating the interest for people to learn a little Welsh which may lead to further interest and learning. Also increasing opportunities for social interactions, strengthening a sense of community and increased knowledge/interest in local heritage.

Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned	The Census is a key source of information about the number of people who can read, write, understand and speak Welsh. The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. However, there was a small increase in RCT, i.e. 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 Local Authorities in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers. The three others were Cardiff, 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. In addition, the latest Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey: July 2022 to June 2023 states that 1 in 5 persons in RCT can speak Welsh. Services will therefore need to build in capacity for future growth of Welsh language service delivery.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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.

Data from the Council's [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Annual Review](#) shows that in 22/23:
- There were 30 registered Welsh Medium childcare and early years settings, offering 933 places (from a total of 204 settings with 4,467 places).
- 569 learners attended Welsh medium pre-nursery and nursery provision in primary schools (compared to 2,252 in English medium).
- 18.3% (4,038 learners) attended Welsh Medium Primary school (compared to 81.7%, 18,021 learners, attending English medium).
- Only 6.99% (210 Learners) with Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background attended Welsh medium schools in RCT (from a total of 3,004 learners).
- 19% (3,121 learners) attended Welsh Medium secondary education (compared to 81%, 13,317, attending English medium).
- The transition rate of learners from KS2 to KS3 (primary to secondary) in Welsh Medium schools is 95.5% (similar to the transition rate for English Medium schools at 95.8%)
- There was surplus capacity of 22.8% in RCT Welsh Medium primary schools and 27% in Welsh Medium secondary/through schools, compared to 19.9% in English medium primary schools and 17.1% in English medium secondary schools.

Within RCT Staff, as of May 2023, the [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report](#) cites;
- 58.7% of staff identified themselves as having no Welsh language skills.
- 41.3 % of staff identified as having Welsh language skills to at least Level 1.
- 9.6% of staff identified as being fluent in the Welsh language.

A breakdown for the language skill level of our staff can also be found below:

Level	Percentage
Level 0	43.56%
Level 1	40.50%
Level 2	4.99%

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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.

Level 3	1.98%	
Level 4	2.19%	
Level 5	6.75%	

Other relevant data or research	**Corporate Plan – Early Engagement Findings**
	An online survey was published on the Council's [RCT Let's Talk Website](#) from December 8th 2023 – January 29th 2024 and received 303 responses. Specific questions around the Council's proposed Well-being Objectives, Vision and Commitments were included in the survey and some of the relevant findings for the Welsh Impact Assessment can be found below. The survey was also available in Welsh along with the entire engagement project page, accompanying comms and group/network feedback sheets.
	At the time of writing, responses from Group/network feedback, including from Fforwm Iaith, have not yet been received. The responses below are from individuals responding to the online survey.
	The lower level priorities and improvement themes that will deliver the Well-being Objectives • People & Communities, • Work & Business • Culture & Heritage contain supporting actions to promote the Welsh language, increase opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and support an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers.
	Proposed Well-being Objective - People & Communities: - 74.6% agreed with the Well-being objective and priorities. - 11.9% were not sure and thought the well-being objective and priorities could be improved. - 13.5% disagreed with the well-being objective and priority.
	Proposed Well-being Objective – Work & Business: - 74.9% agreed with the Well-being objective and priorities.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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.

	- 10.9% were not sure and thought the well-being objective and priorities could be improved. - 14.2% disagreed with the well-being objective and priority. Proposed Well-being Objective – Culture & Heritage: - 73.6% agreed with the Well-being objective and priorities. - 13.9% were not sure and thought the well-being objective and priorities could be improved. - 12.5% disagreed with the Well-being objective and priority. One of the Commitments to our residents, included in the consultation was to '*deliver services through both Welsh and English, in line with service user preferences, and ensure equal treatment of both languag*es': Of the responses received, - 74.9% agreed with the commitment. - 9.6% were not sure and thought the commitment could be improved. - 15.5% disagreed with the commitment.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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?**
Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language e.g. staff, residents and visitors The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work	Positive	The Corporate Plan 2024-2030 identifies four Well-being objectives that align to the pillars of the Sustainable Development principle. Each Well-being objective is underpinned by a set of priorities that set the Council's strategic direction over the next 6 years. Expected outcomes have been identified so that the Council can monitor	The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Well-Being Goal - A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 – Standard number 88 – 97	Ensure robust action plans are developed and monitored to deliver the Corporate Plan priorities and the Welsh language impacts of individual actions/milestones are considered. Any policies or strategies developed and implemented

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		progress across the life of the Plan and understand whether or not it has successfully delivered it's Well-being objectives. Well-being Objective 4 - Culture and Heritage, specifically seeks to provide opportunities for people to use the Welsh language including during the planning, preparation, delivery and ultimately the legacy of the Eisteddfod 2024 which is being held in Pontypridd in August 2024. Priority 1- An RCT where culture and heritage is vibrant and enhances well-being a) Building on the legacy of the Eisteddfod 2024 to benefit our communities and businesses. Well-being objective 2 – Work and Business, Thriving Town Centres b) Widening our Town Centre 'offer', including local events and celebrating culture and heritage. c) Putting in place amenities that our residents can use to	Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Cymraeg 2050 Strategy: Theme 2 - Increasing the use of Welsh Welsh language promotion strategy 2022-27 and action plan Aberdare Town Centre Strategy & associated Welsh language impact assessment Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan 2022 Porth Town Centre Strategy 2018	to deliver the Well-being Objectives within the Corporate Plan will have a more detailed Welsh language impact assessment undertaken.

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		enhance their visits to Town Centres. This will include opportunities to promote the Welsh language including use of signage, support for Welsh language events and creating favourable conditions for local businesses using the Welsh language.		

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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?
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	Positive	Well-being Objective 1 – People and Communities aims for Children and Young People to have the best start in life and learn and grow safely. This includes actions around making Welsh medium education accessible to all through new and improved learning environments; Priority 1: Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow safely: Providing great learning environments through our new and improved early years settings and schools and making Welsh medium education available to all.	The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Well-Being Goal - A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 – Standard number 88 – 97 Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 Cymraeg 2050 Strategy: Theme 1 - Increasing the number of Welsh Speakers Welsh language promotion strategy 2022-27 and action plan	Ensure robust action plans are developed and monitored to deliver all the Corporate plan priorities and the Welsh language impacts of individual actions/milestones are considered. Any policies or strategies developed and implemented to deliver the Well-being Objectives within the Corporate Plan will have a more detailed Welsh language impact assessment undertaken.

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Well-being Objective 4 - Culture and Heritage specifically seeks to promote and grow the use of the Welsh language including skills that can be shared between generations so that more people use and understand the Welsh language.

Priority 1- An RCT where culture and heritage is vibrant and enhances well-being
d) Building on the legacy of the Eisteddfod 2024 to benefit our communities and businesses.
e) Continuing to grow the use of the Welsh language so that it thrives in our homes, communities and work.
g) Developing Intergenerational Projects to promote learning and shared skills, encouraging intergenerational friendships and help to reduce loneliness.

Some of the outcomes we expect to see by 2030:
• More people are confident to use Welsh in their everyday lives and more learners

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		access Welsh medium education.		
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 Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time	Positive	Well-being Objective 1 – People and Communities relates to education, among other things and embedded in this is the teaching of Welsh Language. Priority 1: Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow safely: Providing great learning environments through our new and improved early years settings and schools and making Welsh medium education available to all. Well-being Objective 4 - Culture and Heritage specifically seeks to promote and grow the use of the Welsh language including skills that can be shared between generations so that more people use and understand the Welsh language. Priority 1- An RCT where culture and heritage is vibrant and enhances well-being f) Building on the legacy of the Eisteddfod 2024 to benefit our communities and businesses.	The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Well-Being Goal - A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 – Standard number 88 – 97 Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 Cymraeg 2050 Strategy: Theme 1 - Increasing the number of Welsh Speakers Cymraeg 2050 Strategy: Theme 2 - Increasing the use of Welsh Cymraeg 2050 Strategy: Theme 3 – Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 Aberdare Town Centre Strategy & associated Welsh language impact assessment	Ensure robust action plans are developed and monitored to deliver all the Corporate plan priorities and the Welsh language impacts of individual actions/milestones are considered. Any policies or strategies developed and implemented to deliver the Well-being Objectives within the Corporate Plan will have a more detailed Welsh language impact assessment undertaken.

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| | | g) Continuing to grow the use of the Welsh language so that it thrives in our homes, communities and work.
h) Developing Intergenerational Projects to promote learning and shared skills, encouraging intergenerational friendships and help to reduce loneliness.

Some of the outcomes we expect to see by 2030:
More people are confident to use Welsh in their everyday lives and more learners access Welsh medium education.

Well-being objective 2 – Work and Business, Thriving Town Centres
    a) Widening our Town Centre 'offer', including local events and celebrating culture and heritage.
    b) Putting in place amenities that our residents can use to enhance their visits to Town Centres.

This will include opportunities to promote the Welsh language | Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan 2022

Porth Town Centre Strategy 2018 | |

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		including use of signage, support for Welsh language events and creating favourable conditions for local businesses using the Welsh language		

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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?
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. Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work	Positive	Our commitments to residents contained within the Corporate Plan includes: We will deliver services through both Welsh and English, in line with service user preferences and statutory duties, and ensure equal treatment of both languages This will raise the profile of Welsh language standards with both residents and staff. The engagement in respect of the new Corporate Plan has been bilingual. Subsequent publication and communication will also fully comply with the Welsh language standards.	The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Well-Being Goal - A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 – Standard number 88 – 97 Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030	Ensure robust action plans are developed and monitored to deliver all the Corporate plan priorities and the Welsh language impacts of individual actions/milestones are considered. Any policies or strategies developed and implemented to deliver the Well-being Objectives within the Corporate Plan will have a more detailed Welsh language impact assessment undertaken.
Treating the Welsh language, no less	Positive	Our commitments to residents contained within the Corporate	The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.	Ensure robust action plans are developed and

| **favourably than the English language** | | Plan includes: We will deliver services through both Welsh and English, in line with service user preferences and statutory duties, and ensure equal treatment of both languages

This will raise the profile of Welsh language standards with both residents and staff | Well-Being Goal - A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language

Section 44 Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 – Standard number 88 – 97

Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030 | monitored to deliver all the Corporate Plan priorities and the Welsh language impacts of individual actions/milestones are considered.

Any policies or strategies developed and implemented to deliver the Well-being Objectives within the Corporate Plan will have a more detailed Welsh language impact assessment undertaken. |

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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?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
Development of four annual plans for the Well-being Objectives which will be monitored quarterly and reported to Cabinet. These plans will deliver the Corporate Plan priorities, and include relevant actions to promote the Welsh language, increase opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and support an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers.	June 2024 and annual reports thereafter to 2030	Lesley Lawson - Performance Manager

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?
Nothing to identify	The relevant and/or more specific actions within the Corporate Plan annual/biannual priority plans will be picked up in impact assessments.

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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
This is a considered and well-evidenced assessment of the impact the Council's proposed Corporate Plan 2024-2030 will have on the Welsh language in the county borough. There is a clear awareness that the Council must harness the legacy of the 2024 Eisteddfod to increase the use of Welsh and the number of speakers in the area, and to meet its statutory duties in respect of the language, and it will be essential that policies and strategies derived from this plan are accompanied by their own Welsh Language Impact Assessment, as is noted here. In terms of ensuring the Plan itself has the maximum possible impact upon promoting the Welsh language in RCT and in normalising its use, Welsh Language Services would suggest the team consider renaming Objective 4 as 'Culture, Heritage, and Welsh Language' to fully align with the Well-being Goals of the	26 February	The team is writing the Plan for and on behalf of Chief Executive and will escalate the suggestions made in the WL services comments so that they are considered as part of the next iteration of the draft.

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WFG Act, as it would further emphasise RCT's serious commitment to the language and help to normalise the language even more. We'd also ask that any feedback from groups such as Y Fforwm Iaith be considered when available and any relevant comments/subsequent amendments to the Plan be added as an Appendix to this document or recorded formally in some other way.		
Officer Review Panel Comments	**Date Considered**	**Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations**
Officers from the Review Panel were very satisfied that the Corporate Plan took account of Welsh language impacts and those impacts being positive. Officers were pleased to see that following public engagement the Corporate Plan had been updated to involve further actions and importance around promoting the Welsh language, increasing opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and supporting an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers.	26 February	No amendments suggested or necessary following Officer Review Panel consideration.
Consultation Comments	**Date Considered**	**Brief description of any amendments made following consultation**
A suggestion to integrate the Welsh Language into the Culture and Heritage Well-being Objective was reinforced by feedback from 'Y Fforwm Iaith' and 'Cor Cwm Rhondda' and has been taken into account in subsequent drafts. There were also comments from 2 Neighbourhood Network meetings (Mid Rhondda and North Cynon) and several individual responses to the online survey that mentioned that they'd like to see more about the promotion of the Welsh language, supporting further for the inclusion of Welsh Language in the Corporate Plan 2024-2030.		1. Well-being Objective: Culture & Heritage amended to Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language. 2. 'Our Commitments to residents' were updated to include a commitment re the Welsh language as we developed the plan and was reinforced by feedback. Our Commitments to residents now includes *'We will treat Welsh and English languages equally and deliver services to users in their language of choice'*.

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Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

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

The Corporate Plan will be delivered through the development of four annual plans, one for each of the Well-being Objectives and which will be monitored quarterly and reported to Cabinet and appropriate Scrutiny Committees. These plans will deliver the Corporate Well-being Objectives including Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language, will set the framework for Service Delivery Plans and other Council plans, policies and strategies and will include relevant actions to promote the Welsh language, increase opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and support an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers.

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 - The Corporate Plan will be available in Welsh. The Welsh Language Impact Assessment in respect of an early draft of the Corporate Plan was considered by the Review Panel on 7th March and the findings are attached at Appendix D of the Cabinet report. A suggestion to integrate the Welsh Language into the Culture and Heritage Well-being Objective was reinforced by feedback from Y Fforwm Iaith and Cor Cwm Rhondda and has been taken into account in subsequent drafts.

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Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA		Service Director Name:	
Position		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		Date	

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Feedback Responses from Welsh Language Groups

Fforwm Iaith

Agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, Well-being Objectives and Commitments, apart from the Well-being Objective - Culture and Heritage, where they thought it could be improved. All in attendance (40) provided feedback on an area of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below the feedback received. The response can be categorised by the feedback theme 'Culture' with a focus on the 'Welsh Language'.

"This needs to explicitly mention the Welsh Language as a priority area, to read Culture, Heritage and the Welsh Language / Diwylliant, Treftadaeth a'r Iaith Gymraeg. It should be mentioned as part of the Council's commitment and aspiration for the Welsh Language - to tie in with both statutory duties and wider commitment to Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Standards, WESP 2022-2032 etc".

"If one specific policy area is mentioned (Carbon Neutral by 2030) there should be parity with other essential policy areas / aspirations".

Cor Cwm Rhondda

Responded that they were unsure whether they agreed with the Council's proposed Vision, but they agreed with Well-being Objectives and Commitments. However, they did disagree with the Council's Well-being Objective – Culture and Heritage. All in attendance (50) provided feedback on an area of importance that the network would like the Council to focus on. See below the feedback received. The response can be categorised by the feedback theme 'Culture' with a focus on the Welsh Language.

"We feel the statement could acknowledge that we are in Wales/a Welsh area, and that Welsh language is used here. We also feel it could include reference to being a welcoming area to people of all backgrounds."

"We feel the Welsh language must be acknowledged more explicitly here, especially if we want to maximise the legacy of the Eisteddfod. We'd like to see the objective renamed as 'Culture, Heritage and the Welsh Language' to ensure the Welsh language is at the forefront of council strategy and normalised within the borough at all levels. We'd like to see 'linguistic' heritage added to the second bullet point too. We feel these changes would be more in line with the Well-being goals of the Future Generations Act itself too."

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20th March 2024

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31st December 2023 (Quarter 3)

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 nine months of this financial year (to the 31st December 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 31st December 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 31st December 2023 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).

2.4 Note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31st December 2023 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

2.5 Note the Quarter 3 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 31st December 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 third 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 level 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 3 REPORT

5.1 The Quarter 3 report is attached and comprises:

- **Executive Summary** – setting out, at a glance, the overall performance of the Council as at Quarter 3 (i.e. 31st December 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 9 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

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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 3 2023/24, that is, 31st December 2023.

11.2 The Quarter 3 revenue budget position is projecting a £2.450M overspend and is primarily due to sustained increases in demand for services, particularly within adult and children's services, along with continued additional inflationary cost pressures, for example, food costs within Catering Services and home to school contract costs. Work is progressing as part of the Council's robust budget management arrangements to review all areas of expenditure and income and one-off funding options to bring the revenue position closer in line with budget by year-end. The Council is also continuing its engagement with Welsh Government, like all local authorities in Wales, to set out the on-going service and financial pressures faced and at the same time setting out the clear case for additional funding to be made available by the UK Government to support the on-going delivery of vital public services.

11.3 Capital investment as at 31st December 2023 is £115.741M, with the Capital Programme updated to reflect changes in costs, revised delivery timescales for individual schemes and also new external grant funding approvals received. As set out within the first and second quarter Performance Reports, the Council's Capital Programme for 2023/24 is delivering a sustained programme of significant investment in infrastructure and assets, supporting visible improvements 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, sound progress was made during quarter 3 to take forward a comprehensive programme of work that is supporting improved outcomes for residents and communities within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Other Information:-
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Contact Officer: Paul Griffiths

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

20th March 2024

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31st December 2023 (Quarter 3)

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

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COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT
QUARTER 3 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 3 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 31st December 2023 (Quarter 3).

The Quarter 3 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 31st December 2023 (Quarter 3)		
	Full Year Budget £M	Projected Expenditure as at Quarter 3 £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
Education & Inclusion Services (2a)	222.668	222.506	(0.162)
Community & Children's Services (2b)	201.416	204.111	2.695
Chief Executive (2c)	27.949	27.724	(0.225)
Finance, Digital & Frontline Services (2d)	79.067	79.403	0.336
Sub Total	**531.100**	**533.744**	**2.644**
Authority Wide Budgets (2e)	78.855	78.661	(0.194)
Grand Total	**609.955**	**612.405**	**2.450**

The full year revenue budget variance, projected as at 31st December 2023, is a £2.450M overspend. During quarter 3 the main factors and conditions that have been driving significant budget pressures in the first half of the year continued, these being over and above the additional resources built into the 2023/24 revenue budget. The main factors and conditions being:

- Increases in the cost of social care, reflecting the level of demand for services and the complexity and specialist nature of care required:

- o Adult Services – for external residential / nursing placements (specialist placements), Supported Living Schemes and under-achievement of income due to low occupancy within the Council's Homes for the Elderly; and

- o Children's Services – for in-house and external residential placements.

- Inflation levels remaining high that is causing further cost pressures and has impacted on home to school transport contract costs and food costs within the Council's Catering Service.

Work is progressing as part of the Council's robust budget management arrangements to review all areas of expenditure and income and one-off funding options to bring the revenue position closer in line with budget by year-end. The outcomes from this work will be incorporated into the Quarter 4 Performance Report.

Following on, revenue budget variances, projected at Quarter 3, for each Service Group are set out below.

Revenue budget variances projected at Quarter 3

1. Education & Inclusion Services

   EDUCATION & INCLUSION SERVICES
   - o Additional Learning Needs (£0.177M underspend); and
   - o Catering (£0.150M overspend).

2. Community and Children's Services

   ADULT SERVICES
   - o Long Term Care & Support (£0.228M overspend);
   - o Commissioned Services (£1.534M overspend);
   - o Provider Services (£0.724M overspend);
   - o Short Term Intervention Service (£0.085M overspend); and
   - o Fairer Charging (£0.476M underspend).

   CHILDREN SERVICES
   - o Safeguarding & Support (including Children Looked After) (£1.895M overspend);
   - o Early Intervention (£0.620M underspend);
   - o Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (£0.087M underspend); and
   - o Intensive Intervention (£0.071M underspend).

   TRANSFORMATION
   - o Regional Training Unit (£0.052M underspend); and
   - o Group & Transformation Management (£0.126M underspend).

   PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION
   - o Public Protection (£0.215M underspend);
   - o Community Services (£0.135M underspend);

- o Communities & Wellbeing (£0.121M underspend); and
- o Leisure, Countryside and Cultural Services (£0.107M overspend).

3. Chief Executive

   CHIEF EXECUTIVE
   - o Human Resources (£0.064M underspend); and
   - o Prosperity & Development (£0.149M underspend).

4. Finance, Digital & Frontline Services

   FRONTLINE SERVICES
   - o Highways Management (£0.168M underspend);
   - o Transportation (£0.254M overspend);
   - o Highways Maintenance (£0.080M underspend);
   - o Waste Services (£0.162M overspend); and
   - o Parks Services (£0.073M overspend).

5. Authority Wide Budgets

   - Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£0.217M 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 31st December 2023	
	Capital Budget £M	Actual Expenditure £M
Chief Executive (3a)	28.653	16.248
Finance, Digital & Frontline Services (3b)	79.535	45.973
Education & Inclusion Services (3c)	72.862	48.766
Community & Children's Services (3d)	13.110	4.754
Total	**194.160**	**115.741**

Key Capital Variances at Quarter 3

- 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 European Funding Office ERDF (£2.500M); Welsh Government (WG) Universal Primary Free School Meal Grant (£2.830M); WG Childcare (£1.820M); and Housing with Care Fund (£1.197M).

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.

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Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

- **Turnover**

Service Area	2023/24		2022/23			
	As at 31st December 2023		As at 31st December 2022		As at 31st March 2023	
	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover
Turnover – Council Wide	**10,505**	**9.33**	**10,870**	**9.16**	**10,896**	**11.38**
Chief Executive's Division	922	5.97	962	6.44	952	9.14
Education & Inclusion Services	1,245	7.39	1,275	4.47	1,278	6.03
Schools Primary Secondary	4,801 2,941 1,860	10.16 10.34 9.89	4,956 3,112 1,844	9.62 7.90 12.53	5,020 3,142 1,878	11.16 9.64 13.68
Community & Children's Services	2,595	11.21	2,747	12.34	2,722	15.94
Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	942	5.73	930	6.56	924	8.87

- **Sickness Absence**

Service Area	2023/24	2022/23	
	As at 31st December 2023 %	As at 31st December 2022 %	As at 31st March 2023 %
% days lost to sickness absence – Council Wide	**4.92**	**5.45**	**5.34**
Chief Executive's Division	3.42	3.20	3.16
Education & Inclusion Services	4.69	4.84	4.73
Schools Primary Secondary	4.21 4.54 3.69	4.73 5.18 3.98	4.57 5.00 3.84
Community & Children's Services	6.84	7.96	7.89
Finance, Digital & Frontline Services	4.96	5.01	5.15

For a more detailed breakdown of 2023/24 staff turnover and sickness absence information, click here.

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<u>Organisation Health related investment areas</u>

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.

- **<u>Council Strategic Risks</u>**

  The Council's Strategic Risk Register is reviewed on an on-going basis to take account of the changing internal and external operating environment.

  Further to the review process of the Register, it has not been deemed necessary to revise Strategic Risk Register risk ratings to those reported at quarter 2. This position will be kept under on-going review and, where revisions are considered necessary, these will be included in future Strategic Risk Register updates.

  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.

A summary of progress made across each of the three priorities as at 31st December 2023 (Quarter 3) is set out in Sections 5a - c. Members will note that as part of the summaries of progress, electronic links have been included to each priority action plan, providing more detailed information on the progress during the third quarter of the year.

Corporate Plan Priority Progress Update

o **PEOPLE** (Section 5a)

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful
Summary of progress to 31st December 2023
Supporting our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life.   We have continued our work to support our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life. Linc Cymru have appointed a new contractor to resume construction of the new extra care home in Porth. Work has commenced on site in January 2024 and is progressing. Pre-application for the new extra care home in Mountain Ash commenced in December 2023, prior to seeking planning permission by the end of financial year. We are also working on the development options of a further two extra care facilities in Ferndale and Treorchy. 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.   Work has begun on developing a new specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities in adulthood and older age, on the former Bronllwyn Residential Care Home site in Gelli The former care home has been demolished and work on site continues following a break due to the liquidation of the former demolition contractor. Work is progressing as planned on a supported accommodation scheme as part of the 'Big Shed' development in Tonypandy. The scheme will contain 8 apartments for adults with learning disabilities alongside staff accommodation. We are also progressing design options for a new supported living scheme for people with a learning disability in Church Village but progress has been slower than expected and partners have not yet been identified at this stage on the project.   We continue to invest in services to **prevent** escalation of need increasing or enable recovery and independence. We completed 735 reablement packages between 1st April - 31st December 2023. Of these packages, 720 reduced, maintained or mitigated the need for support (98%). We worked with Health to develop new intermediate care provision at Parc Newydd Care Home in Talbot Green to support timely discharge for people not yet ready to return to their own home. Refurbishment of the new reablement provision has been completed; however, in line with current and future anticipated demand we will now utilise this refurbished provision for residential dementia placements ensuring that the refurbished provision and gardens can safely accommodate individuals in line with their care requirements. We are currently recruiting staff before new placements can commence.

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We are progressing the redesign of the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service operating model within Adult Services to refocus on enhanced early intervention and **prevention** services. Some elements of the new model have already been progressed, including increased joint working with the Council's Community Development Team and other community services and improvement to referral processes. A new digital form is in development with the aim to implement for First Response colleagues and the general public in the next few months.

We continue to maximise new technology and ensure services are accessible and available to people and their families. This includes **collaborating** with Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil Councils to procure a digital Alarm Receiving Centre solution which will provide more opportunities for broadening the assistive technology that we currently offer that meets the needs of residents. Unfortunately, the initial tender could not be awarded due to the cost of the new solution being significantly higher than anticipated. Options are being explored regarding the next steps, these include another collaborative tender or a possible direct award to our current provider.

We continue to work with domiciliary care providers to ensure that people receive good quality home care based on the outcomes they want to achieve and that there is sufficient provision available at the right level to meet demand. In Quarter 3, Cabinet approved a redesign of our domiciliary care service model and future commissioning of the Council's Supported Living Service for People with a Learning Disability, with arrangements progressing to implement these decisions.

We continue to deliver and monitor Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for both Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Councils ensuring residents homes are adapted in order to support them to live in their home independently. In Quarter 3, it took an average of 350 calendar days to deliver a DFG and 149 DFGs were approved in Rhondda Cynon Taf with a total grant award of £1.5M. Of those DFGs completed, 93% respondents agreed that they feel more confident and independent after the adaptation and 96% respondents agreed that it was easier for a family member/carer to assist in meeting their daily needs.

We continue the transformation of day services for older people. In December 2023, following a period of consultation and pre Scrutiny, Cabinet approved proposals which aim to create a more efficient and effective service offer, providing older people with access to modern facilities, and ensuring better use of Council resources. These changes include combining Trecynon Day Centre and Cwmni Dda Day Centre so that future provision is provided from Cwmni Dda Day Centre and transferring, on a phased basis, provision from Tonyrefail Day Centre to a new day centre provision at Cwrt yr Orsaf extra care in Pontypridd. The changes, which will take effect by March 2024, will maintain the care provided to people with assessed needs and promote well-being and independence, and staff will be relocated to ensure continuity of care.

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. This took place throughout the summer and we supported service users and their families and carers to understand and engage with the consultation process by offering face to face consultations, where requested, and creating an information pack for them to ensure the relevant information was presented in an accessible and clear format. Taking into account the outcome of the consultation, which was informed by what people told us through the "My Day My

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PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

Way" engagement, Cabinet agreed the implementation of the proposed co-produced Day Services Strategy and operating model for people with a learning disability in November 2023. This remodelling of the Council's day service provision to a new East and West structure, including smaller community-based groups, will ensure that services are delivered in a way that achieves the best possible individual outcomes for people, based on need and demand, whilst making the best use of Council resources.

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. We are developing new initiatives and programmes to increase customer membership and visitor numbers across the service area e.g. in Quarter 3, we promoted our Fall into Fitness offer and Christmas Cracker offer to encourage access to our gyms and swimming pools. We also introduced Cold Water swims at Lido Ponty and 2,968 visits were made during these and our popular Boxing Day swim sessions. In total, we have 10,542 Leisure For Life members compared to 9,383 in December 2022. 1,099,743 visits were made to our indoor sport and leisure facilities between April 2023 and December 2023 compared to 912,323 in the same period last year.

We continue to explore new ways of monitoring and evaluating projects that are linked to our Leisure Strategy in a consistent way including developing outcome measures and case studies. An example of this work is our review of usage at Darren Park following the introduction of a 3G pitch in September 2023. Usage has increased from an average of 80 uses a month prior to the installation of the 3G pitch to over 4,000 a month. An additional positive outcome has also been identified from feedback received from local walking groups who have been able to extend their winter walks as a result of the floodlights on the 3G pitch.

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 are also responding to customer feedback to strengthen our leisure offer. This has included introducing adult swimming lessons in Tonyrefail Leisure Centre following a number of customer enquiries. This 10-week programme, led by a fully trained instructor, is being delivered to meet the individual needs of customers including those that have never learnt to swim or wanted to build confidence and skills in the water. We will continue to promote these lessons on our social media pages.

We continue to develop the Food Prosperity Network and in November 2023 the RCT Food Partnership achieved the national Sustainable Food Places (SFP) Bronze Award. The award recognises the excellent community partnership work undertaken throughout the County Borough to promote healthy, sustainable, and local food. Additionally, the award highlights the Council's commitment to addressing significant social challenges such as food poverty, diet-related illnesses, the decline of family farms, and the loss of independent food retailers. An example of the type of community project that we support is the Gilfach Goch Community Facility where an average of 150 subsided two course meals per week are provided to residents aged 50+. Activities run daily from the venue including bingo, sewing, crochet, pilates, men's social group, Adult Community Learning & a Winter Welcome Centre. On the 7th December 2023, 75 residents

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attended the Christmas Lunch with pupils from Tonyrefail Community Schools attending to provide entertainment.

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. We promoted local events in our libraries including 'Santa Saturdays' in Treorchy Library in partnership with Love Treorchy. Launched as part of the Treorchy Christmas event on the 2nd December, children were able to visit Santa's Grotto every Saturday from the 2nd to 23rd December. Visitors paid £5 per visit and were then given a £5 voucher to spend in shops on the local High Street to encourage footfall and people to shop locally in the run up to Christmas. In total, 2,281 visitors and 552 children attended these events. We also promoted our twelfth RCT produced pantomime, Cinderella, with prices offered at the same price as last year's production despite inflation. We strive to make our productions more environmentally sustainable, and for this year's pantomime, we reused as much as we could from previous pantomime productions, reducing the amount of one-off items we purchased, and recycling anything that could not be reused. In total, 37,550 individuals attended arts events in our theatres and Garth Olwg between April 2023 and December 2023 compared to 25,613 in the same period last year.

We continue to prioritise and strengthen 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 3, a total of 22 Neighbourhood Network meetings have taken place with 176 community groups and organisations represented from across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

In total, our Community Co-ordinators based within our Community Resilience Hubs have received and responded to 846 individual requests for support via a coordinated community-based approach. Focussing particularly on early intervention and **prevention**, the information, advice and assistance and wider **preventative** approaches delivered enables residents to access support as early as possible, thus reducing demand on health and social care by encouraging the greater personal independence of residents and build the sustainability of the Third Sector.

Integrating health and social care and providing support for those with mental health problems and complex needs.

We continue to work with our partners to implement an **integrated** health and social care model. A regional model has been agreed based on two priority pathways of **integrated** care:

1. The urgent pathway of care: unscheduled community response for intensive, wrap around multidisciplinary team support that is time limited.
2. The population health management: a multidisciplinary response to population segmentation to embed a **preventative** ethos across all levels of need.

The aim of delivering **integrated** services is to improve health, care and wellbeing including **prevention** through a proactive approach and ensuring people will spend more time at home, with improved individual and population outcomes.

Following the agreement, we have worked with regional health and social partners to agree a new governance structure, workforce plan and fully costed commissioning intent to deliver the new

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PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

integrated community services model. This work has taken longer than anticipated and a regional director has now been appointed to manage the implementation of the new regional model from April 2024.

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. We have also embedded Home First approaches within Support@Home Services to support Pathway 1 discharges from hospital.

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 and a contract has been awarded to the third sector to deliver the new dementia care connector role across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

We are also **collaborating** with our partners on early intervention and **prevention** work to reduce the number of Public Protection Notices issued and referrals to statutory services through the South Wales Police Early Help project. Following a successful pilot in 2022/23 this work 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. For this reporting period, 134 referrals were received via the South Wales Police Early Help pathway of which 82 received a non-statutory wellbeing assessment, and 48 were referred/signposted to community organisations/groups for support. The non-statutory wellbeing assessment is designed with the resident at the centre of their support, ensuring their needs, goals and outcomes are achieved, which results in them taking control of their own lives and wellbeing. This case study provides an example of how this referral pathway has impact in the community.

We continue to raise awareness and develop the resident support offer within our communities. Having received confirmation of funding for the Community Dementia **Prevention** Programme pilot in Quarter 2, we have worked with our existing networks to identify organisations that could apply to take part in the pilot. Applicants were asked to apply for grants of up to £2,000 to provide Dementia **prevention** activities under the broad aims of 'Be physically active', 'Maintain a healthy weight' and 'Be socially active'. A total of 19 projects were successful in securing funding across the County Borough. The type of activities that will be provided include intergenerational activities within Porth Community School and Ty Porth Care Home; wellbeing and therapy sessions including mindfulness activities; social activities including coffee mornings; and opportunities to take part in low impact exercise including yoga, pilates and strength and balance activity.

Over the next 5 years, we will be **collaborating** more with our partners in Health to develop **Integrated** Health and Social Care Hubs across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. Utilising the Integrated Regional Care Fund, we have appointed HICO to undertake a feasibility study and develop a regional strategy for this project.

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PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.

We continue to focus commissioning to improve access to and support engagement in early intervention and **prevention** services for children, young people and families to reduce demand on statutory services. This quarter we have begun to implement the findings from the [Autside](#) review to ensure services are accessible to neurodivergent children, young people and families. This has included delivering sensory environments training within our youth club environments and sensory training for our family services providers. Sensory Circuit training is also being planned for YEPS staff. A sensory circuit is a form of sensory integration intervention and it involves a sequence of physical activities that are designed to alert, organise and calm the child. The sensory circuit aims to facilitate sensory processing to help children regulate and organise their senses in order to achieve the 'just right' or optimum level of alertness required for effective learning. The circuit should be an active, physical and fun activity that children enjoy doing.

We continue to promote and provide parenting programmes via our [RCT Families website](#). These courses can help build confidence, improve resilience and support parents to be the best they can be. Between April 2023 and December 2023, 89% of parents who completed a parenting programme recorded a positive outcome (350 parents).

We also continue to monitor the take up of Welsh medium Flying Start childcare as a result of the change to our commissioning arrangements that was designed to actively encourage the take up of Welsh medium provision. Working with Mudiad Meithrin, we have increased the number of Welsh Medium provisions across the County Borough on the approved supplier list for Flying Start. This has resulted in a 122% increase in the number of Welsh medium approved Flying Start settings, from 9 to 20. We have also designed a leaflet ([Flying Start Bilingual Journey](#)) in partnership with Mudiad Meithrin which is now circulated to every new family when the child is 18 months old via the Family Health Visitor to promote the Welsh language and Welsh language provision. We have also altered our application forms to allow parents to choose a 'don't mind' option when it comes to choosing language preferred as an alternative to specifically Welsh or English medium. Where parents opt for 'don't mind', we aim to offer a Welsh medium provision where possible to increase the uptake in Welsh medium provisions. As a result of these changes, since April 2023, of those offered childcare via the Flying Start expansion programme, 21% (125 children) have been allocated a Welsh medium provision. This compares to 5.6% in 2021/22 and 9.7% in 2022/23.

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. Between January 2023 and December 2023, of the 122 children who ceased to be Looked After, 65 children were returned home (53%). Work continues on refreshing our permanence policy. We have completed work to review our current policy and identified what works well and what needs to change. We have held focus groups with staff and interviewed family members as part of this work including a Reunification workshop held in Autumn 2023. Practice is developing and a report and action plan is being developed. 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. An evaluation of the pilot will be completed by the end of March 2024.

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PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

In line with the Welsh Government ambition of eliminating profit from children's care, we are implementing our **long-term** Residential Transformation Strategy which was agreed by Cabinet in February 2023. Through the Strategy, 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. In 2023/24, we have opened Willowford House, registered Ystrad Fechan as a Children's Home, recruited and trained staff for these new facilities as well as purchase a number of other properties that will be refurbished and registered as children's homes. As a result of these developments, the percentage of Children Looked After in not for profit residential care has increased from 21% in April 2023 to 31% in September 2023.

We continue to work with Foster Wales. As at 31st December 2023, there were a total of 269 RCT Foster Carers (125 Mainstream and 144 Kinship). This compares to 284 on 31st December 2022 (134 Mainstream and 150 Kinship). We need to reverse this trend and costed plans to accelerate recruitment of Foster Carers are being developed for approval.

Our Participation strategy outlines Rhondda Cynon Taf's 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 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 have developed new webpages to provide information to the public and these will go live in April 2024.

We are working with our schools to develop strategic approaches to supporting children and families in poverty. We continued to roll out universal free school meals in line with Welsh Government policy, which was completed for our Year 3 and 4 pupils by September 2023 and we are preparing for the rollout to Year 5 and 6 in April 2024. We also prepared a report for Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee to provide a summary and evaluation of Community Focussed Schools and Anti-Poverty measures in October 2023. This report highlights the positive work that has been undertaken within schools to support children and families in poverty.

The full action plan can be viewed by **clicking here.**

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 3

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PEOPLE		
Investment Area	**Investment Value[1] £M**	**Quarter 3 Update**
Extracare Housing	7.772	As set out in the quarter 2 Performance Report, this investment funding covers: • 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. (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). Plans for additional extra care facilities are being developed in line with the Council's residential care homes for older people strategy, this being supported via additional investment of £2M as agreed by full Council on 20th September 2023.
Tackling Poverty Fund	0.300	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.
Total	**8.072**	

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[1] Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.

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- **PLACES** (Section 5b)

PLACES - Where people are proud to live, work and play
Summary of progress to 31st December 2023

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

Continued focus on promoting good recycling practices through campaigns and education. 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 into new items. During the quarter, 16 educational visits have been made to the centre including 6 made by schools, and 22 online sessions have also been made available to those schools not able to physically visit the centre. A new interactive recycling game was also launched this quarter that tests recycling knowledge, discover what can and can't be recycled and where each item needs to be placed. We continue to look at ways to help with transport costs for physical visits. We have also ensured that our recycling bag distribution points have been well-stocked for the Christmas period. Opportunities have been taken to promote recycling, particularly during Recycle Week in October, and with our seasonal campaigns e.g. THINK GREEN this Halloween!, and Be A 'Star Recycler' this Christmas!

We continue to see a positive trend in household recycling following the changes to the 3-weeky black bag waste collections in July; the overall recycling percentage has increased to 67.44% compared to 65.36% in Qtr 3 2022/23. The tonnage of residual waste sent to landfill continues to positively decrease from 2,108 tonnes (2.42%) in Qtr 3 2022/23 compared to 1,170 tonnes (1.39%) this quarter.

In collaboration with Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales, we have promoted the changes in legislation relating to non-domestic waste collections i.e. the separation of residual and recyclable waste, in advance of the April 2024 implementation date. Our web pages have been updated together with procedures for recycling bags and bins. This quarter, we have also publicised changes to our Green Waste collection services that have changed to a new bookable, free, bespoke service during the less busy winter period (November – March).

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. Targeted awareness raising is being provided to those households identified as not recycling food waste, and we continue to utilise enforcement powers to reduce residual waste and ensure the correct presentation of waste. In addition, 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. The extension to the RCT Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) was also agreed by Cabinet in September following public consultation. We also continue to take appropriate action to enforce the PSPO for dog controls as evidenced in November when 2 residents were fined for related offences.

In addition, we continue to work with Caru Cymru (Keep Wales Tidy) to support community activity e.g. litter picks. This quarter we also invited residents to recycle small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) at our Leisure Centres.

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 also

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

support the Council's decarbonisation agenda to reduce single use plastic across the Council. The Environmental Protection (Single-Use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023 became law in September 2023, which will make it a criminal offence to supply or offer to supply (including for free) certain single-use plastic products to consumers in Wales. More information on this Act will be provided in quarter 4.

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 Maindy Road Bridge scheme in Ton Pentre; White Bridge in Pontypridd; and Llanharan Railway Footbridge. Repairs have also been completed at Imperial Bridge Porth and at the Gelligallad Footbridge. We have also celebrated the reopening of the Grade II listed historic Iron Tram Bridge in Trecynon following its restoration. To ensure the safety of pedestrians and motorists, wall repairs have also taken place in Abernant.

We have undertaken road repairs at Rhigos Mountain Road, and resurfacing works at Aberdare Town Centre and at the newly installed pedestrian crossing point in Llanharan. In November, Cabinet agreed highways schemes for additional investment totalling £1.5m to deliver 23 road resurfacing schemes (£1.146m), 16 footway improvement schemes (£304,000) and £50,000 for minor patching works where required.

Progress has also been made on the Rhondda Fach Active Travel Route. Phase One was nearing completion in December and Phase Two from the gateway heading south has commenced to create a new shared 1.5km walking and cycling route on the opposite side of the Rhondda Fach River to the Phase One works. Completion is expected in the Spring of 2024.

We also continue to progress the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act and flood risk mitigation measures. A report was presented to the Climate Change, Prosperity & Frontline Services Scrutiny Committee in November on 'The Statutory Public Consultation for the Authority's Review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy And Action Plan'. Flood alleviation continues to be a priority for the Council with work commencing at Ynysboeth, culvert improvements at Mountain Ash and Cilfynydd, and drainage schemes in Tonypandy.

An update on the positive progress to date has also been provided on work at the Tylorstown Landslip site.

In November, subsidised bus travel within RCT was announced for the month of December, following a further allocation of money from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, to help with initiatives to reduce the Cost of Living crisis. It is hoped that this initiative and free parking in our town centres during the festive period would provide a much needed boost to bus services and to our town centre economy.

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

We continue our work to improve community cohesion. Wi-Fi capability is now available at 13 Community Centres and at the 2 RCT Bowls Centres.

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

We are launching the 3rd Round of the Shared Prosperity Fund RCT Community Support Grant Programme to support community groups in need with a financial resource (revenue and capital) on the 29th January 2024, for 2024-2025 projects. An update on the proposed 'RCT Community Asset Transfer Policy' will be set out in the forthcoming financial year.

Our work to prevent anti-social behaviour continues in partnership with South Wales Police. In June 10 additional PCSOs were 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. A report on this partnership will be presented to Scrutiny later in the year.

Our work to support individuals with chronic substance misuse, mental health needs and offending backgrounds continues with a focus on those requiring support because of their complex needs and issues with housing. We are seeing increased referrals this year compared to the same period last year (135 Qtr 3 2023/24 compared to 75 last year). This includes increased referrals from RCT (72 compared to 44 last year). We also continue to work with partners to provide services to children and young people through educational sessions in schools and youth clubs: 86 sessions have been held across Cwm Taf with 1,786 participants attending. Barod our integrated Substance Misuse Service provider, continues its multi-agency work to ensure identification of unmet need, sharing of good practice and responding to challenges and issues.

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, and we continue to make positive progress in securing an RCT vehicle to take out into the community later this year to expand our Outreach service targeting parts of our society that are known to experience domestic abuse. The Council has also supported White Ribbon Day in November, the global initiative/campaign to end men's violence against women and girls.

To keep people that live and work in RCT safe, we continue to provide information to raise awareness of fraudulent activity This has included information to keep residents safe when travelling by taxi, and the Ask Angela campaign.

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

We continue to invest in our green spaces to increase biodiversity. In October, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Dare Valley Country Park with a celebratory day of activities on Sunday 3rd December.

The works to improve facilities at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park continue. We have completed construction of the new education and heritage centre Canolfan Calon Taf which opened in August; restored the Bandstand and the old toilet block into a staff welfare facility. Work on the Sunken Garden is nearing completion and will be planted-up next quarter. The redevelopment of the former pitch and putt golf area in the northern part of the park is also nearing completion. Feedback from the engagement sessions held has been considered when progressing this scheme.

Our Playground Investment Programme has progressed with nine schemes completed to the end of December.

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PLACES - Where people are proud to live, work and play
This quarter an appeal for designers has been made by the 2024 National Eisteddfod for Wales to create the 2024 Eisteddfod Chair and Crown. We continue to promote, help raise funds and support the delivery of the event following the official announcement in August 2023. The full action plan can be viewed by **clicking here**

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 3

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	**Investment Value[2] £M**	**Quarter 3 Update**
Highways Infrastructure Repairs	4.880	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 11 schemes that are included in the 2023/24 programme, 9 were completed by the end of Quarter 3, 1 are on-going and 1 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 3, 8 had been completed, 1 is 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.
Structures	5.943	The investment funding has been allocated to support structure projects including: • Llanharan Railway Footbridge and Imperial Bridge – The schemes completed on site in November 2023. • Lanelay Bridge (Talbot Green) – minor snagging works to be progressed, the timing of which linked to river levels. • Bodringallt Bridge (Ystrad) - Infilling – works are scheduled to commence in quarter 4. In parallel with the above, various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
Parks Structures	1.359	The investment funding has been allocated to support various footbridge repairs and replacements within Parks: • Gelli Isaf Bridge (Ystrad) – Scheduled Monument Conservation Scheme – following completion of phase 1 in 2022/23, the phase 2 scheme is complete. Further areas will be progressed as part of phase 3 in 2024/25, with revised timescales taking account of the presence of bats.

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[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 3 Update**
		• Nant Yr Arian footbridge (Llantwit Fardre) - a contract to replace the structure has been awarded and works are due to commence on site in quarter 4. • Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
Parks and Green Spaces	1.050	This investment funding is supporting drainage, pavilion and infrastructure improvements to various parks sites. The 2023/24 programme comprises of 56 schemes (3 new schemes have been incorporated into the programme during quarter 3 i.e. King George Field - purchase of manual hoist; Gelligaled Park - replacement chain link fence; and pitch drainage works at Llwydcoed. As at quarter 3, 22 schemes have been completed.
Llanharan Link Road	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. A large section of the southbound carriageway was completed in quarter 2 and a section of the northbound carriageway at the southern end of the project was completed in quarter 3, allowing the traffic to be diverted onto the new carriageway. Works have commenced on the now redundant areas of carriageway to construct the opposing carriageways together with associated large culverts and active travel route. Works have also commenced with the fabrication drawings for the pedestrian footbridge to be installed at the northern end of the project. Works remain on programme to complete in summer 2024.
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.

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Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	**Investment Value[2] £M**	**Quarter 3 Update**
Cynon Gateway (North), Aberdare Link Road	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.
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, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and ERDF West Wales and the Valleys European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). During quarter 3, the final works were completed for the Transport Hub with snagging works completed in quarter 4.
Leisure – Darran Park 3G Pitch	0.175	Scheme complete and in use.
Leisure – Leisure Centres	0.400	Additional investment funding agreed by Council 20th September 2023 for additional refurbishment works across Leisure Centres.
Total	**30.042**	

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- **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 31st December 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 2023, 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, including providing co-ordinated help to start ups. The Business Growth Grant Programme has supported 41 business growth and business premises investments since April 2023 and businesses are being supported to ensure they gain maximum benefit from the investment. 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. A tender process has been undertaken to appoint a developer and negotiations are taking place with a potential preferred bidder that may lead to the award of a development contract. Welsh Government Transforming Towns Loan funding has been approved for developer acquisition of HSBC Pontypridd, with plans including tourist accommodation on upper floors. Design development is progressing for 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, with updated information for businesses and a link to the local business directory now available on the Council's website. **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** Following a wide range of engagement and formal consultation with the public and stakeholders, the Aberdare Town Centre Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in December 2023. The strategy aims to build on previous investment and establish Aberdare as a vibrant, dynamic and attractive destination. Continued progress is being made on the regeneration of town centre properties, including the redevelopment of the Rates Building supported by a Welsh Government grant, the former Trina's building in Canon Street and the former Troopers at Victoria Square. Further projects will be developed now the strategy has been adopted. Early draft proposals for the Tonypandy 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, including the Big Shed redevelopment, where a contractor has been appointed and work commenced on drainage and groundworks.

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

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 £1.28M grant was secured from Welsh Government for the demolition of the Marks and Spencer/Dorothy Perkins buildings which was carried out in December 2023. The Bingo Hall site is also progressing and designs include the development of a bus interchange and high quality public realm. Advanced works were completed in December 2023 to prepare the site. A contractor for the main construction has now been appointed. 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. Redevelopment of the Muni Arts Centre, which commenced on site in September, continues to progress well, including progress of strip out/demolition works, stonework repairs and cleaning and installation of scaffolding to access the ceiling in the main auditorium. Work is due to finish this summer.

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. Works are now at the construction stage, and traffic has been routed to the new carriageway whilst works to the old carriageway are ongoing. The project is due to complete in late summer.

Working with Cardiff Capital Region, we continue to progress Housing viability gap funding to remediate contaminated land conditions across brownfield sites. Planning consent has been granted for the former Aberdare hospital site and the applicant has commenced development. Funding has been secured for the remediation of Cwm Coking works for development. However, progress has proved difficult due to the complex nature of contamination at the site and discussions are ongoing between the developer and Cardiff Capital Region. Following ongoing discussions between Cardiff Capital Region and the developer, the remediation of the Heol y Wenallt site has been terminated by mutual agreement. Dialogue will take place to explore opportunities for the funding to be reallocated.

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 2023, 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.

Improvement work to refine and further improve self-evaluation processes has been ongoing and processes are now more streamlined and simplified.

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. The Council continues to work with partners to progress the strategic priorities within the WESP, and progress against each of the seven WESP outcomes and WG feedback was reported to Education and Inclusion scrutiny committee on 22nd January.

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

Following on from Wellbeing events held in quarter 1, Attendance case studies have been completed with colleagues in Neath Port Talbot and shared with Welsh Government for inclusion in revised national attendance guidance. 2 RCT schools have also been invited to complete case studies for inclusion. A new attendance action plan for the academic year 2023/24 is now in place. Improvements in attendance have been made between the 2022/23 and 2021/22 academic years in both primary and secondary phase, and in the majority of groups of learners. However, there remains considerable challenge particularly at secondary phase and for eligible Free School Meal learners. A detailed report was presented to Education and Inclusion Scrutiny committee on 14th December 23.

A more detailed update on Estyn's recommendations for improvement was reported to Education and Inclusion Scrutiny committee on 22nd January.

Following the positive evaluation of Step 4 provision presented to Cabinet on 27th March 2023, Tranche 4 was approved and implemented in 8 schools. Progress meetings will be held in February. 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, and support for schools is being put in place. Two conferences delivered on whole school approaches to behaviour in spring and summer terms received good evaluations from schools. Headteachers have reported back on how schools are utilising the practices shared. A behaviour workshop held in December was also positively received, and a follow up meeting arranged for the summer term. Further information on exclusions is available in the report to Education and Inclusion Scrutiny committee on 14th December 2023. This continues to be an area of support and challenge for schools through the Team Around the School process. However, evidence of impact upon schools of TAS intervention for exclusions is limited and this will be reviewed and escalated as appropriate.

Following service delivery consultation with ALN co-ordinators, revised ALN service delivery models were implemented in September, which balance the need for specific case support with the development of whole school approaches. Processes for referrals have also been reviewed and streamlined, whilst still complying with statutory processes, following stakeholder feedback. The impact of changes will be evaluated at the end of the academic year.

To ensure alternative provision continues to meet the needs of learners across the local authority, guidance detailing school and governing body roles and responsibilities relating to alternative provision has been circulated to schools. Survey information provided by schools has also been analysed, and actions identified to ensure schools are undertaking their statutory responsibilities. An alternative provision panel is being put in place to ensure ongoing monitoring and quality assurance visits to settings will be planned in the spring and summer terms. Shared Prosperity Funding has been confirmed for Transitional Support workers and will support Year 10 pupils, particularly those at risk of Not being in Education, training or employment on leaving school, with CV writing, ambitions, life skills and engagement with relevant services.

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. Year 2 of the project is now underway with 45 schools and 7 early years settings participating.

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

Work continues in partnership with Central South Consortium to regularly review the progress of all schools. The Team Around the School protocol for schools requiring co-ordinated LA/CSC support is now embedded. Whilst there have been positive impacts in some areas, for example attendance, evidence of impact on schools receiving intervention for exclusions is limited and this will be reviewed and escalated as appropriate. Following the end of union action, work is ongoing with CSC to ensure consistency of reporting on school/project support to enable the early identification of schools causing concern. All schools have access to the teaching and learning charter, and pilot schools will share their use of the charter in summer headteacher meetings.

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. The new Welsh medium school building in Rhydyfelin has been completed, with Heol y Celyn primary pupils using the site from the beginning of the academic year. The second phase of the project, which will deliver new drop off, parking, sports and habitat areas, will be complete by September 2024 to form the new school Ysgol Awel Taf. Work is well underway at Ysgol Bro Taf (3 – 16 school in Pontypridd), Ysgol Afon Wen (3 – 16 school in Hawthorn), and YGG Llyn y Forwyn, with all 3 projects due to be completed in September 2024. Work at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive to deliver improved sports and sixth form facilities has been completed with the new facilities handed over to the school. Phase 2 of the works to deliver new staff parking is ongoing. Work is also progressing well at three MIM Primary Schools (Pontyclun: Penygawsi; and Llanilltud Faerdref), with steel signing ceremonies at Llanilltud Faerdref and Penygawsi held in July. Llanilltud Faerdref is due to open to pupils in April 2024 and Penygawsi in September 2024. The Pontyclun programme has been revisited due to unforeseen asbestos in the ground, but works are on target to meet a revised programme completion date of March 2025.

Following public consultation, Cabinet agreed to open a new 3-19 special school in RCT at the meeting on 23rd October. This will increase capacity to better meet and manage the demand for special school places and help ensure pupils are allocated places in the special school nearest their home.

Capital improvement work is also underway to provide facilities which will support the community focussed schools approach, enabling co-location of services and stronger engagement with the school community. Works at Treorchy Primary school health hub will be completed by March 2024 and Trehopcyn Primary Community Hub and Porth Community School hub will be completed in financial year 2024/25. Welsh Government funding has been approved for similar works at Hawthorn High School (Ysgol Afon Wen) and also refurbishment of 2 childcare settings, with additional funding decisions still awaited. In addition, small capital grants will assist 61 childcare settings to improve their facilities.

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. £59.9M funding has been allocated to RCT Social Housing Grant for the next 3 years and is fully committed, with a total of 26 schemes included in the programme development plan. As of the current reporting period, 8 schemes have utilised local contractors. Hafod Housing's Clos Heddfan and Llys Ty Garth schemes, which have

recently been completed, demonstrate successful delivery supported by previous social housing grants.

SME housebuilders have 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. The Preferred Strategy of the revised LDP was approved by Council in January for statutory public and stakeholder consultation.

The draft Local Housing Strategy has been completed, however it has been decided to align the Strategy to the Council's new Corporate Plan which will be finalised in early 2024/25 and this has slightly delayed engagement activities, which will now be undertaken in early 2024/25 prior to presenting to Cabinet. 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, has also been completed and will be shared with housing leaders groups to agree next steps.

The new Assessment and Support Team is now in place and will enable implementation of new pathways for prevention of homelessness, with the aim of ensuring more effective access to services. However, a property identified for accommodation for homeless single individuals was not approved by Planning Committee and an appeal is underway. The social letting agency continues to develop to enhance housing options and provide affordable accommodation, with 22 properties currently on the scheme. Evaluation of the operation of the Housing Allocations Policy has been undertaken and a report is due to be shared with the Common Housing Register Steering Group.

The National Empty Homes Grant Scheme launched at the end of January, with RCT acting as lead administrator, and 16 local authorities across Wales are now participating, with a large percentage of schemes approved to date within RCT. 5 properties in RCT have been completed and brought back into use to date under the scheme. Proactive work continues to be taken in line with the Empty Homes Strategy 2022 – 2025, including working with Registered Social Landlords to bring empty commercial buildings and other properties back into use, delivery of Houses into Homes and Owner occupier loans to support bringing properties back into use, and the use of enforcement action and enforced sales where appropriate. A more detailed update on progress in delivering the strategy was reported to Cabinet on 23rd October.

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

Council services have worked together to identify and improve potential referral and progression pathways into work and skills support, for example, through the Leisure GP referral scheme and Adult Community learning courses. A single referral pathway has been developed so that referring organisations can indicate the type of support required and this can be matched with the services and funding pathways which best fit needs. This has been promoted both to partners and internal services, resulting in a steady flow of referrals to employment support services, which remain on target for the current period. During Q3, employment routes for female dominated professions including hair and beauty and childcare pathways were developed, as current programmes are attracting more male participants.

12 graduates and 49 apprentices commenced employment with the Council on 4th September and will support staffing needs and succession planning across a variety of service areas. One of the Council's graduate officers was shortlisted for the Apprenticeship Awards Cymru Tomorrow's Talent Award. The Council also continues to support opportunities for vulnerable young people and those

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with specific needs to access employment support and work placements, including 5 care experienced young people who commenced the Step in the Right Direction traineeship programme in September. One of the Step in the Right Direction trainees was recognised as Trainee of the Year at the Council's own awards in December. New intakes for all of these schemes are currently being planned for later in 2024. The Council has also been accredited as a living wage employer.

Following a successful collaboration with Treorchy Business Improvement District last year, a Customer2Care Summer programme in Pontypridd in collaboration with Your Pontypridd BID provided work placements for 13 young people in local businesses. Discussions have also commenced with Our Aberdare BID to potentially extend the programme into Aberdare in summer of 2024.

The Green Light Project, which provides support to year 11 pupils without a clear careers focus who are not reaching their potential, supported 110 pupils from 16 secondary schools in the last intake. 96 pupils were either fully or partially engaged, and of these, 93 secured positive destinations in Education, Employment or Training. Funding has been secured to continue the project until March 2024 through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

We continue to work with schools to support pupils to engage in careers. 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 February 2024, with a focus on careers benefitting from Welsh language skills.

The full action plan can be viewed by **clicking here**

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 3

		Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY
Investment Area	**Investment Value[3] £M**	**Quarter 3 Update**
Empty Property Grant	--	Support to bring empty homes back into use is being funded from external funding during 2023/24 and the RCT investment has been re-profiled into future years. Further information on the National Empty Homes Grant Scheme is included within the Prosperity Priority Plan.

Schools	0.652	This investment funding is supporting:
		
		• YGG Llyn Y Forwyn
		  o The construction of a new 240 place Welsh medium primary school, including 30 nursery places (net zero carbon in operation) with external facilities including a MUGA, and on site Cylch Meithrin and community facilities.
		  o Works on site are progressing and the building was made watertight by end of December 2023. Inclement weather is impacting progress overall that may result in scheme completion being December 2024; the Council and partners are working together to mitigate this position as far as possible.
		
		• Y Pant – the investment funding will contribute to the delivery of a 2-storey extension and first floor fit out for 4 Classrooms. The new block was completed September 2023.

Transport Infrastructure	1.894	This investment funding is supporting a wider programme of highways capital works including: • Llanharan signal controlled pedestrian crossing has been completed during quarter 3. • A4059 / Bowls Club junction - feasibility study completed to investigate junction / traffic flow improvements along the A4059. • A4059 Quarter Mile junction - feasibility proposal agreed and work on-going to develop a proposal for detailed ground investigations.
Park and Ride Programme	0.754	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: • Porth – phase 3 detailed design work has been completed.

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[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 3 Update**
		• Pontyclun – feasibility work complete
Drainage	0.559	This investment funding is supporting drainage and culvert network works by delivering, as match funding, 23 Welsh Government grant funded schemes across the County Borough.
Total	**3.859**	

Section 6 – THE COUNCIL'S WORK TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

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, a number of progress reports on climate and environment related projects have been 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.

In 2023/24, the Climate Change Strategy and carbon reduction actions have been further embedded into the four areas of focus within the Climate Change Strategy: **Council Specific, Climate PEOPLE, Climate PLACES and Climate PROSPERITY.** Where there are actions or projects that do not have a clear 'home', these items are included in the areas of 'best fit'.

A summary of progress in Quarter 3 which will be considered by the Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee, can be viewed by clicking here. Key achievements include:

- Council Specific: the confirmation of the Council's 2022/23 Carbon Footprint and a reduction to carbon emissions to 96,639.83 tonnes CO2e.
- Climate People: achieving the Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award.
- Climate Places: Progressed the land based Solar Farm in Coed Ely to 'Tendering' stage.
- Climate Prosperity: launching the RCT Schools eco award with climate friendly school appropriate prizes funded by Morgan Sindall

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20th MARCH 2024

HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS, STREETCARE AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR A MORGAN OBE

Author: Andrew Griffiths, Service Director Highways and Engineering.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 Further to the Council's approval of the Three-Year Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2026/27 on 6th March 2024 at Council, this report sets out the detailed capital programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended Cabinet;

2.1 Note and approve the Supplementary Capital Programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects as detailed within this report.

2.2 Note that the current allocations are part of a 3-year capital programme that delegates authority to the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services, to extend activity to deliver additional projects during the financial year, where capacity exists for accelerated delivery in accordance with the purpose of the wider programme, or to suspend programmes/projects and reallocate funding to optimise delivery.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 This report has been developed to identify the programme of commitments for RCT capital funding.

3.2 In recent years, the programme has been impacted by a number of external factors, including supply chain shortages, high inflation and Covid19. Whilst some of these factors have abated, there are still significant challenges arising from; escalation of construction costs,

availability of skills and resources, intense activity on the network by statutory undertakers, Transport for Wales and others, competing for road space.

3.3   The Council's ambitious capital programme continues to be delivered alongside the significant additional and fully funded programme of work attributable to the destruction to infrastructure caused by Storm Dennis.

3.4   Despite these challenges, good progress has been made through 2023/24 in most areas. It is therefore prudent to continue to maintain the flexibility to review projects on a case-by-case basis around deliverability and risk; flexibility to suspend individual projects and commit resources to other projects within a programme. This will be key to maintaining momentum and value for money.

3.5   The unprecedented floods of February 2020 continue to represent a significant body of work in repairing and upgrading our infrastructure including bridges, roads, culverts and retaining walls, together with numerous landslides and ongoing legacy issues related to former coal tips.

3.6   Commitments have been made to providing funding to replace and upgrade this infrastructure, much of which will need to meet new expectations around flood events. Substantial grants have been secured from Welsh Government during the previous three financial years, with the Storm Dennis elements anticipated to come to a conclusion in 2024/25. Welsh Government Coal Tips related capital and revenue grants continue into 2024/25 with major works continuing on Phase 4 of Llanwonno Tip at Tylorstown, via a remediation contract with a value of circa £6M.

3.7   This report considers the detail against the specific 2024/25 RCT capital allocations of £14.265M in relation toHighways Technical Services and £16.629M in relation to Strategic Projects. These allocations are to safeguard the long-term integrity of the highways and transportation network and to enhance the network to deal with evolving travel demands and the effects of climate change. Specific regard is given to promoting safer and more sustainable travel and to enable economic activity. Detail for consideration is submitted under the following areas;

- Highways Improvements
- Land Drainage/Flood Risk Improvements
- Traffic Management
- Car Parks
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Making Better Use Programme (MBU)
- Unadopted Roads

3.8   The Council has submitted bids for Welsh Government Grants for transport projects related to;

- Continuing / refining the Welsh Government 20mph initiative
- Road Safety Revenue
- Road Safety Capital
- Safe Routes in the Community
- Active Travel
- Local Transport Fund (including Resilient Roads)

3.9   The Council continues to be heavily engaged in the Cardiff Capital Region City

Deal, supporting the £734M allocated to Metro. A significant proportion of this will deliver the electrification of the Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr rail lines with 4 trains per hour to the top of each line, currently programmed for completion in 2024.

3.10 The Porth Transport Hub (part of the Metro Plus programme) was completed in 2023 and is currently subject to the final agreements with TfW to bring this into service. The Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA) already has an allocation of funding of £2M for the ongoing Metro Plus Priority Bus Infrastructure Programme for 24/25 which includes for Sardis Rd and the Mid Valleys Bus Corridor Improvements.

3.11 Furthermore during the 2023/24 Financial Year, significant sums of grant funding has been secured via the Regional Local Transport Fund allocation. Studies have progressed related to;

• Mid Valleys Connectivity
• Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) Funding

3.12 CCRTA has submitted a bid for £3.76M for ULEV 2024/25, which is for 50 charge points at schools and the Car Club project. A contract has been let to Connected Kerb who have provided electric vehicle charging points at 57 car parks across RCT, with a further 8 car parks to receive charge points as well as adding 8 further points to car parks already connected by the end of 2024.

4 SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

4.1 Highways Improvements

4.1.1 The Highways Network represents the most significant asset of the Council, valued in excess of £3.4Bn, comprised of carriageways, footways, structures (bridges, retaining walls, culverts, etc.), street lighting, traffic signals and signs, safety barriers, highway drainage, etc.

4.1.2 The network has now benefitted from thirteen years of enhanced levels of investment, and this will continue into 2024/25.

4.1.3 The total allocation of capital resources for the Highways Improvement Schemes, as included in the Capital Programme for 2024/25, is £14.265M and is broken down into works packages in the table below. This includes previously reported slippage of £5.144M of Highway & Parks Structures funding. Spending plans for this programme of works are detailed in this report.

Work Area	£M
Carriageways	5.982
Footways	0.575
Unadopted Roads	0.200
Structures	6.580
Parks Structures	0.320
Street Lighting	0.473
Traffic Management	0.100
Car Parks	0.035
Total	**14.265**

4.1.4 **Carriageways**; A programme of carriageway resurfacing and surface treatment to the value of £5.982M will be funded in 2024/25. £4.5302M of proposed schemes are listed in Appendix 1 Table 1a. These identified schemes will be supplemented by £0.600M to carry out minor surface repairs (larger patches), £0.125M of fencing and safety barrier repairs, £0.450M for targetted improvements to 6 wards and £0.100M for repairs to ironwork. £0.177M of previously approved schemes will slip from 23/24.

4.1.5 **Footways**; are considered to be a high risk to the Council. An identified programme of resurfacing and surface treatment to the value of £0.575M will be funded in 2024/25. A list of proposed footway schemes is included in Appendix 1 Table 1b.

4.1.6 **Unadopted Roads;** Building on the funding allocated in previous years, a further £0.200M is allocated to unadopted roads to enable more streets to be made up to adoptable standards and formally adopted as highways maintainable at public expense. The list of streets proposed to be made up is included at Appendix 1, Table 1c.

4.1.7 **Street Lighting**; the allocation of £0.473M is split to enable £0.346M to be invested in Traffic Signals refurbishment and £0.127M towards street lighting. Traffic Signals funding will be allocated to installations that require modernising. Streetlighting allocation will go towards an ongoing programme of column replacement and replacement of the Council's network of supply cables.

4.1.8 **Highway Structures**; There are significant challenges associated with maintaining highway structures with several in a critical condition. A total budget of £6.580M (including £4.631M of previously identified slippage from 2023/24) has been allocated for 2024/25. A full list of proposed schemes can be found in Appendix 1 Table 2. Project Management Costs will be allocated appropriately.

4.1.9 **Brook Street Footbridge,** adjacent to Ystrad rail station is substantially completed and has been supplemented by WG grant funding for Active Travel. Contractual "close out" and finalisation of final accounts is still ongoing as a result of protracted contractor discussions. Any surplus of funding allocated to this project which can be released, will be diverted to the schemes identified or prioritised within the financial year.

4.1.10 A number of challenges continue to affect scheme delivery including staff resources, weather, access constraints and site changes. Lead in times for projects are extending which is proving challenging to programme major works particularly for bridges that cross main rivers. Award of contracts may need to be in the preceding financial year for works the year after. This is to allow for sufficient time for contractor mobilisation and to develop working methods and design of temporary works

4.1.11 **Afon Cynon Bridge** – this bridge carries the A4059 over the river between Cwmbach and the Asda Roundabout in Aberdare. The scheme will replace the bearings and deck expansion joints. It is anticipated contract award will be in 2024/25 with main works in 2025/26.

4.1.12 **Retaining Wall Repairs**/Replacement continue on a prioritised basis with major refurbishment or reconstruction funded by the capital programme. The sites includes Brewery Terrace, Pontygwaith, Salem Terrace, Llwynypia and the A4058 wall, Porth.

4.1.13 **Confined Space Culvert Repairs** – a term service contract is proposed to allow for task orders for specific culvert repairs (over 900mm in diameter) to be issued on a prioritised basis.

4.1.14 **Rhigos Rock Netting** – replacement of the temporary mesh installed after the fire damage is funded on a priority basis, with further repairs carried out on a needs basis and subject to funding.

4.1.15 **A4059 Commercial St Footbridge** – the outcome of the Principal Inspection is awaited to determine the recommended actions for its management. Funding previously allocated to this project will be reviewed upon the findings.

4.1.16 Design work for Llanwonno Rd Railway Bridge, Glan Road Bridge and Victoria Bridge is proposed in 24/25.

4.1.17 Highway structures schemes require Advance Preparation including feasibility, site investigation, ecology surveys and design. Work will continue for bridges from the list outlined in Appendix 1 Table 3.

4.1.18 **Parks Structures:** A budget of £0.250M is allocated in 2024/25 in addition to the £0.070M being carried forward from 2023/24. The outline funding allocation is shown in Table 4.

4.1.19 **Storm Dennis:** A number of Highways, Parks and Countryside structures and embankments were damaged during Storm Dennis. A £3.619M budget is assigned to this for 2024/25 funded by WG. Castle Inn Footbridge Replacement and Berw Road Bridge (White Bridge) are currently in progress on site, nearing completion. Feeder Pipe Footbridge is at pre-construction stage.

4.1.20 The list of structures known to be affected by Storm Dennis are included in Appendix 1 - Table 5 for reference.

4.2   Land Drainage/Flood Risk Improvements

4.2.1   The Capital Land Drainage Programme supports works on land drainage and flood alleviation schemes, which are of such scale that their cost places them outside the framework of routine maintenance supported by the revenue programme.

4.2.2   With regard to land drainage (Flood Alleviation) schemes, the Council continues to benefit from Welsh Government (WG) grant support (85%) as the Land Drainage Authority under Section 59 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Lead Local Flood Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. In support of this process the land drainage capital programme identifies a number of project business cases targeted at attracting external funding support. These business cases will be carried out on a rolling 3-year programme with 1-2 completed per year.

4.2.3   Progression of schemes will be dependent on successful applications for grant following the 5-case business model process through the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC) and where appropriate a Business Justification Case (BJC). An allowance has been

made within the drainage improvements programme for progression of such business cases and schemes in order to provide the required match funding.

4.2.4   Appendix 2a identifies the business cases and projects currently under development. Projects identified on the Welsh Government pipeline for capital investment in Land Drainage/Flood Risk Improvements have been submitted for inclusion for 2024/25 at approx. £4M, and await confirmation of approval in principle, also pending business case approval. Grant Bids have also been submitted for 14 Small Scales Schemes at approx. £1.11M. Over £2.6M was allocated in grant to RCT during in 2023/24

4.2.5   Appendix 2b identifies projects which had grant bids submitted to the Welsh Government in February 2024 for Resilient Roads Fund grant with a value of £2.7m for 2024/25. This is the fifth year that councils have had the opportunity to bid for funding aimed at mitigating the effects of Climate Change on the transportation network. £0.900M was allocated to RCT during 2023/24. As these bids are centered on areas of high flood risk to the network, they are included in this section. Progression of the projects will be dependent on grant confirmation

4.2.6   To support the ongoing programme £0.025M has been allocated for Strategic Outline Case development/scheme development outside of the current WG programme. This is to allow in year opportunities for 2025-26 funding to be investigated and programmed.

4.2.7   Furthermore £0.075M has been allocated to small works, these are typically <£10k identified as part of flooding investigations.

4.2.8   Appendix 2 provides details of the Drainage/Flood Risk Improvements Programme for 2024/25. Of the £1.255M funding allocation, £1.185M consists of Council funding and £0.070M of secured grant.

4.3   Traffic Management

4.3.1   As part of its network management duties under the Traffic Management Act and the Highways Act, the Council has the ability to implement improvements to the management of traffic within the County Borough. Finance for the programme is provided by an allocation of core capital funding of £0.100M.

4.3.2   The Council's capital allocation will enable the implementation of small scale schemes and provide safety aids such as warning signs, the introduction of traffic orders and the provision of residents parking. Details of the 2024/25 Capital Programme are included in Appendix 3.

4.3.3   Welsh Government Road Safety Capital Funding has now been "reinstated" after the suspension of two years to focus on implementing the Welsh Government default 20mph programme which came into effect on 17 September 2023. RCT has submitted a bid to Welsh Government to cover the anticipated 2024/25 costs amounting to approximately £0.808M. This will be utilised to evaluate the review of the speed limit and also to continue the auxiliary works required as a result of the initiative.

4.4   Car Parks

4.4.1   An ongoing programme of repairs and upgrades to the Council's car parks will continue with a £0.035M allocation in 2024/25.

4.5   Transportation Infrastructure

4.5.1   The total allocation for Transport Infrastructure for 2024/25 in the Capital Programme amounts to £14.779M.

4.5.2   The most substantive allocations of annual funding are typically allocated towards the progression of a programme of major economic infrastructure investments across RCT. Two of our prioritised schemes; Llanharan Sustainable Transport Corridor (formerly Link Road) and A465 Cynon Gateway North. Both have been subject to the "Roads Review" process initiated by Welsh Government which did not support either of the projects. However, the Council has further refined the Llanharan proposal taking into account the findings of the review and the Welsh Government have initially indicated support in principle of this refinement undertaken by the Council. Discussions continue on the refinement of the scheme with the Welsh Government.

4.5.3   The case remains that major interventions are still required to mitigate the significant traffic and transportation related challenges that exist and will only multiply in both cases as a result of the planned infrastructure and committed housing development.

4.5.4   The Council will seek to work closely with Welsh Government to enable sustainable solutions to be identified that overcome these challenges and promote sustainable growth and economic activity.

On that basis, the following allocations are made;

- **Llanharan Sustainable Transport Corridor - £5.128M**
- **A465 Cynon Gateway Transit Corridor £1.269M**

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4.5.5   **Dualling A4119 Coed Ely to Ynysmaerdy - £5.868M**

Alun Griffiths Contractors Ltd are making good progress on site. Welsh Government determined that this project was outside the scope of the Roads Review having already substantially commenced physical works. The project benefits from £11.417M Levelling Up Fund Grant from Central UK Government, which is in addition to previous years funding from Welsh Government. The scheme is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2024.

4.5.6   **Gelli /Treorchy Link Road - £0.384M**

In light of the recent publication of the Welsh Government Roads Review and the introduction of new policy tests for road building and the options to overcome the challenges facing the Rhondda Fawr, in particular those related to Stag Square, Treorchy will be reviewed. The purpose of the review will be to revisit the issues and establish sustainable objectives to address this ongoing problem.

4.5.7 **Park and Ride Programme - £0.740M**

The Park and Ride programme is intended to create additional parking capacity at rail stations across RCT to enable car drivers to switch to rail travel encouraging modal shift in favour of more sustainable forms of travel that contribute to reducing congestion and harmful emissions.

Park and Ride is a key element to enable mode shift and promote accessibility to the Metro and opportunities to add value to Metro will be kept under review as the full scope and detail of the Metro project crystallises.

The Council has worked in conjunction with Transport for Wales (TfW) over the implementation of the Treorchy Park and Ride project and TfW will be implementing this project on our behalf in the sum of £571k (excluding contingency).

4.6   Making Better Use (MBU) and Miscellaneous Improvements - £1.390M

4.6.1 The Council continues to invest in a Making Better Use (MBU) and Miscellaneous Improvement programme. The ethos of this programme is to identify, design and deliver a series of low cost, high value miscellaneous improvements to deal with a number of operational issues covering safety, accessibility, efficiency, enhancements to bus corridors and the propensity to travel actively, including joint working with partners to resolve local accessibility and connectivity related issues. An element of this work will focus on the A4059 corridor.

5   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1   Equality and Diversity issues will be considered as part of determining the final detail of the proposed schemes.

6   CONSULTATION

6.1   There are no consultation requirements relating directly to the report but the proposed schemes will (or have) involve varying degrees of consultation, some of which will relate to statutory processes (such as Traffic Regulation Orders).

7   WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1   A Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not necessary at this time.

8   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1   The funding allocation to support schemes contained within this report was agreed by Council on the 6th of March 2024 as part of the three-year Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27. This report does not commit any additional spend over and above this agreed allocation.

9   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1   There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report.

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

10.1   This investment programme supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

10.2   The programme is wide ranging. It deals with the maintenance and provision of transport assets created in order to meet travel demand. The programme supports enhanced connectivity to link homes with employment opportunities, education, and health facilities, and to act as a catalyst for development and regeneration. In conjunction with grant applications, a range of sustainable and active travel opportunities are promoted.

10.3   The programme also seeks to reduce flood risk and mitigate communities from the damaging impacts of climate change in light of more frequent extreme weather events.

10.4   The programme supports the Well-Being goals fostering prosperity and resilience with inclusive and sustainable transport options supporting more cohesive and vibrant communities.

11   CONCLUSION

11.1   The above programme continues the enhanced levels of investment under the RCTInvest initiative, helping to sustain the resilience and durability of our highways and transportation infrastructure, promoting sustainable transport opportunities and network efficiency.

11.2   Consequently, Frontline Services will coordinate and deliver significant investment in a number of important areas during 2024/25 and the proposed programme is accordingly recommended for approval.

11.3   Whilst RCT is one of the few Councils that continues to make meaningful and significant investments in its highway network since the demise of Welsh Government roads maintenance funding, the lack of additional Welsh Government support is beginning to impact on the resilience of the road network. The table below demonstrates the level of progress that has been made since 2010/11, however significant challenges remain with climatic conditions being a major factor in road condition and ongoing maintenance requirements. (Note the 23/24 figures have not been released to date).

Indicator	2010/11 Indicator	2022/23 Indicator
THS011a – percentage of A class roads requiring maintenance	16.2%	3.7%
THS011b – percentage of B class roads requiring maintenance	15.2%	5.7%
THS011c – percentage of C class roads requiring maintenance	15.3%	3.7%
THS012 – percentage of all classified roads requiring maintenance	15.7%	3.6%

11.4   The Council, in common with all LAs across the UK faces significant challenges in maintaining this enormous and complex asset. The indicators above are directly impacted by the levels of funding available to maintain the asset. Whilst there is clearly a level of funding required in maintaining asset condition in a steady state, reducing funding below an optimum level creates greater challenges for the future. The ongoing level of RCT investment respects that principle but it is a fine balance.

11.5   The commitment of the Council to invest in transport infrastructure offers the ability to engage with Welsh Government and provide flexibility to maximise funding opportunities. However, whilst funding for Flood Risk, Tip Safety, Active Travel and the Welsh Government 20mph initiative continue to meet our immediate needs, traditional Welsh Government Transportation Grant funding, including Resilient Roads Funding continues at reduced levels.

11.6   The outcomes of the Welsh Government Roads Review present new challenges and opportunities and we will work with Welsh Government to identify sustainable solutions to the very real problems that remain to be addressed. The allocations in this report renew and underline our continued intent in this regard.

11.7   The programme is as always subject to minor changes due to possible engineering difficulties or programming and coordination issues with statutory undertakers. Programme delivery will still be immensely challenging due to supply chain challenges and cost escalation, and the flexibility to switch funding across programmes will ensure the best outcomes for RCT.

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Table 1a Proposed Carriageway Schemes

Town	Location	Budget
Abercynon	Hill Street	£15,000
Beddau	Beddau R/A Gwaunmiskin Rd	£18,750
Beddau	Milton Close	£78,000
Blaenllechau	Commercial Street	£116,250
Blaenllechau	Glyn View	£36,000
Brynna	Hillcrest	£43,125
Brynsadler	Talygarn Drive	£67,500
Cefnpennar	Cefpennar Rd to Greenfield Terrace	£48,750
Clydach	Court Street	£159,750
Clydach	North Terrace	£28,125
Cwmbach	Bethania Place	£37,500
Cwmbach	Blaennantygroes Road	£69,375
Cwmbach	Bryn Hill	£30,000
Cwmbach	Gower Road	£30,000
Cwmparc	Ocean Street	£20,825
Dinas	Graigddu Road	£101,250
Ferndale	Waltter Street	£39,375
Gadlys	Depot Road	£65,000
Gadlys	Nevielle Terrace	£21,375
Gelli	Gelli Road	£93,750
Glyncoch	High View Way	£82,500
Godreaman	Brynmair Road	£75,000
Graig	Madoc Street	£18,750
Hawthorn	Cardiff Road	£93,750
Hawthorn	Ynyscorrwg Road	£84,375
Hendreforgan	Gelli Areal Road	£105,000
Hirwaun	Swansea Road	£101,250
Hirwaun	Trewaun	£68,625
Hirwaun	Fifth Avenue	£15,000
Llanharry	Sycamore Road	£27,750
Llanharry	Holly Road	£50,625
Llwynpia	Tynyla Road	£281,250
Llwynpia	Institute Road	£55,500
Maerdy	Oxford Street	£99,375
Mountain Ash	Aberdare Road	£112,500
Mountain Ash	Cliff Street	£33,750
Mountain Ash	The Avenue to Duffryn Road	£85,000
Penygraig	Hendregwilym	£86,250
Penygraig	Dinas Road	£26,250
Penygraig	Bishop Street	£61,875
Penygraig	Mynydd-Yr-Eos	£63,000
Penygraig	Hendregwilym to Penygraig Road	£35,250
Pontyclun	Cowbridge Road O/S Leeks	£97,500
Pontypridd	Maesycoed Road	£84,375
Porth	Primrose Terrace	£45,000
Rhydyfelin	Ilan Avenue	£150,000
Rhydyfelin	Warren Close	£30,000
Stanleytown	Llanwonno Road	£18,000
Tonteg	Tonteg Road	£75,000
Tonypandy	Fern Terrace	£60,750
Tonyrefail	Gilfach Road	£131,250
Tonyrefail	Heol TyLlwyd	£135,000
Tonyrefail	Duffryn Close	£76,875

Town	Location	Budget
Treherbert	Abertonllwyd Street	£56,250
Treherbert	Dumfries Street	£93,750
Tyntetown	Main Road	£93,750
Upper Boat	Heol-y-Bwnsi	£84,375
Wattstown	Pleasant View	£86,250
Ynyshir	Church Terrace	£60,000
Ynysybwl	Tai Newydd	£91,875
Ynysybwl	Church Street	£64,125
Ystrad	Gelli Industrial Estate	£112,500
Ystrad	Danywern Terrace	£45,000
Ystrad	Victoria Street	£56,250
TOTAL		**£4,530,200**

Table 1b Proposed Footway Schemes

Town	Location	Budget
Abercynon	Upper Gertrude Street	£25,000
Abercynon	Footway off Abercynon Road	£10,000
Abercynon	Footway from Fife Street to Park View	£15,000
Beddau	C Estate	£36,800
Cwmbach	Pinecroft Avenue	£39,200
Cwmbach	Kendal Court	£14,400
Cwmbach	Derwent Avenue	£28,800
Cwmbach	Rheidol Close	£31,200
Hirwaun	Meadow Close	£12,800
Hirwaun	Oakland Close	£12,800
Mountain Ash	Steps from Arnold St to Troed-y-rhiw Rd	£20,000
Pontyclun	Heol y Coed	£50,000
Ton Pentre	Clara Street	£25,000
Tonteg	Briar Way	£45,000
Trealaw	Alaw Road	£36,000
Trebanog	Trebanog Road	£45,000
Treherbert	Bute Street	£48,000
Treorchy	Dumfries Street	£55,000
Various	Disabled Access Improvements	£25,000
TOTAL		**£575,000**

Table 1c Unadopted Roads Schemes

Town	Location	Budget
Abercwmboi	Off Bronallt Terrace	£25,000.00
Godreaman	Off Brynmair Rd leading to Trail	£28,000.00
Porth	Orchard Close	£90,000.00
Ynyshir	Graig Road	£57,000.00
TOTAL		**£200,000.00**

Table 2 Proposed Highway Structures Schemes 2024/25 (Including reported slippage)

Street/Road	Structure	Town	Budget (£)
	Brook Street Footbridge	Ystrad	401,000
Various	Confined Spaces Culvert Repairs	Various	250,000
Various	Retaining Wall Refurbishment	Various	1,100,000
A4059	A4059 Commercial St Footbridge	Aberdare	430,000
A4059	Afon Cynon Bridge	Cwmbach/ Aberdare	1,500,000
Cwmdare	Glan Road Bridge		50,000
Stanleytowm	Llanwonno Rd Railway Bridge	Stanleytown/ Pontygwaith	75,000
A4223	Victoria Bridge Long Culvert	Pontypridd	25,000
	Beechwood Road Culvert	Taffs Well	150,000
	Margaret St Retaining Wall	Pontygwaith	850,000
A4061	Rhigos Rock Netting	Treherbert	1,404,000
Various	Advanced Preparation and Scheme Completions	Various	345,000
Total			**£6,580,000**

Table 3 Structures Considered for Advance Preparation Work

Street/Road	Structure	Town
	William Edwards Bridge	Pontypridd
B4275	Cynon Star Bridge	Abercynon
A4058	A4058 Cantilever	Pontypridd
B4278	Brittania Bridge	Porth
B4278	Rheola Bridge	Porth
A4233	New Rheola Bridge	Porth
	Machine Bridge North	Trefforest
B4595	Machine Bridge South	Trefforest
B4223	Gelli Culvert	Gelli
A4059	Meirion Street River Underbridge	Aberdare
C229	Dinas Riverbridge	Dinas
	Nant Llanilid Footbridge	Thomastown
Moy Road	Glan y Llyn Bridge	Taff's Well
B4273	Graig Bridge	Ynysybwl
Ynyshir Rd	Wattstown Stone Arch Bridge	Wattstown
A4233	Pontygwaith Riverbridge	Pontygwaith
	Cwm Pennar Bridge	Cwmpennar
A4054	Nant Llonydd Bridge	Hawthorn
	Leiners Bridge and Footbridge	Hawthorn
N/A	Nantygwyddon to Gelligaled Park Footbridge	Llwynypia
N/A	Nantygwyddon to Sherwood Street Footbridge	Llwynypia
B4275	Mountain Ash Town Bridges	Mountain Ash
C221	Ferndale Bridges	Ferndale
A4059	Violet Street Footbridge	Aberaman

Table 4 Proposed Parks Structures

Street No	Street Name	Town	Budget (£)
	Evans Terrace Retaining Wall		£130,000
	Gelli Isaf Bridge	Aberdare	£120,000
	Advanced Preparation		£70,000
Total			£320,000

Table 5 Structures Affected by Storm Dennis and anticipated to be fully funded by Welsh Government (*in italics works is wholly completed*)

Structure Name	Location
Ynysyngharad Park Footbridge	*Pontypridd*
Castle Inn Bridge	Rhydyfelin/Treforest
Berw Road Bridge	Pontypridd
Feeder Pipe Footbridge	Abercynon
Footbridges on Rights of Way	*Various*
Tynybryn Footbridge	*Tonyrefail*
Taff Trail Mill Farm Rd Footbridge	Abercynon
Penydarren Tramroadside	*Aberdare*
Bailey Street Bridge	*Ton Pentre*
Canning Street Bridge	*Ton Pentre*
Maindy Street Bridge	*Ton Pentre*
Gelligaled Footbridge	*Ystrad*
Merlin Bridge	*Hopkinstown*
Campbell Terrace Culvert	*Mountain Ash*
Blaencwm River Wall	*Blaencwm*
Hopkinstown River Wall	*Hopkinstown*
Berw Rd River Wall	*Pontypridd*
Sion Street	Pontypridd
Castle Inn River Wall	Rhydyfelin
Pontypridd Road River Wall	*Porth*
Tonypandy River Wall	*Tonypandy*
Brook Street Retaining Wall	*Porth*
Ynysymeurig Wall and Bridge	*Abercynon*
Maerdy Mountain Road A4223	*Maerdy/Aberdare*
Ynyshir Community Route Landslip	*Ynyshir*
Taff Trail and other Active Travel Routes	*Various*
Nant Gelliwion Bridge	Penycoedcae

Structure Name	Location
Mill Road Culvert	Ynysybwl
Cross Street R/Wall	*Ynyshir*
Nant Clydach Bridge	*Abercynon*
Gyfeillion R/Wall	*Hopkinstown*
Gelli Culvert	Gelli
Afon Dar and Tramway Culverts	*Aberdare*
Rural Lanes - Storm Damage Repairs	*Various*
Various repairs and works to culverts, bridges and walls and landslips/embankments	*Various*

Proposed Land Drainage/ Flood Risk Management Capital Programme 2024/25

Scheme/Location	Activity/Work	RCT	WG Grant**	WG Grant/ other*	Total
		£k	£k	£k	£k
Land Drainage Improvements Allowance (match Funding) for progression of major schemes eligible for FCERM funding. Assumes WG Approval. See Appendix 2A	OBC/BJC/FBC & Works (15% Match Funding)	637		3,609*	4,246*
Small Scale Schemes 2024/25 – 14 Projects - Assumes WG Approval and 15% match funding See Appendix 2a	Construction, Design Only and Design & Construction	166		944*	1,110*
Resilient Road Fund - 2024/25 – 18 Projects - Assumes WG Approval and 10% match funding See Appendix 2b.	Construction, Design Only and Design & Construction	272		2,443*	2,715*
Maes y fynnon/Cardiff Rd FAS	Design and Development	0	10**		10**
Tuberville Road Porth FAS	Design and Development	0	60**		60**
Strategic Outline Business Cases/Scheme Development	Production of Strategic Business Cases for future projects. Incl Concept/Prelim Design	25			25
Mynydd-Yr-Eglwys, Ystrad	Monitoring & Remedial Works	10			10
Small Works Budget	Small scale works <£10,000 to reduce impact of surface water flows affecting properties and the highway	75			75
Total		**1,185**	**70****	**6,996***	**8,251***

*Assumes successful grant bids
** Grant already secured.

Schemes under development that will require a successful application for Grant from the Welsh Government.

Strategic Flood Risk Area (SFRA) and Larger >£200k Individual Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS)

Scheme	Location	Activity/Work (2024/25) SOC – Strategic Outline Case BJC - Business Justification Case OBC - Outline Business Case FBC - Full Business Case
Treorchy FAS - (Phase 2)	Treorchy	FBC - Detailed Design and Development
Pentre FAS	Pentre	FBC - Detailed Design and Development
Turberville Rd - Porth	Porth	Full BJC - Detailed Design and Development
Maes y Ffynon FAS	Aberaman North	Full BJC - Detailed Design and Development
Nant Gwawr (Phase 2)	Aberaman North	FBC - Detailed Design and Development
Cwmbach Canal FAS	Cwmbach	OBC – Preliminary Design & Development.
Trehafod FAS	Trehafod	FBC - Detailed Design and Development
Afon Cynon/Wellington St FAS - OBC/NFM	Aberdare	FBC - Detailed Design and Development
Cefn Pennar Road - FAS	Cwmbach	BJC - Preliminary Design & Development.
Victor St - FAS	Mt Ash	Full BJC - Construction
Tirfounder/Bro Teg Road - Phase 2	Cwmbach	Full BJC - Construction
Arfyn Terr, Tylorstown - FAS	Tylorstown & Ynyshir	FBC - Detailed Design and Development
Park Street FAS	Treforest	SOC – Business case test & Concept Development
Blaenllechau FAS	Ferndale	SOC – Business case test & Concept Development
Penrhys Road Inlet - FAS	Ystrad	Full BJC - Construction

Small Scale Projects <£200k Individual Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS)

Scheme	Location	Activity/Work
Heath Terrace (Central Inlet)	Ynyshir	**Construction -** Culvert upgrade to mitigate impact of debris blockage - Channel Scour Rehabilitation
Brook Street - Blaenrhondda	Treherbert	**Construction -** - Upgrade the inlet and channel to better accommodate debris control and maintenance improvements
Tynewydd - Relining	Treherbert	**Construction -** Structural Lining & Rehabilitation of an Ordinary Watercourse Culvert Network
Brook Street - Aberaman	Aberaman	**Construction -** Culvert rehabilitation and associated diversion works
Llanwonno Road - Defect Analysis JH	Penrhiwceiber / Mountain Ash	**Design Only -** Design work for the relining and rehabilitation of the ordinary watercourse culvert network to improve its structural condition to reduce the risk of asset failure
Dan-y-Cribyn - Defect Analysis JH	Ynysybwl	**Design Only -** Design work for the relining and rehabilitation of the ordinary watercourse culvert network to improve its structural condition to reduce the risk of asset failure
Brynmair Road (Boncyff)	Cwmaman	**Design Only -** Upgrade to the Brynmair Road culvert inlet and the ordinary watercourse culvert network
King George Field	Clydach	**Design Only -** Culverted ordinary watercourse rehabilitation and improvement works
Rosedale Terrace	Llwynypia	**Design Only -** Culvert inlet and channel improvement works with downstream overland flow routing - Design
Ely Brook	Cilfynydd	**Design Only -** Culvert inlet and channel improvements with associated access improvement works - Design
High Street - Ynysybwl	Ynysybwl	**Design Only -** Design works to facilitate inlet improvement, debris basin, channel rehabilitation and access improvements- Design
Plantation Road	Abercynon	**Design & Construction -** Culvert inlet and channel improvements with associated access improvement works
Column Street	Treorchy	**Design & Construction -** -Advanced works related to inlet improvements, including channel rehabilitation and trash screen upgrades
Telemetry	Various	**Design & Construction -** Expansion of the ordinary watercourse telemetry network in RCT

Schemes under development that will require a successful application for Grant from the Welsh Government.

Resilient Road Fund - Alleviate the effects of climate change (flooding) on transportation infrastructure

Scheme	Location	Activity/Work
A4058 Tonypandy - Trealaw to Ynysgrug (RV4)	Trealaw/Porth	Existing Highway Carrier Line (filter system) is showing significant root mass within the main system approximately 550m which is reducing the capacity of the carrier line to function resulting in frequent Highway Flooding
A4119 Bypass Ynysgrug - Tonypandy - Coedely (RV7)	Tonyrefail West	Plastic Carrier Line has significant defects i.e root ingress and displaced joints through the length of the network - partial surveys undertaken
St Luke's Road, Llwyncelyn	Porth	Works to upgrade a Highway Culvert inlet which will include works to the Headwall, debris screens and associated access
Mill Street	Tonyrefail East	Works to upgrade a Highway channel/ditch will include works to the upgrade the channel width, depth and banks and associated works to upgrade debris screens within the channel
Ynyshir Road	Ynyshir	**Design Only** - Works to upgrade the highway drainage infrastructure, via the upgrading of the highway carrier line and associcated inflow gully structures
A4058 Cymmer Road	Porth	**Design Only -** Ordinary watercourse rehabilitation and highway drainage improvements to manage overland flows affecting the A road.
A4058 Gyfeillion Rd	Cymmer	Structural repair to the A4058 Highway drainage carrier network, including patch repairs and structural lining works.
Cemetry Road	Porth	**Design Only -** Limited drainage within the highway - Installation of a new Carrier line and associated gullies over a length of 56m
Trebanog Road	Trebanog	**Design Only -** Limited drainage within the highway - Installation of a new Carrier line and associated gullies over a length of 172m
Turberville Road Inlet	Porth	Culvert inlet upgrade and ordinary watercourse channel rehabilitation
A4058 - Ty Mawr Road Junction	Graig and Pontypridd West	Installation of super gullies in the low spots (200m) to accommodate surcharging flows from the culvert at Ty Mawr Road
A4058 - Dinas Depot	Cymmer	**Design Only -** Upgrade gullies along the highway and carry out improvements where there is a watercourse that overflows onto the road

Mountain Road	Williamstown	**Design Only -** Limited drainage within the highway - Updating of the highway drainage infrastructure
B4278 Gilfach Road	Tonyrefail West	Works to upgrade the highway drainage infrastructure, via the upgrading of the highway carrier line and associated inflow gully structures
A4061 Rhigos Road Culverts	Rhigos	Installation of gateways, access tracks and fencing for continued maintenance of the Rhigos Road culvert inlets
Cardiff Road, Aberaman Phases 2 & 3	Aberaman	Works to upgrade the highway drainage infrastructure to manage overland flows
A4059 Canal Road	Cwmbach	Design and construction work for the relining and rehabilitation of the highway drainage network to improve its structural condition to reduce the risk of asset failure (42 GR3/4/5 defects identified along the length of the highway)
A4059 Newtown	Mountain Ash	Design and construction works to improve the capacity of the highway drainage infrastructure to manage overland flows which cause regular flooding to the A4059.

Proposed Traffic Management Programme 2024/25

Traffic Management Programme 2024/25	Cost (£)
Minor schemes, signs and markings	25,000
Collision Cluster and Capital Programme Review	2,000
Small scale traffic regulation orders (Speed limit, Road Safety and community benefit)	20,000
Residents Parking Review	40,000
Speed Limit Review	4,000
Remedial works resulting from Safety Audits on previous schemes	4,000
Development of schemes	5,000
Total	**100,000**

In addition to the above the Traffic Management team will be responsible for continuing the Welsh Government default 20mph initiative over 2024/25 as well as delivering several Education and Inclusion Services funded projects throughout the county borough including the highway elements of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

tudalen wag

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES PLANNED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE (COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS)

Author(s):
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21st Century Schools and Transformation

1.   **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

         The purpose of the report is to:

1.1   Provide Members with details of the capital works for approval for 2024/25 as part of the Council's three-year Capital Programme.

2.   **RECOMMENDATIONS**

         It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1   Approve the Education Capital Programme priority schemes for 2024/25 as outlined in Appendices 1-9 and approve scheme commencement.

3.   **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1   An ongoing programme of work is required in school premises to deal with essential condition and health and safety issues across the school estate, to ensure school buildings are 'safe, watertight and warm'.

3.2   These works will support schools with effective maintenance that will continue to reduce the risks associated with buildings and building services and help to prevent the need for significant capital expenditure and disruption to children's education which can follow with building failure.

3.3   To continue to deliver the Council's long term school modernisation improvement programme supporting the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

4. <u>BACKGROUND</u>

4.1 Members will be aware that an amount of £6.315M has been allocated to the planned capital programme (minor works) for 2024/25, as agreed by Council on 6th March 2024.

4.2 The continuation of the three-year rolling Capital Programme will continue to make significant enhancements to the quality of our school premises. The education capital programme continues to be a vital part of the Council's School Modernisation Programme in order to improve the physical environment and continue to support the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales.

4.3 Fit for purpose school buildings are important to ensure that the Council can focus on maximising educational outcomes in these challenging times and improve all of our schools by creating 21st Century learning spaces. This includes delivering modern, watertight and warm classrooms, rich with ICT and improved energy efficiency which drives down our CO_2 emission's contributing to the Council's 2030 net zero carbon target.

4.4 Improving our school estate also supports schools, and the Council, with delivering the Welsh Government's Community Schools initiative, embedding schools at the heart of society, ensuring that our schools are used for the wider benefit of the communities directly served by their schools. This will allow increased access and participation through the provision of good quality facilities enabling enrichment and facilitating extra-curricular activities such as access to halls for music, drama, play, classrooms for learning, spaces for meetings and recreational for sport, which will support our communities to become vibrant, and provide safe meeting and learning environments.

4.5 This funding will also ensure that the Council supports the local supply chains and local construction industry and supports small businesses at the heart of our communities providing local employment.

4.6 In framing options of programme of works, the following factors have been taken into account:

- The results of the Property Condition Surveys and further investigation works and observations by Council surveyors and engineers.
- Delivering priorities set out in the Service Asset Management Plan in line with the Corporate Asset Management Plan.
- ESTYN Inspection Reports.
- Health and Safety considerations.
- Reducing energy and carbon.
- Refurbishing learning environments to provide flexible creative teaching spaces in preparation for the new Curriculum for Wales 2022.
- Investing in adaptations to schools to assist pupils with mobility and other accessibility needs to promote inclusion.

4.7 The planned capital programme has been divided into categories identifying the nature of the works considered to be a priority.

5. CATEGORIES WITHIN THE PROGRAMME

5.1 The table below sets out the proposed allocation of the planned capital programme funds now available to spend in 2024/25.

SPEND CATEGORY	£M
Kitchen Refurbishments/Remodelling	0.390
Window and Door Replacements	0.100
Essential Works	0.651
Electrical Rewiring	0.115
Fire Alarm Upgrades	0.045
Toilet Refurbishments	0.308
Equalities Act/Compliance Works	1.939
Education and Inclusion Access Condition Surveys	0.200
Boiler Replacement	0.290
Roof Renewal	1.094
Asbestos Remediation Works	0.500
Improvements to Schools	0.065
Capitalisation of IT Hardware/Software and Licences	0.258
Universal Free School Meals	0.360
Total	**6.315**

5.2 Appendices 1–9 set out programmes of work for each category included above, with the exception of Education and Inclusion Access Condition Surveys, Asbestos Remediation Works, Improvements to Schools and Capitalisation of IT Hardware/Software and Licences.

5.3 The following narrative summarises the required investment and intended outcome of each spend category:

- **Kitchen Refurbishments/Remodelling**
  A rolling programme of replacement kitchens is required to maintain the current capital asset of school buildings and assist with much needed improvements, contributing towards the implementation of the Welsh Government 'Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) 2013' and the reduction in energy and carbon emissions. Appendix 1 provides Members with a list of identified schemes.

- **Window and Door Replacements**
  A rolling programme of replacement windows and doors is required to improve the energy efficiency, and in doing so reduce energy costs, and maintain the current capital asset of school buildings, as well as undertaking work to ensure compliance with statutory legislation. Appendix 2 provides Members with a list of identified schemes.

- **Essential Works**
  Members will be aware of the amount and value of outstanding historical maintenance works required to the buildings in the Education and Inclusion Services portfolio. Appendix 3 provides Members with a list of priority works, considered essential to maintain a 'safe, watertight and warm' environment for all users.

- **Electrical Rewiring**
  Appendix 4 provides Members with details of Education establishments that require electrical rewiring.

- **Fire Alarm Upgrades**
  Appendix 5 provides Members with details of school(s) that require fire alarm upgrades in order to comply with current legislation.

- **Toilet Refurbishments**
  Appendix 6 provides Members with details of schools that require refurbishment to comply with The Education (School) Premises Regulations 1999, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and to support the recommendations in the report 'Lifting the Lid on the Nation's School Toilets' produced by the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

- **Equalities Act/Compliance Works**
  An allocation of funding has been set aside to continue with works as and when deemed necessary to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Appendix 7 provides Members with a list of identified schemes. The project previously reported to Members, to construct an extension to Maesgwyn, is ongoing and so included on the list.

- **Education and Inclusion Condition Surveys**
  Continuation of condition surveys to all schools to inform the condition, suitability and accessibility of all buildings throughout the Education estate.

- **Boiler Replacement**
  A significant number of systems are reaching the end of their useful life, therefore it is considered prudent to fund a rolling programme of replacement boilers and upgrades, to assist with the reduction in energy and carbon emissions. Appendix 8 provides Members with a list of identified schemes.

- **Roof Renewal**
  It is considered prudent to allocate funding to ensure a roof replacement rolling programme is maintained. Appendix 9 provides Members with a list of identified schemes.

- **Asbestos Remediation Works**
  An allocation of funding has been earmarked to continue essential asbestos remediation works, following the results of recent asbestos surveys commissioned by the Council, and to progress a programme of replacement CLASP buildings affected by asbestos.

- **Improvements to Schools**
  Under accounting regulations, certain expenditure that was previously charged directly to the revenue budget is now shown in the Capital Programme.

- **Capitalisation of IT Hardware/Software and Licences**
  An allocation of funding has been committed for on-going hardware, software and licences to support essential data systems such as SIMS (Schools Information Management System), and the cashless catering system.

- **Universal Free School Meals**
  Capital funding received from the Welsh Government will assist in the roll out of this new initiative. This funding will continue to be utilised to upgrade and extend existing kitchens and serveries within our schools to facilitate the increased uptake in this service.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

6.1 The proposed schemes have given due consideration to equality issues, particularly in relation to access to our school premises. Schools are a key part of our communities and as such it is important that they are well maintained, accessible and 'fit for purpose'.

6.2 As this report is not seeking permission to implement a proposal in respect of a change of function, service, strategy or policy, it is deemed that an EqIA is not required in this instance.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As this report is not seeking permission to implement a proposal in respect of a change of function, service, strategy or policy, it is deemed that a Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not required in this instance.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

8.1 There are no consultation requirements arising from this report. However, subject to the decision of Cabinet, further collaboration will be undertaken with each school setting to deliver the agreed programme of works in a suitable and mutually agreed time period.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The funding allocation to support spend categories contained within this report was agreed by Council on 6th March 2024 as part of the three-year Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27. This report does not commit any additional spend over and above this agreed allocation.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The legislation considered in compiling this report is the 'Keeping Learners Safe' - the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002.

11. **LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN, NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015**

11.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

- **Prosperity**
  - Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper
  - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.

11.2 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.

This proposal would contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Planning for the 'long term', helping to 'prevent' problems occurring or getting worse in the future and delivering services in 'collaboration' with others.

This proposal would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Improving school environments that can deliver the new Curriculum for Wales.
- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to reducing our carbon emissions.
- Provide first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contribute towards a healthier Wales by providing additional facilities for pupils.
- Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible to undertake the works to schools.

11.3 There are links to RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services' Strategic Plan for the years between 2022 and 2025, 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.

12. **STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS**

12.1 The Education and Inclusion Service Planned Capital Programme provides investment in schools throughout the County Borough, as such this report is not focussed on electoral wards but delivers investment on a strategic level.

13. **CONCLUSION**

13.1 The projects identified within the planned capital programme can be committed and delivered within the financial year and will have an immediate impact on improving the fabric of schools, enhancing the learning environments both internally and externally, providing improved facilities for the schools' and communities that they serve. A coherent plan of expenditure will contribute to improvements in a wide range of physical environments benefiting pupils, staff, young people and members of the public encouraging and enabling community use of these buildings.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:
Education and Inclusion Services Scrutiny

Contact Officer:
Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21st Century Schools and Transformation

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Item: EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES PLANNED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

Background Papers
Council 6th March 2024: The Council's Three Year Capital Programme

Officer to contact:
Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21st Century Schools and Transformation

APPENDIX 1: Kitchen Refurbishments/Remodelling

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
St John Baptist Church in Wales High School	Supply and fit new dishwasher, oven, induction hob and refurbishment of staff changing room and toilet	65,000
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	New servery and roller shutter	30,000
Various Schools	Removal of gas appliances – new energy efficient upgrades	200,000
Various Schools	Removal of sterilisers/dishwasher replacement	95,000
	Total	**390,000**

APPENDIX 2: Window and Door Replacements

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	Phase 4 – new windows and curtain walling	50,000
Ton Junior School	Replacement Fire Doors	25,000
Parc Primary School	Replacement Fire Doors	25,000
	Total	**100,000**

APPENDIX 3: Essential Works

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Ty Castan – Alternative Education Provision	External masonry repairs, repointing, atrium glazing	140,000
Maes-y-coed Primary School	Refurbishment of main hall	40,000
Alaw Primary School	Replacement rotten cladding and replacement floorboards/joists	80,000
Ton Infants School	Structural works - replacement floors	100,000
Bodringallt Primary School	Structural works - classroom upgrades	40,000
Cwmdar Primary School	Structural works - classroom upgrades	30,000
Ferndale Community School	External improvements to footpaths - health and safety works	30,000
Trerobart Primary School	Junior block - internal upgrades and remodelling	50,000
Trallwng Infants School	Remodelling and internal upgrades	41,000

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Trehopcyn Primary School	Refurbishment of stairwells and corridors - internal upgrades including damp treatment	100,000
	Total	**651,000**

APPENDIX 4: Electric Rewiring

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Blaengwawr Primary School	Rewire	25,000
Darranlas Primary School	Rewire - second phase	40,000
Llanhari Primary School	Rewire	50,000
	Total	**115,000**

APPENDIX 5: Fire Alarm Upgrade

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Mountain Ash Comprehensive School	Fire alarm upgrade	45,000
	Total	**45,000**

APPENDIX 6: Toilet Refurbishments

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Darranlas Primary School	Phase 1 toilet refurbishment	58,000
Maes-y-coed Primary School	Refurbish infant toilets and reconfiguration	60,000
Cwmdar Primary School	Refurbish infant toilets	60,000
Oaklands Primary School	Refurbish nursery toilets	60,000
Treorchy Primary School	Refurbish infant toilets	70,000
	Total	**308,000**

APPENDIX 7: Equalities Act/Compliance Works

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Maesgwyn Special School	Extension – creation of 3 classrooms	1,450,000
Ysgol Ty Coch	Remodelling/ improvement works	200,000
Various Schools	Upgrading hygiene/changing areas	90,000
Various Schools	Classroom Adaptations for Learning Support Classes	90,000
Various Schools	Acoustic Improvements for Learning Support Classes	109,000
	Total	**1,939,000**

APPENDIX 8: Boiler Replacement

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Upgrades to main plantroom	90,000
Buarth Y Capel	Boiler replacement	40,000
Cwmclydach Primary School	Boiler upgrade	20,000
Llanhari Primary School	Boiler replacement	50,000
Penrhiwceibr Primary School	Boiler replacement	25,000
YGG Ynyswen	Boiler replacement	40,000
Pontygwaith Primary School	Boiler upgrade	25,000
	Total	**290,000**

APPENDIX 9: Roof Renewal

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
Cwmlai Primary School	Replacement facias and gutters	50,000
Ffynnon Taf Primary School	Flat roof replacements	47,000
Ton Junior School	Replacement rainwater goods	36,000
Ton Infants School	New roof	250,000

Property/School	Project	Estimated Cost (£)
St John's Baptist CiW School	Contribution to roof replacement	52,000
St Margaret's Catholic Primary	Contribution to roof replacement	20,000
Capcoch Primary School	Roof replacement	250,000
Penyrenglyn Primary School	Roof replacement	200,000
Penpych Primary School	Roof replacement	139,000
YGG Ynyswen	Roof remedial works	50,000
Total		**1,094,000**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2022-2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES WITH RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR MAUREEN WEBBER, DEPUTY LEADER

Author(s):   Melanie Warburton, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information on the Council's Annual Equality Report for the year 2022-2023.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1   Consider the comments and feedback, following pre-scrutiny by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, attached at Appendix 2; and

2.2   Agree to the content and publication of the Annual Equality Report.

3.   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1   The Annual Equality Report has been developed to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties.

3.2   The report contains progress made in year 2022-2023 in meeting the Equality Objectives contained in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan.

4.   BACKGROUND

4.1   The Public Sector Equality Duties in Wales which came in to force on 6th April 2011 included a requirement for public authorities (including Local Authorities and Schools) to report annually on how it has met the General Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010.

4.2 Reporting requirements are set out in the following regulations;

- Regulation 7   Collection and publication of information

- Regulation 9   Employment monitoring reporting
- Regulation 16   Reporting on compliance with the General duty.

4.3   The Council must report the above information on an annual basis, and publish by 31 March each year.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1   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 (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations based on protected characteristics.

5.2   An equality impact assessment is not required for this report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1   A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared and is attached in Appendix B (to follow). This will be published on the Council's website together with a consultation document that outlines the proposal in further detail and in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

6.2   A Welsh language impact assessment is not required for this report.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

7.1   The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26th February 2024 and the feedback is attached at appendix x (to follow).

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1   There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1   The Annual Equality Report has been developed to meet the requirements in the The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, known as the Wales Specific Equality Duties.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN ,NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

10.1   The contents of the plan contribute to the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

10.2 Due regard has been made to all 7 well-being goals and the 5 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. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

11.1 This applies to all electoral wards.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The Council's Annual Equality Report has been developed in line with legislative requirements and guidance produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

12.2 The report highlights the positive work that the Council has undertaken to meet it's equality objectives contained in the SEP.

12.3 The Annual Equality Report has to be published by 31 March 2024 in order to comply with legal requirements.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee-
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer:
Melanie Warburton, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20 MARCH 2024

Item: ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2022-2023

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact:
Melanie Warburton, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Annual Equality Report

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

This document can be made available in alternative formats and languages. To make a request please telephone 01443 444529 or email equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

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

1

Contents

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1. Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Council's Annual Equality Monitoring Report, which represents the Council's approach to providing information on its work in respect of equality and diversity.

The Council is required, under the Wales Specific Equality Duties, to report annually on how it has met the General Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010, and this document contains the information required in order for the Council to meet these duties.

Publishing the information in one report covering all requirements will make it easier for interested parties to identify how the Council is delivering on its commitment to equality, its legal obligations and the action plans contained within its Strategic Equality Plan (SEP).

Each section of the report looks at the Council's progress and the final section contains details of future work the Council needs to do.

Once again Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has continued to make our County Borough a more equal place for people to live, work and access services, however we recognise that there are, and will continue to be, areas for improvement. Publishing this Annual Report will not only help the Council to meet its obligations under the Wales Specific Equality Duties, but will assist you, as citizens to identify these areas and monitor progress on them.

Councillor Maureen Webber
Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Council Business

2. Who We Are

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council covers a wide geographical area and has a population of over 237,700 (Office of National Statistics (ONS) – Census 2021). The Council is the largest employer in the local area and the third largest local authority in Wales, over 79% of employees live within the Council boundaries.

The Council is committed to the principles of equality and diversity and we work to ensure that this is demonstrated in our service delivery and in our employment practices.

The Council reviewed its Corporate Plan in 2020. The Council's priorities set out in the [Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) are:

- Ensuring **People:** are independent, healthy and successful;

- Creating **Places:** where people are proud to live, work and play;

- Enabling **Prosperity:** creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

The Plan puts residents at the centre of what we do.

A new Corporate Plan is being developed for 2024-2030 and will be launched in April 2024. This plan builds on the strong foundations of our previous plans and at the same time recognises the changes we need to make to meet the unprecedented service and financial challenges ahead.

The Council is governed by 75 elected Members and operates a Cabinet system. It has a Senior Leadership Team headed by the Chief Executive and attended by Senior Directors, and employs over 10,000 employees in a variety of service areas and roles based within the following groups:

- Chief Executives

- Community & Children's Services

- Education & Inclusion Services

- Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services.

3. Reporting on Equality

The main purpose of this Annual Report is to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that all public authorities covered under the specific duties in Wales should produce an Annual Equality Report by 31 March each year. This report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

What the regulations require:

The Annual Report for 2022-2023 must set out:

- The steps the authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information;

- How the authority has used this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty;

- Any reasons for not collecting relevant information;

- A statement on the effectiveness of the authority's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;

- Specified employment information, including information on training and pay;

- Progress towards fulfilling each of the authority's equality objectives;

- A statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the authority has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives.

4. The General Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a general duty on the Council (and other public sector organisations) when making decisions and delivering services to have due regard in how to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained below);

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Protected Characteristics

This is the term used in the Equality Act to identify the types of people who are more likely to experience detrimental treatment and/or discrimination simply because of who they are. The law is designed to protect them, they are:

- Age;

- Disability;

- Gender Reassignment;

- Marriage and Civil Partnership;

- Pregnancy and Maternity;

- Race;

- Religion or Belief;

- Sex;

- Sexual Orientation.

When thinking about how to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, the Council also has to think about the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and are connected to that characteristic;

- Meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Council also has to particularly think about how it will tackle prejudice and promote understanding. This report includes information on what the Council has done in order to meet the General Duty.

5. How We Meet The General Equality Duty

To demonstrate how the Council has met the General and Specific Duties relevant information is considered, which may include data from local and/or internal sources such as customer surveys, community forums or Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), as well as data from national and/or external sources such as census information, research reports and statistics on hate crime.

IDENTIFICATION AND COLLECTION OF RELEVANT INFORMATION

When considering how to identify what information should be included in this report, the Council first looked at the information relating to it's SEP. This allowed the

Council to reflect and monitor whether the information is still appropriate in assisting the Council to deliver on the General and Specific Duties.

Full details can be found in the SEP which can be accessed on the Council website at: [Strategic Equality Plan](#)

The information identified is still very relevant to the delivery of the General and Specific Duties; internal documents provide statistical information that can be used for determining action and enable comparison to identify improvements or areas for further improvement. Internal strategies and their action plans provide information on how the Council is delivering its priorities. External information, including that with a national context, provides the Council with a raft of data that can assist in developing appropriate and relevant policies and approaches.

The Council recognises that the SEP is not the only area that can identify relevant information and that whilst it is very useful, service areas would also hold information that could assist the Council in identifying how it is meeting the General and Specific Duties.

Many of our service areas have examples of good practice which help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). The information is obtained through our internal performance management systems. As part of this performance management process, the Chief Executive reviews how individual service areas are demonstrating their compliance and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duties. Whilst there are some excellent examples of good practice, some of which are highlighted later in this report in the section 'equality objectives', some areas have more to do. Work will continue to raise awareness and understanding of the PSED with the aim of fully embedding equality matters into all aspects of our service delivery.

In addition to the good practice in our service delivery and workplace, ensuring Diversity in Democracy is commitment from our elected Members, and the Council is working to support their [Diversity Pledge.](#)

The Council has an EIA process in place, the results of which contribute to the information contained within this report.

Employment monitoring data is provided from the Council's HR system. The previous system 'Vision' has been replaced by 'iTrent' during this reporting period. There have been some challenges in collecting equality monitoring information due to issues with the transfer of data between the systems. It should be noted that employment monitoring information includes teachers and all school-based employees.

THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

The Council's main strategic plan is the [Corporate Plan](). This Plan was implemented in March 2020 and sets out the Council's priorities for the 4 years between 2020-2024. The detailed actions to deliver these priorities are monitored and scrutinised by Councillors every quarter as part of the [Council's Performance Reports]() to Cabinet. At the end of the year, the plans are also subject to more in depth challenge, review and evaluation, the results of which are then included in the Council's annual [Corporate Performance Report]().

NON COLLECTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INFORMATION

Whilst considerable relevant information has been collected for this report, it is acknowledged that it is sometimes difficult to collect and monitor all information in a Council as large as Rhondda Cynon Taf. A number of cross-Council networks already exist, such as the Disability Officers Group, to ensure that information and good practice are monitored and shared, however it is recognised that improvements can always be made to encourage a consistent approach in information sharing.

Use of Information

When considering what information should be used it was important that areas of good practice were identified across service areas to demonstrate that a commitment to delivering equality exists throughout the Council. Information used in this report includes:

- The Council's Corporate Plan (2020-2024)

- Service delivery/projects (2022-2023)

- Employment practices

- Consultation and engagement programme

- EIAs (2023)

- Employment monitoring information (2022-2023)

- Monitoring and delivery of the SEP action plan (2022-2023).

DELIVERY OF COUNCIL STRATEGIES

The Council consults and engages with its residents to collect information that is used to plan and prioritise, identify areas for improvement and service change, set and monitor performance standards and measure satisfaction on the quality of the services we provide.

The Council continues to develop and increase engagement though our Let's Talk RCT engagement website [Let's Talk RCTCBC](). The site has a suite of engagement tools that has enhanced our offer and made our engagements more user friendly

During 20023 just under 12,500 visits were made to Let's Talk RCT pages, with a further 800 made to Dewch i Siarad pages. This led to over 2,600 points of active engagement across multiple projects, the most active of which included Let's Talk Eisteddfod 2024, our annual budget consultation, Let's Talk Waste & Recycling and Let's Talk Local Development Plan.

Examples of the Let's Talk projects we have supported and led on include;

Let's Talk Equalities
Let's Talk Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)
Let's Talk Budget 2024-2025 (Phase 1)
Continuing to Talk About What Matters to You
Let's Talk Eisteddfod 2024
Let's Talk Aberdare
Let's Talk About What Matters to You
Let's Talk Southern Gateway
Let's Talk Children's and Young Adult Library Service
Let's Talk Leader's Debate
Let's Talk Taff Trail Trallwn
Let's Talk Budget 2023-2024 (Phase 2)
Let's Talk Climate Change.

During 2023, we supported or managed a large number of services with their consultation and engagement activities and supported a number of face-to-face engagement events.

It is difficult to measure exact levels of feedback from all consultations, due to the different methods used, reporting timescales and the fact that some services are still undertaking consultations themselves. We have though attempted to provide some response levels in the table below.

During 2023 we have supported over 65 service consultations as shown in the table below, with over 10,000 responses received and analysed.

This is in addition to the over 2,500 engaged people via the Let's Talk site.

Note: these figures do not include those we engaged with via our face-to-face methods.

Service Area	Number of Consultations	Snap Surveys	Number of Responses
Chief Executive	16	9	2975
Community and Children's Services	28	28	1455
Education and Inclusion Services	6	6	3183
Frontline Services	5	6	2092
Public Health Protection & Community Services	12	12	504
TOTAL	**67**	**61**	**10209**

Note: higher than normal due to Waste survey

Examples of some of the consultations that we have supported and led on include;

- Dog Fouling
- Flood Alleviation Schemes & Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Learning Disabilities Day Services
- Heritage
- Supported Living Service
- Participation Strategy
- Budget Consultation
- Service Changes
- Corporate Plan
- Strategic Equalities Plan.

Examples of how residents and communities have been involved in the Council's work in 2023 include:

- Engaging with Schools and young people via Instagram and in school settings
- Continued engagement and involvement with residents and communities in service changes that impact them, so that their voices are heard in Council decisions.
- Continued engagement with the Older People's Advisory Group about issues that could support their ability to get out and about. We have a joint SLA agreement with Age Connects Morgannwg and Older Peoples' Advisory Group to support and engage with older people in RCT;
- We provided a freepost and telephone option for those who cannot engage digitally, in addition to our face-to-face approach;
- We linked in with other services whilst undertaking our face-to-face events, from joining up consultations, to providing waste bags and advice and information;

- We have continued to use digital and social media engagement as one of our methods to obtain resident views and promote consultations;
- Continued to make our consultations more accessible to residents by increasing the use and availability of easy to read materials.

All consultations that we undertake we attempt to engage with the widest range of people that we can. We aim to capture the views of all groups that live within the borough and aim to represent all their opinions and concerns. We continue to provide Easy Read versions of all service change consultations and collect demographic equality information for services to use to inform their decisions making and the Impact Assessment Process.

We continue to monitor questions we include in surveys, relating to Equalities and Welsh Language. The data collected is used to inform the Council's decision-making process, an Equality Impact Assessment and a Welsh Language Impact Assessment must be prepared in order to consider the possible relevant impacts from any proposals.

Work has continued throughout 2023 to provide support to officers preparing Equalities & Socio-economic and Welsh Language Impact Assessments for strategy and policy developments. Support has ranged from provision of simple data outputs (largely based upon data from Census 2021 and the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)) to in-depth research (into, for example, housing conditions and tenure patterns and cross reference to income deprivation and material deprivation indicators) and analysis of qualitative and third-party reporting on different factors.

6. Equality Objectives

In 2019 we launched our Strategic Equality Plan (2019-2022). To aid the development of appropriate and relevant equality objectives the Equality and Human Rights Commission report 'How Fair is Wales 2018' was the main reference source. Equality objectives were aligned to well-being goals contained in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, specifically a 'More Equal Wales' and a 'Wales of Cohesive Communities'.

A comprehensive engagement process was undertaken with the public and targeted engagement was undertaken with community groups that reflect the 'protected characteristics' contained within the Equality Act 2010.

From this engagement and consultation with a number of Council service areas the following equality objectives were identified and published in the Strategic Equality Plan 2019-2022. The equality objectives are:

Objective 1   To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive;

Objective 2   To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities;

Objective 3   To promote safe communities;

Objective 4   To reduce the gender pay gap;

Objective 5   To create an inclusive workforce.

An action plan has been developed outlining specific actions in relation to each equality objective. These actions will be monitored through service area delivery plans.

Outlined below, we show our progress towards the equality objectives. It should be noted that not all actions were due to commence in the financial year 2019-2020 and these will be progressed in following years.

Objective 1 – To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

Action 1 - Identify community groups that represent the full diversity of the citizens of Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop accessible communication channels with them.

The Council has many well established links with community groups across RCT, for example, Youth Forums, Older People's Advisory Groups and the Disability Forum. The focus of this action is to engage with under-represented minority groups and individuals that have not had regular communication routes with the Council.

Community Cohesion Group

The Community Cohesion Group has a new, wide range of partners invited to attend from varied agencies and backgrounds across Cwm Taf. This has allowed for the sharing of information and allowed us to open up communications in newly identified minority groups. The Co-ordinator of Valleys Ethnic Minorities Support (VEMS) is now the group Chair and is able to pass on key information about support and events available in RCT to the individuals she comes in to contact with as part of VEMS. New members of the group such as the Reaching Wider Officer based at the University of South Wales have assisted with the identification of large numbers of Nigerian students who were seeking support from the foodbanks and the local authority in general.

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Disability Forum

We held our first face-to-face Disability Forum meeting since the Covid-19 pandemic in November 2022. Following an engagement exercise with members, we now plan to hold Disability Forum meetings regionally across the county borough to make meetings more accessible by public transport and increase the effectiveness of meetings. We plan to hold our first regional meeting in the Cynon area in June 2023.

Facilitating the Disability Forum is very important as it provides a positive space where members are able to raise any issues or experiences with accessing Council services, and Council officers can feedback directly any action taken and improvements to services as a result. In addition, the Forum provides a social element to members which allows them to feel part of a community, and less isolated.

General Engagement

The relaxing of all restrictions post Covid-19 meant that general engagement within the community could recommence. Town centre engagement projects throughout Hate Crime Awareness Week and during other key times of the year in areas such as local libraries, colleges and schools has opened up communication channels with all members of the community. Joint engagement sessions with officers from South Wales Police have taken place on a more regular basis.

LGBT+ History Timeline

In conjunction with Welsh Government, we created an LGBTQ+ History Timeline for RCT. This timeline celebrates RCT from the LGBTQ+ perspective, highlighting people and events that show that LGBTQ+ people have always played an important part in our county's history. The timeline allows all citizens of RCT to contribute to the project, to reflect the ongoing experiences of LGBTQ+ people, in RCT. We received great feedback from attendees at the launch event at Rhondda Heritage Park.

Project Unity

We were very pleased to support Project Unity (support group/project for those who identify as LGBTQ+) in relaunching in RCT following the pandemic as it offers much needed support and a voice for those who identify as LGBTQ+. Together with the Cohesion team, Project Unity has been able to relaunch and organise several events. These include a memorial event at Aberdare Museum to recognise transgender people who died as a result of discrimination and a transgender awareness event at St Elvan's Church along with regular meetings with the

Cohesion team. At the end of 2022-2023, plans were being made for a large Project Unity Summer event to support Pride month.

Safeguarding Week

We assisted South Wales Police in Operation BETSY across Cwm Taf, which was in line with Keep Safe Cymru. The aim of the operation was to identify people who may be vulnerable (some due to memory loss), who may not be known to services and so may not be receiving adequate care and support. This involved visiting town centres to engage with the public in trying to gather intelligence in relation to the above.

We were able to gather details from a substantial amount of people. We can now arrange for them to be visited by local PCSO's as well as being given information in relation to crime prevention.

Town Centre Engagement

Community Cohesion Officers and South Wales Police Officer's engaged with the general public in town centres throughout National Hate Crime Awareness Week. Officer's encouraged conversation with the public and information packs were put together and distributed to provide education and information on Hate Crime, reporting routes and support services available.

Valleys Ethnic Minorities Support

We continue to work closely with [Valleys Ethnic Minorities Support](#) (VEMS) whose members come from many different countries and have a wide ethnic diversity. The group works to overcome barriers to accessing local services, provide training and employment. VEMS meets weekly and these meetings are regularly attended by both the Cohesion team and the Cohesion officers from South Wales Police. Additionally, the co-ordinator of VEMS now chairs the Community Cohesion Group so is able to give regular updates and liaises with a range of partners when it comes to identifying community members from different cultures and countries.

Veterans and Armed Forces Community

Supporting the Armed Forces Community

In 2023, the Council's Armed Forces liaison officer had a key presence at veteran socialising and support groups throughout the county borough, ensuring members of the Armed Forces community received the advice and support required.

The Council are proud to have facilitated the establishment of new veteran support groups such as Woody's Lodge and Fighting for Pride, expanding our support

network. Additionally, in partnership with The Lighthouse Project in Tonyrefail, we offer a free lunch to veterans and their partners on the last Thursday of every month. Overall, we provide weekly support to 7 Armed Forces community groups spread across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

We worked with Maerdy GP Surgery to establish a monthly socialising and support group for veteran patients. The group has been a great success and raised awareness among patients about the Armed Forces Covenant and the support/priorities available to them if required. The GP surgery has gone on to achieve its GP-friendly certificate, keeps a record of all its veterans, and writes out to them each month with an update on Armed Forces events and groups taking place in the local area. The surgery has introduced a dedicated veteran webpage: https://www.ferndalemaerdymedical.co.uk/patients/veterans/ which highlights the importance of informing GP staff of veteran status.

Commemoration and Celebration - Month of the Military Child

We held an event to celebrate 'Month of the Military Child' for service children and their families who live in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This family fun event was held to celebrate our service children and their unique experiences. Working with Forces Fitness, the Council provided free family fun fitness sessions that were conducted at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd, where 75 children attended. The sessions offered fun and engaging activities that allowed service children the opportunity to celebrate and to meet with other service children.

Fighting with Pride

We have connected with Fighting with Pride, a charity that supports LGBTQIA+ veterans and serving LGBTQIA+ personnel. This has led to the Council adopting the Pride in Veterans standard, recognising the specific needs that LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families face.

Served and Proud

In 2023, the Council launched 'Served and Proud', this project is aimed at supporting LGBTQ+ veterans through a 2 weekly face to face group. We were pleased to welcome Hannah Blythyn MS, the Lead on Armed Forces and Veterans Policy in Wales, at the launch event. The project has gained momentum since its inception, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of supporting our veterans. We continue to actively promote the group, with a particular focus on reaching members affected by the historical 'gay ban'. Members of the group contributed valuable insights to the recent LGBT Veterans Independent Review, enhancing our understanding of their experiences and challenges.

Action 2 - Identify the number of refugees living in Rhondda Cynon Taf that are not already included in settlement programmes.

No refugees (excluding those who are part of the resettlement program) became known to the Cohesion team in 2022/2023.

Action 3 - Undertake an employment needs assessment which will inform specific action points relating to young people, disability and ethnicity.

The Communities for Work plus (CfW+) programme is a WG funded programme that can support short-term unemployed, long-term unemployed and economically inactive residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Individuals with protected characteristics remain the priority target audience of the programme and engagement activity is designed to target under-represented groups, for example, working with the DWP. Disability Employment Advisers (DEA's), the Community Engagement Steering Group, Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) and Over 50s Forums to expand reach and target provision.

The SPF People and Skills Programme is a UK Government funded programme, supporting those furthest from the labour market to engage in community-based activity and those who are employed but experiencing in-work poverty and/or under-employment factors.

Early in 2023, the 2 programmes aligned under the Employability Umbrella of 'RCTCBC Work and Skills', one holistic and inclusive programme using the differing funding streams to ensure all residents of RCT can access employment related support. This holistic programme replaced the previous ESF funded programme, whereby not all residents were eligible for support due to economic status or postcode restrictions placed on the Council by the funder.

Of 1500 participants supported within the 3-year period:

- 550 were aged 16-24 years (33%)
- 3 participants identified as transgender (<1%)
- 151 represented Black or Ethnic Minority groups (10%)
- 539 participants disclosed low or no skills (36%)
- 107 individuals stated migrant status (7%)
- 330 disclosed one or more Work Limiting Health conditions (22%)
- 73 participants were registered as disabled (5%)
- 126 were lone parents (8%).

The Employment Needs Assessment is conducted on an individualised basis. All participants completed a needs assessment prior to enrolling to ensure the most appropriate support/provision could be allocated. This needs assessment would then

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be reviewed on a 12-weekly basis and as such, action plans amended or where required, signposting to more appropriate support.

Support is also tailored according to an individual's needs and whilst the expectation is a minimum of fortnightly contact, the pace is determined by the participant and isn't time restricted, for example, a participant may be referred due to social isolation, they can be supported to attend community-based groups and to build confidence prior to 'the employability conversation'. The participant is supported to upskill, gain work experience, and apply for work as applicable and as deemed appropriate by them.

The priority cohorts of participants supported within RCT were largely in line with other Welsh Local Authorities:

Priority Cohort	RCTCBC	Across Wales
16-24	33%	34%
Transgender	<1%	1%
Black or Ethnic Minority	10%	18%
Migrant Status	7%	14%
Work Limiting Health Conditions	22%	20%
Disabled People	5%	9%
Lone Parents	8%	8%

Across Wales statistics provided by WG October 2023

The number of people supported and the way in which support was offered was impacted significantly due to the pandemic. Unfortunately support ceased entirely early in the pandemic as staff were redeployed to offer support to those who were shielding. When employment support resumed, it was often conducted virtually. The inability to access public venues, particularly Job Centre Plus Offices was a barrier to providing to support at this time.

Case Study

A 46-year-old lady engaged with RCT Work & Skills who had learning difficulties and autism.

Background / What is …?

LM engaged with RCT Work and Skills after being unemployed all her life due to her disability. She needed an employer to give her a chance after searching for sustainable employment most of her life.

LM lives with her mother in a jobless household in receipt of benefits.

LM was eager to find employment to keep her mind occupied on a daily basis & help her get into a routine.

The engagement…

LM is a re-referral to RCT Work and Skills and previously disengaged due to lack of commitment. During initial engagement, LM was more motivated this time around and was ready to do something for herself. LM eager to start volunteering to gain experience and enhance her CV to find sustainable employment.

We spoke about a confidence course online, but LM informed me she had done these types of courses in the past and they did not work for her. LM felt when she would start volunteering her confidence would improve over time and would help her get into a routine.

We met with a RCT work placement officer in a joint meeting, LM explained she would like to become a cleaner or work in a local café. The RCT work placement officer explained how the volunteering works and gave LM a few options of what was available in Mountain Ash. The one placement that suited LM was in Perthcelyn Community Centre serving refreshments to Mother and Toddler groups that are held at the community centre. LM was also responsible for cleaning the building and locking up the building with another member of staff.

She was volunteering at the Community Centre for 2 days a week for 8 weeks, LM's confidence grew dramatically, and she also completed a Food & Hygiene course whilst at her placement. LM was also attending British Sign Language course at the Community Centre. She was engaging with staff and members of the public weekly.

After supporting LM for a few months, she was then ready to start applying for a part time job as she now had the skills and drive to start moving her life forward. After searching for work with LM an opportunity was emailed through from the RCT Employment Liaison Officer.

The job vacancy was for a cleaning position, 6 hours week in Perthcelyn Office, this position was perfect for LM to start off with. The job vacancy was a Council position, I felt, as a mentor, that this job was perfect for LM with the right guidance and support. I contacted the cleaning manager to explain LM's learning disability and to ask if they would give her a chance. I accompanied LM to an interview and they offered her the job with the view to increasing her hours in the future.

On LM's first week she had training from the Council and was showed what her duties were and what was expected of her.

I have now signed LM off the project as she does not want to increase her hours and feels 6 hours a week is enough for her at the moment. As Perthcelyn is my office base, I keep in regular contact to support LM in any way I can.

Good Practice Shared / Lessons Learned

- Partnership working
- The individual improved in confidence and self-esteem as a result of mentoring.

Outcomes

- Job outcome
- Training outcome

Action 4 - A community profile to be undertaken for all library areas to better understand the needs of customers.

The library service has identified the main catchment areas for each library and then undertaken a profile of each area by using the Community Insights programme which focusses on the following areas:

- population in the wards that fall into the library's catchment area;

- information on children in poverty, people out of work, people in deprived areas, disability, pensioners and other vulnerable groups;

- information on housing characteristics: dwelling types, housing tenure, affordability, overcrowding, age of dwelling and communal establishments;

- information on recorded crime and crime rates;

- information on limited long-term illness, life expectancy and mortality, and general health;

- more information on qualifications, pupil attainment and absences;

- information on people's jobs, job opportunities, income and local businesses;

- information on transport, distance to services and digital services;

- information on physical environment, air quality and neighbourhood classifications.

Analysis of this data creates a good understanding of the differences between the communities each library serves. Use is also made of geographic information available about the level of Welsh speakers in various parts of the borough.

The service also profiles visitor numbers, book issues, downloads, attendance, type and number of events at each library as part of their performance meetings with branches and of course listens to feedback from staff and customers.

All of the above help the service to target help to areas in need and to provide services, outreach and information in those areas. The impact of these interventions can make a real difference to the lives of those accessing the service, examples include:

1.   Working with the town BID at Aberdare and Treorchy to provide events that showcase and promote both local businesses and Welsh produce, events have included,

Christmas parade at Aberdare and Treorchy. At Treorchy the event was held on the first Saturday of December, the library would on average see 250 – 300 visitors, on this day 1555 visited.

Comments include:

"Just wonderful!"
"The best Santa we have ever seen!"

2.   Places to connect – to help combat loneliness and isolation brought about by closure of other community venues and the cost-of-living crisis. As part of the Places to Connect programme the service organised several 'Coffee and Craft' days across libraries. Community members were invited to spend as much time as they liked at libraries, chatting, having tea and coffee and taking part in crafts such as wreath making, card making or playing board games. Comments after the events included:

"This was a fab session, there was a good community spirit, I can't wait for the next one."

"I only intended to stay for an hour but ended up staying all day, it was great to sit and chat to people, I hadn't seen NAME for years!"

"This library is excellent! It's really given me a lift to be here today."

3.   As a result of feedback from two Ukrainian settlers who attended the above, a staff member, who first came to the UK over a decade ago and who at the time spoke no English, asked to set up a 'Chat Club'. The club which aims to encourage community members whose first language is not English to meet up, have a coffee and chat to improve their English language skills meets

fortnightly. Membership has grown steadily and currently has members from the Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Italy and Iran.

4. At one Places to Connect event, a participant mentioned it would be nice to have a puzzle table in the library as people could then spend longer periods of time in the building without feeling self-conscious. As a result of this, and through kind donations from staff, jigsaw tables have been set up in several libraries. A user at Aberdare library has said:

    "We drop in a few times a week, my husband and I spend an hour or two picking books and doing the puzzle, our son and granddaughter have joined us too!"

    Library borrowers have also started to donate puzzles they have already completed and libraries regularly swap and circulate jigsaws to provide variety.

5. The 'Winter of Wellbeing Scheme' allowed the e-teens library at Treorchy to set up several craft sessions, the aim of which was to encourage skills such as crochet and knitting and to help the participants to open up, talk and share stories to maintain good mental health and wellbeing, participants commented:

    "I've been practicing at home and on the bus. I've been making so many things and I'm definitely improving."

    "I've enjoyed learning crochet and I'd love to do similar things in the future."

6. In partnership with the Park and Dare Theatre, Treorchy library hosted a 'Fun Palace' event. Both venues were given over to the local community who then hosted events and workshops to show the hobbies and crafts available in the local community. The day promoted these groups as a way of increasing people's knowledge, health and wellbeing. Events included:

    - Clay modelling and sculpture
    - Easter Crafts
    - Crystal Art
    - Book Craft
    - Gonk making
    - Face paining
    - Pastel painting
    - Guitar workshop
    - Embroidery and sewing

- Planting and potting
- Silent disco

Participants said:

"Lovely event, well worth attending."

"Brilliant activity, wonderful staff."

"'We really enjoyed trying the guitar, gardening and embroidery and took away things to continue at home. Also found out about local events e.g. gardening class. My daughter loved painting."

7. Following a recent refurbishment, Treorchy library repurposed the old entrance and reception area into a gallery that is made available to local groups and artists.

Once such person, a 21 year old photographer and digital artist has autism. He has had difficulty communicating for his whole life and found people around him haven't understood the world he lives in and the impact of his autism on him. As a way of trying to get his grandparents and wider family to understand him better, he set about creating visual representations of his internal experience of autism.

He had such a great response from family and friends that he approached the library service to share his work. He was invited to show his collection *Passing by…* at both the gallery at Treorchy and Pontypridd library.

Both exhibitions were highly successful and since then his work has been featured on ITV's Backstage Programme as well as exhibiting in London, Paris, Amsterdam and New York. The artist has recently been awarded a grant from Arts Council Wales as part of the Creative Steps fund which has helped him to further develop his own art practise as well as supporting his mission to help people to understand some of the challenges faced every day.

The gallery at the library is so popular it is booked several months in advance.

8. In recent years RCT libraries has seen a significant increase in people coming to the library for 'non-traditional' reasons. Increasingly, members of the public identify the library as a safe space where they can obtain help, support and advice.

RCT Council has set up Community Resilience Hubs within four libraries and employ a Neighbourhood Network Team who work with the library, other

Council and public sector services, private/voluntary organisations and Community Groups. An example of help given includes:

A person arrived at Aberdare library seeking help. He had previously used the One4all one stop shop within the building and knew it was a place he could come to for advice.

He informed the library staff that he was out of work, hadn't eaten in several days and had no money for food, gas or electricity and wanted help with accessing a local Foodbank.

The library staff knew that the neighbourhood network team work closely with local foodbanks and have emergency food parcels for vulnerable people. The branch librarian made the person comfortable in the library and then spoke to their line manager who contacted the local Community Co-ordinator with their details. Luckily the person had a mobile telephone and although he did not have any credit to make calls, he could receive them.

The Community Co-ordinator was able to contact them within a few minutes and was able to provide them with an emergency food parcel. They were also able to discuss with them further help and support that would be needed.

The Branch Librarian said:

"Sadly, we are getting more people coming into the library who are really struggling and need our help. It's really good to know that people trust us and will come in. It's also really important to know we can provide the help they require and to know we have colleagues in the Neighbourhood Network Team who we can ring to get immediate support for anyone in need".

The library service also, as part of the Welsh Library Standards, carries out an adult and separate children's customer satisfaction survey every three years. Information from this survey is used to plan library strategy and to shape services. For example, a need for community space identified in both Ferndale and Hirwaun eventually led to the service to creating a meeting room at Hirwaun library and to include separate meeting and IT rooms in Ferndale library.

As well as all of the above activities, the service uses the information in the 'Community Insight' report to target partnership working with organisations such as, South Wales Police, Transport for Wales, Adult Education and wider government to provide information, drop-in sessions and classes.

Action 5 - Undertake research as part of the local housing market needs assessment into the demand for housing needs for disabled people.

The Council applies the data set out in the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) when determining the mix of new schemes/properties that are being built with the use of social housing grant (SHG). The Service continues to apply this method in order to tackle the demand for housing among disabled people. A new LHMA has recently been completed and is in draft form which will shortly undergo quality assurance and internal scrutiny process and will be submitted to Welsh Government by the end of March 2024.

Action 6 - Undertake a review of the Homestep Scheme to ensure equality monitoring questions are appropriate to identify specific needs with an emphasis on the identification of housing needs for young disabled people.

The Homestep mailing list sign up process has been re-designed and now has a far easier completion process for potential applicants. This mailing list will be used to inform the next LHMA in 2025.

The Housing Strategy and Investment Service is continuing to work with the Council's Digital Improvement Office to review all mailing lists and application forms to bring these online and these are being worked through in order of priority. When the Homestep mailing list is reviewed with the Digital Improvement Office and an application form considered it will include equality monitoring questions to identify specific needs, including those of young disabled people.

Action 7 - Improve and develop the collection and recording of customer equality monitoring information across Council service areas.

In August 2022 the Council launched its internal Equality Monitoring toolkit and standard monitoring form for all staff and service areas to use when conducting monitoring. The purpose of the form and toolkit is to ensure that monitoring practice across the Council is cohesive, and data collected from each service area is robust. As part of the monitoring toolkit and form launch, we held 2 'Lunch and Learn' awareness sessions for managers and staff responsible for monitoring to understand the importance and benefits of equality monitoring, and how to use the new resources.

By standardising our monitoring form and questions asked in equality monitoring across the Council, the data collected as part of monitoring exercises will now be cohesive and easily comparable to a range of external data markers, including the Census. This means that we will be able to tell more easily if our services are accessible and reflect the diversity of our communities. This robust data should also lead to more relevant and local data being used in Equality Impact Assessments,

meaning that we can demonstrate who will be affected by our proposals more accurately.

A standardised monitoring form and questions also means that our monitoring is more inclusive, and as a result more people should feel represented when completing monitoring forms.

Action 8 - To evaluate the experience of disabled people who are on the Homefinder register to understand any barriers to accessing adapted accommodation and to identify improvements to the process as a result.

The RCT Allocation Scheme is currently being reviewed and adapted, housing is one of the main areas within this review. We have commissioned consultants to independently review the way that accessible/adapted housing is applied for and allocated. To assist in this process individuals registered with Homefinder were contacted and given the opportunity to comment on the process. Whilst most did not take up the opportunity, valuable feedback was received from 2 current applicants as well as the Community Occupational Therapist Teams who support disabled applicants in their search for suitable housing. We also evaluated the number of applicants seeking adapted/accessible properties and continue to monitor on a quarterly basis the number of allocations to households needing adapted/accessible homes.

Action 9 - Improve and develop monitoring of customer complaints.

We have implemented a new Customer Record Management System backed by Power BI which better enables us to understand the needs of customers and communities where there are equality considerations.

In Social Care a similar approach is being used to identify the diversity within our communities to ensure that services are focused and targeted where they are most needed through the Annual Social Services Survey. This is in the early stages and will continue to be developed, with outcomes shared with partners in the third sector to inform their delivery plans.

Action 10 - Improve local access to information advice and assistance provision for children, young people and families to promote their participation and engagement.

The **Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS)** has continued to utilise a range of methods to deliver youth work services in 2022-2023, including the provision of information advice and assistance to young people to promote their participation and engagement. The table below shows the Youth Engagement and Participation Service's 'reach' (number of individual young people engaged in open

access activities organised by, and receiving one to one support from, the service) and the number of contacts the service made with anonymous young people during street-based youth work sessions delivered during the year:

Annual reach 2022-23	
11-13yrs	4177
14-16yrs	3860
17-19yrs	999
20-25yrs	191
TOTAL	**9277**
Number of anonymous contacts 2022-23	
	2042

Reach by age 2022-23	% population	Welsh average	Variance
11-16yrs	47%	n/a	n/a
11-19yrs	36%	24%	+12%

In 2022-2023 the Service engaged with 36% of young people aged 11-19yrs, performing 12% above the National Welsh Average.

The Council has continued to invest in mobile youth vehicles utilising core and grant funding to act as hubs in localities where access to a suitable permanent venue is not available. The vehicles are used as mobile youth clubs; as the base for community activities like fun days and street-based youth work; as well as a hub for use at times when an immediate response is required within a community, such as following a serious incident that requires enhanced youth work support. The mobile youth vans continue to prove an invaluable resource, thus a fourth vehicle was purchased in line with the priorities of the Cabinet. The ongoing expansion of the community street-based youth work supported by the YEPS vehicles will remain a priority in line with available funding opportunities. The availability of the vans as a resource has allowed the service to carry out an additional 107 sessions of activities, increasing the number of contacts by 1,719 in 2022-2023.

YEPS uses numerous ways to communicate with young people, parents/carers and community members such as emails, text messaging, posters, leaflets, social media platforms and an app which was launched in 2022. YEPS also has a Youth Officer solely responsible for developing digitalisation and promotion, supported by at least one Social Media Champion in each cluster. Young people have been at the heart of the development of the app, which has transformed user engagement and improved service delivery; as well as promoting the service and its activities and support on offer, the app enables parents and guardians to complete consent forms for off-site

activities. The numbers of followers for each of the social media platforms is steadily increasing year on year as the service continues to promote events, activities and use live streams to engage followers.

2022-23	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Youtube
Number of followers	4, 266 (+814)	2, 917 (+206)	1, 761 (+97)	382 (+12)
Page reach/visits	84, 023	22, 971	36, 046	6, 000 (-4,336)

The YEPS website, was rebranded as YEPS.wales in 2022 aligning with the new app and continues to provide access information, advice and guidance for young people around a number of themes such as money management, travel etc. The website usage data is monitored monthly with 39,700 users accessing the website in 2022-2023 totalling 66,500 views. The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) section of the website is also growing in prominence as it's continuously updated to ensure young people have easy, 24-hour online access to IAG on several key issues.

The **Family Information Service** plays a key role in disseminating information to service users and families. The Family Information Service (FIS) Facebook page currently has 3,500 followers, proving an effective means to communicate with parents, families and members of the public about information, services and activities available to them. The creation of an Instagram social media page for FIS to appeal to the younger RCT residents has been approved and is with the Council's Communication Team to build.

The **RCT Families Website** is a public facing one stop shop for information related to children, young people and families. It provides an important single point of access for information, advice and signposting for children, young people, parents, community members and practitioners to the range of support on offer, providing the means for members of the public to meet their own information advice and assistance needs. The website www.rctfamilies.co.uk has received 14,483 views in 2022-2023 with 2,400 unique visitors with the 'looking for information' within the Parents/Carer section being the most popular. A series of internal staff demonstrations of the RCT Families website have been delivered to promote it's use amongst professionals and their service users. QR codes have also been generated for service user accessibility that front-facing staff can use in the community.

Work is underway to review the usage of the three **Children and Family Centres** and consider opportunities to increase the use of the buildings and engagement with the wider community linking in with neighbourhood network developments. We continue to work with community and third sector organisations through the Community Support Steering Group. We are also planning to undertake informal

sessions with parents to try and establish parent forums, making sure that any developments meet the needs of the families and the wider communities. As part of the RCT Families website and social media opportunities, the promotion and profile of the Centres is being raised, showing the resources available and signposting to sources of advice and support in community settings.

The first **Your Voice Survey** since the pandemic was delivered this year by YEPS and saw the views of almost 5,000 young people in schools, colleges, youth clubs and other community settings across the county borough, representing the diversity of young people living, being educated or working in RCT. Young people were given the opportunity to complete a series of interactive questions on a range of thematic areas, including health and wellbeing, learning and education, leisure and culture and community safety. The findings have been reported to the Senior Management Teams in Public Health and Protection, Education and Children's Services as well as Senior Leadership and will be used to inform priorities for the Service and its partners to meet the needs of young people aged 11-25.

YEPS continues to support young people's participation through **Youth Forum** work. In 2022-2023 YEPS hosted 97 Youth Forum sessions, attended by 204 young people. YEPS' thematic forums have become well embedded throughout 2022-23; the voice of the young people has influenced several successful service developments which have addressed the needs of 11-25 year olds, as outlined in the table below. However, in an effort to recruit larger numbers of participants and actioning the voice of the young people in the forums, from April 2023, the service amended the organisation of the forums as travel was proving an obstacle to participation for many, with forums returning to localities across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf; each locality has selected a specific focus area, thus the thematic element has been retained.

Thematic forum	Positive outcomes achieved
Equality & Diversity / Cynon Forum	White ribbon event LGBTQ+ weekly meetings Supporting the Festival of Unity Live and Let Pride Art Exhibition
Community Safety / Taf Forum	Anti-Racism Black Asian and Minority Ethnic event Around the World Operation Bang Work with Crime Stoppers and Police Crime Commissioner to ensure young people know how to report crime
Mental Health & Wellbeing / Rhondda Forum	Mental Health animation which has been nominated for a national Youth Excellence award
Environment & Sustainability	Capel Swap Shop Currently organising an event 'YEPS wears Prada' (an environmentally friendly fashion show)

	Currently organising a tree planting activity to enhance young peoples' understanding the importance of looking after our local wildlife

The RCT's **County Youth Forum** (CYF) is the main group for ensuring that the voice of as many young people in RCT can be collated and shared with relevant partners and decision makers. Numbers throughout 2022-2023 remained low and engagement from schools was sporadic; following consultation with young people, the CYF meetings were moved from afterschool sessions when it transpired transport was often an issue, to during half term holidays. This amendment has proven successful with 21 young people now attending, representing 8 schools. However, there is still work required to engage other schools to ensure all young people across RCT are given the opportunity to have their voices heard.

YEPS has developed its **Young Editors Programme** as an additional means to actively promote the work of young people, led by young people. This has steadily become more popular throughout 2022-23, with 8 young people (an increase of 5 from last year) now active members and becoming 'Content Creators'. These young people have produced a short video on young people's rights as part of World Mental Health Day, with further plans to produce content related to various issues affecting young people, including the promotion of YEPS' provision. They have also held interviews with authors for book launches, elected members and young people at the RCT Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic event and visited various youth clubs.

OBJECTIVE 2 – To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below:

Action 1 - A comprehensive review of the recruitment and selection process to increase the diversity of applicants.

We have created a [careers/jobs microsite](#) to develop our employer brand and attract more applicants to apply for our jobs. Our job description template was also redesigned to complement the website. We appointed a Graduate Officer in Recruitment, Social Media and Marketing who joined us in May 2022. This post developed recruitment marketing by utilising social media and more traditional methods of advertising such as posters, print, roundabout and billboard advertising. Enhanced recruitment campaigns were delivered, and specialist advice was available to managers to advertise posts, attract applicants, increase the use of social media platforms and targeted advertising, including paid Facebook advertising.

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In some high priority campaigns, to encourage more applicants, we offered support to complete applications for high priority posts at jobs fairs and focus on training and support available to encourage more people to apply for jobs.

We undertook a recruitment survey with our managers. 82% of recruiting managers were highly satisfied with their recruitment marketing support and 18% satisfied; with the majority of managers recruiting for hard to fill posts (some with multiple vacancies did not fill them all but believed they filled more posts than they would have without the intervention). Managers also reported that they were getting a higher number of applications and better quality in terms of suitability and understanding the role.

LinkedIn has been developed with engagement work and a pilot 12 month subscription package to advertise Council vacancies. The pilot has received positive feedback from managers, in particular regarding recruitment for specialist and technical posts. Some feedback from recruiting managers is listed below:

- "We did get a higher number of more experienced applicants than previously.."

- "Following the adverts you arranged for me earlier this year, we were successful in appointing a senior engineer, so thank you for your input which really helped."

- "Very helpful supporting my needs to advertise a crucial vacant post that had been difficult to gain interest in."

Enhanced engagement work in terms of LinkedIn content has also been undertaken to raise our profile as an employer.

An education/schools recruitment microsite is also close to being launched, content written and test pages have been produced, other complimentary content such as video currently in final stages of production.

Action 2 - Develop and implement an action plan based on the employment needs assessment specifically in relation to young people, disability and ethnicity.

The CfW+ programme's Facebook and web pages were redeveloped within the period, with the aim of expanding reach and increasing self-referrals onto the programme.

The Work and Skills teams work closely with DWP, Careers Wales and other Council services to not only generate referrals but to ensure a targeted approach of RCT residents with protected characteristics. Regular meetings with DWP highlight any shortfalls of referrals within specific Job Centre Plus Offices, together with any shortfalls of referrals that fail to represent priority cohorts. This has been difficult at times due to the DWP Commissioned Maximus offer, which targets the same customer groups.

Activity and the usual forward planning, proactive approach to delivery has been impacted by the following factors during the period of the current Strategic Equality Plan.

- funding requirements i.e. ensuring programme delivery is in-line with Government approved delivery plans and a changing eligibility criteria

- the referrals received from third parties, often those closer to the labour market, are referred with the desire to quickly enter employment, as opposed to the intended target audience of those with complex needs or several barriers to employment

- an internal Management of Change process within the period that meant a significant restructuring of staff and changes in funding streams/project guidance

- a reactive approach due to the ongoing difficulties that surrounded the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and mass redundancies within RCT due to the closure of large employers, such as Garth Bakery and the UK Windows and Doors Group.

That said, activity to reduce inequalities that exist within our communities included:

Disability Confident event

Work and Skills hosted a joint event with DWP at the Rhondda Heritage Park Hotel to raise awareness to employers of the Disability Confident Scheme. 19 employers and partners attended, many of whom were already registered at Disability Confident Levels 1,2 & 3. 5 had no prior involvement in the scheme. By the end of the event all 5 were successfully registered as Disability Confident Level 1. This brought the number of Disability Confident registered employers in RCT to 100, the highest number of DC registered Employers within a Local Authority in Wales.

Childcare Choices

Work and Skills supported the Early Years team to deliver a Pilot Childcare Choices Event, aimed at lone parents wishing to pursue a career that would compliment their own childcare needs. Whilst the event was small, all attendees enrolled for Employment Mentoring to upskill and receive support to enter the sector but also to benefit from the Work and Skills barrier fund, which helped with DBS checks, childcare for the duration of training and travel to the training. Further sessions are planned for 2024.

Employment Routes

The Employment Routes programme is a training programme built around specific employer needs and employment opportunities. The Real Skills programme is a pathway specifically designed for 16–24-year-olds with no/low skills and no work experience. Real Skills offers learning opportunities through hands-on project work, usually within community venues in need of a new lease of life, for example, Pontypridd Foodbank stores had fallen into disrepair, 2 project cohorts supported the redevelopment of the site, making the space more fit for purpose.

SPF Service Level Agreement with Leisure and YEPS

Service Level Agreements were put in place during the inception of the SPF People and Skills to enable both Leisure and YEPS to help Work and Skills achieve targets around improving physical and mental health of economically inactive RCT residents. Low intensity Leisure activities were designed to target less-active individuals and engage them in physical, group-based activities.

YEPS activity under the SLA encourages young people to engage in gaining life skills, to complete volunteering opportunities and to receive support to gain better insight into employer expectations, all of which will contribute to project outcomes whilst maximising the SPF grant through the support of internal Council services.

Response to UK Windows and Doors Closure

When the UK Windows and Doors Group closed suddenly there was extreme concern for the 400+ employees impacted, many of whom who had worked within the same industry and area for 40+ years. The RCT Work and Skills team, together with DWP and Careers Wales, worked quickly to facilitate an Information, Support and Recruitment event. More than 70 employers, partners and training providers attended, with all employers offering live vacancies on the day. More than 300 individuals affected by the closure attended the event. Many of the attendees spoke of hidden disabilities, an inability to read and write that had remained hidden within their lengthy employment, impacted mental health and extreme anxiety as to what

would happen next. Confidential meeting spaces were offered on the day along with follow up support sessions to ensure all individuals could access tailored support to suit their individual needs. 3 attendees left the event having already been offered a job and start date, whilst 50+ attendees had interviews/call backs scheduled. The support of the individuals still facing unemployment continues through 1-1 mentoring.

In-Work Support

The In-Work support element of the programme is also inclusive of anyone who is in paid work and wishing to upskill and/or seek alternative employment. More recent activity has sought to support those who are employed by RCTCBC but facing barriers to conducting their current role. This could be due to changes in physical or mental health. An employee recently took Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) as they were no longer able to conduct their physical role. The development of this piece of work will seek to negate the need for Voluntary Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy through retraining and support to diversify in the workplace.

Action 3 - Recommend within the adapted housing review that the Council commits to increasing the number of adapted and accessible homes being built in the area across all tenures.

The Adapted Housing Review has been completed and makes a number of recommendations, including increasing the supply of adapted housing across all tenures. The next steps are to incorporate the recommendations into our working practices and other policies and strategies.

Action 4 - The implementation of the Develop, Invest and Grow project to improve Well-being and equality and diversity outcomes in over 100 small medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Staying Well at Work (formerly Develop Invest & Grow) was led by RCT and part funded by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government provided support to small businesses and their employees. The support was offered at no cost and focusses on a bespoke range of products to improve employee Health and Wellbeing and businesses to manage employees with disabilities/work limiting health conditions.

Funding for the project delivery ended in December 2022. During its lifetime the project engaged with businesses and individual employees throughout RCT. The project focussed on health and wellbeing and provided support to individuals and businesses in terms of HR support, education and clinical treatment and support. The project provided companies with guidance on Diversity and Inclusion, particularly in relation to policy development and provided training on topics including men's health issues, women's health issues, menopause, mental health and

wellbeing. The project also provided specific support to participants around individual health issues and fitness for work.

Action 5 - To provide accessible information to the public through a variety of formats with a specific focus on improving accessibility of information for the Deaf community.

All Customer Care activities are available via the Council's Contact Centre and through its website and online forms. This allows users to access information and perform transactional services through different channels, according to their preference and needs. The Digital Improvement Office works closely with service areas and the Corporate Web and Communication Teams, to ensure that the information available online is of an appropriate level of detail to allow users to self-serve as much as possible, thus providing them with access to information and request services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, without limitation of Council opening hours.

Analytics show that there is a rising trend in usage of webpages to access information and request services, with a significant increase in the percentage of customer care interactions via the web and mobile devices from 87.9% in 2018-2019 to 94.9% in 2022-2023.

Action 6 - Undertake development of the use of assistive technology within the Digital Strategy.

In 2022-2023, the Council has developed its new Digital Strategy for 2022-2026, setting out its vision and objectives for digital and technological opportunities as 'enablers' to help achieve its wider corporate goals. The strategy is formed around 4 key principles, one of which is digital solutions and service design. A key part of this strand of the strategy focuses on the investigation and application of emerging technologies to support services to deliver more effective solutions to their users. This includes the use of assistive technology for use by both staff and service users, to offer greater support and provide insight for targeted intervention where resources are more limited. Such areas being considered include the use of technology to reduce the administrative burden on teams through the application of transcribing technologies to reduce the requirement for minute taking tasks, allowing staffing capacity to be re-directed to other tasks. In addition, the Council is scoping the opportunity to pilot unobtrusive sensors within service users' homes to measure behavioural patterns of basic household tasks and activities. This type of technology will highlight changes in patterns of these activities and offer an alerting mechanism to predict and prevent deterioration in general health, in order to intervene at an earlier point in the service user's decline, improving their chances of a faster recovery.

Action 7 - To strengthen existing Homefinder processes to take into account equality and diversity best practice.

Equalities is part of the Allocation Scheme review that is currently being undertaken. Staff from the Diversity and Inclusion team have attended task and finish groups to provide advice and assistance with the application process.

Homefinder operates a face-to-face service in Sardis House for individuals wishing to make an application but do not have access to a telephone or the internet. Homefinder has also improved accessibility for individuals seeking to apply for housing by establishing a presence in One4All Centres in Aberdare and Treorchy every week and these are proving to be successful.

Homefinder continues to attend the Disability Forum and attendees' feedback relevant information from this community network.

Action 8 - To further develop an inclusive approach to apprenticeships.

Since 2018, when this action was agreed, we have recruited 2011 apprentices into various service areas across the Council. The Employment, Education and Training team extensively advertise and promote vacancies to internal and external stakeholders. Delivering workshops and webinars to colleges, Department for Work and Pensions, Careers Wales, Communities For Work and supported agencies such as Elite, to encourage individuals from all backgrounds and those with disabilities to apply. Our recruitment process ensures we provide reasonable adjustments to individuals to assist them with the process. For example, we have allocated additional time on assessments, interview questions issued early, delivered virtual interviews etc. The statistics below highlight the success and sustainability of the apprenticeship scheme.

2018 – 2023

Starts   2011   Female 92   Male 119

Obtained Jobs	108	92%
External employment	15	13%
Internal Employment (RCT Council)	93	80%
Other Outcomes	5	4%
No Outcome	4	3%

Action 9 - Strengthen the scrutiny process for the Equality Impact Assessment process.

In last year's report we outlined the introduction of the Review Panel which was established to strengthen the scrutiny of completed equality impact assessments and Welsh Language impact assessments. Senior officers from across the Council sit on the Review Panel to review the impact assessments, checking that relevant data and evidence have been used to inform decision making.

The Review Panel has now become an established governance process which is adding value to the decision-making process. It has helped raise awareness of the importance and relevance of the use of data and evidence in the impact assessment process. Feedback from Council officers has been positive about the value of the process in developing their understanding of equality matters.

To support this process, along with guidance documents and impact assessment examples, a Data Library dashboard has been created, with the help of Data Insights and GIS team, to provide Council officers with relevant information about the people and places within RCT.

Action 10 - Encourage the uptake of Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement through reviewing service delivery models and an effective marketing strategy.

All [Catering Services web pages](#) have been updated to promote the uptake of eFSM with easy access hyperlinks for application. The Council's media team continue to share social media messages promoting eFSM take-up.

Posters and links to You Tube videos, promoting the importance of applying for free school meals have been forwarded to all RCT schools.

Here is the Welsh version of the You Tube video https://youtube.com/shorts/gIqKtJgy0F4

Here is the English version of the You Tube video https://youtube.com/shorts/LjbXTxNhCUI

Action 11 - Take a strategic approach to our town centres which will benefit from investment to ensure an attractive and accessible environment for local businesses, shoppers, residents and visitors.

Prosperity and Development's Service Delivery Plan sets out a number of key service priorities for 2022-2023, one of which includes:

Modernise our town centres – by building on their role as centres for social inclusion, local economic opportunity and the provision of services. By recognising their changing role from retail centres to social destinations and helping them to adapt to changes in economic and customers' expectations.

In supporting the delivery of local economic activities whilst promoting social inclusivity the Council have continued to engage with a variety of groups and stakeholders in delivering new projects and initiatives across our town centres and to seek their views on implementing appropriate and timely measures.

1. Following a successful informal early engagement exercise to help inform a draft "Strategy for Aberdare Town Centre", a period of formal consultation was undertaken which sought the views and opinions of a wide range of stakeholders from within Aberdare town centre and the wider communities it serves on the draft strategy. The consultation concluded that the draft strategy was positively received and largely aligned to the towns identified strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. It also largely supported the Strategic Objectives and Investment Themes set out in the strategy which would be used to coordinate future investment in the town. The strategy was formally adopted by the Council and the approach taken in developing the strategy has helped to foster a sense of local ownership and commitment.

2. The Council delivered a series of Christmas Events within 4 of its 8 town centres and worked collaboratively with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Town and Community Councils to deliver an event in the 4 remaining town centres. The events provided individuals and families with an affordable festive celebration and delivered increased town centre footfall to support local businesses. The events were supported by free car parking in all Council owned town centre car parks and were well attended and positively received.

3. The Council delivered a programme of free to access family activities in Pontypridd and Mountain Ash town centres during the Summer holiday period. The activities were funded using prize money received from the 2022 Visa sponsored Let's Celebrate Towns Awards, where Pontypridd won the Champion award and Mountain Ash the Rising Star award for Wales. The Champion award highlights towns that have demonstrated an exceptional ability to create a supportive environment that helps businesses and communities to thrive, whilst the Rising Star award recognises up-and-coming towns that are on their way to transforming the local economic environment and community.

4. The Council have continued to work collaboratively with business groups and other stakeholders to deliver a range of projects and community focused events across our town centres. These include working collaboratively with the Our Aberdare BID to deliver a Summer programme of activities throughout Aberdare town centre and with the Love Treorchy BID to deliver the town's annual Food & Drink Festival. Additional projects have delivered seasonal town centre floral displays, promotional videos and festive lighting.

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5. The Council's Town Centre Team and Employment, Education & Training Team worked collaboratively with the Your Pontypridd BID to deliver a programme that provided a number of work placement opportunities for Children Looked After throughout Pontypridd town centre. The programme, which supports the Council's commitment as a Corporate Parent, was well received and delivered many benefits for both the young people and businesses that took part. The programme in Pontypridd builds upon the successful pilot programme delivered in Treorchy town centre in 2022 and the programme is scheduled to be extended further to include Aberdare town centre in 2024.

6. The Council has commenced a Wayfinding Project in Pontypridd town centre. In collaboration with the Your Pontypridd BID and Town Council the project has developed a Wayfinding Strategy that sets out a number of recommendations for implementation that will improve accessibility and wayfinding for residents and visitors in Pontypridd town centre.

OBJECTIVE 3 – TO PROMOTE SAFE COMMUNITIES

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

Action 1 - Review, develop and re-implement the Hate Crime Strategy.

In 2022-2023, the Hate Crime strategy was implemented to its fullest following the Covid-19 pandemic. The relaxing of most restrictions made this possible, however, some challenges still remained, such as the amount of community groups and projects that no longer exist due to ending or folding during the pandemic. This has meant having to take a 'starting from scratch' approach to what were annual events and well-established groups etc.

Be My Voice Campaign

The 'Be My Voice' campaign was launched through the Council's Social Media pages with 2 moving videos of members of the People First charity who spoke about their experience of being the victims of hate crime as a result of their learning disabilities.

The campaign seeks to encourage the wider community not only to recognise Learning Disability Hate Crime, but also to report incidents that they witness to the Police.

In addition to the videos, visits were made to local schools, colleges and businesses to undertake awareness raising workshops with the aim of encouraging understanding and reporting processes. The videos were extremely well received by the public, with Darren's video receiving almost 4000 views on the Council's Facebook pages, multiple shares and positive comments and the films were subsequently picked up by Wales Online where the post gained tremendous support.

National Hate Crime Awareness Week

The Cohesion team alongside Cohesion officers from South Wales Police undertook a week long campaign of engagement, events and visits to promote awareness during NHCAW that included:

- Tuesday 11th - hate crime workshop with Aberdare College - distributing merchandise and engaging in meaningful discussions with the students;
- Tuesday 11th - mobile police station outside Aberdare Library to engage with members of the local community;
- Wednesday 12th – NHS Training at Tonteg Hospital.

School Visits

We were pleased to be able to initiate more school visits. In October, Cohesion Officers visited Treorchy Comprehensive School and engaged in 'Hate Crime and Mental Health' discussions with various year 11 pupils. Additionally, the Youth Ambassador Programme continued at Treorchy Comprehensive School.

South Wales Police – Hate Crime data for Rhondda Cynon Taf

Table 1a. Hate Crimes by characteristic

Disability	88
Race	278
Religion	20
Sexual Orientation	147
Transgender	34

Table 1b. Hate Crimes by area

Rhondda	139
Cynon	94
Taf	165
Merthyr	145

Table 1c. Hate Crime by month (2022)

January	29

February	41
March	48
April	46
May	55
June	51
July	33
August	52
September	53
October	53
November	43
December	39

Action 2 - Review the existing approach to tackling modern slavery.

Modern Slavery / Human Trafficking is currently an agenda item on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Serious and Organised Crime Board. Updates are provided by the lead South Wales Police officer for the area. There are established processes in place when modern slavery / human trafficking is suspected.

The Community Safety Partnership review is still taking place and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Board is scheduled to be in place for April 2024.

Action 3 - As part of Education's Well-being Strategy we will develop a programme for schools about raising awareness of emotional abuse in relationships.

We have undertaken a number of projects with young people about healthy relationships.

Spectacle Theatre - Making Monsters

This project aimed to teach young people about relationships, both healthy and unhealthy, provide an opportunity to talk openly about feelings and experiences, and to promote and identify help seeking behaviour.

Drama techniques have been known to enhance emotional intelligence, communication skills, develop curiosity and confidence. (Van de Water, 2021)

Themes related to healthy relationships were identified from child focus groups:

- How you express feelings and have disagreements
- Trust
- Social connection
- Not responding to peer pressure (sending indecent images of self)

- Sense of safety
- Being supported.

The outcomes of this project:

- Before the project 61% of pupils said they felt they knew where to go for support. This improved to 71%;
- Before the project 68% of pupils said they understand domestic violence. This improved to 95%;
- Before the project 57% of pupils said they are good at listening to someone whose opinions differed. This improved to 82%.
- After the project 100% of adult participants said they were extremely confident or quite confident to support children

Healthy Relationship Programme – Real love Rocks, Barnardo's

This resource explores:

- Relationships - What they are and what makes a happy, safe, fair and consensual relationship.
- Child Sexual Exploitation - What it means, the different ways it might happen and where to get help if needed.
- Keeping Safe - Encouraging young people to think about how to stay safe when they are out and about; highlighting the added risk that alcohol, drugs or not being in contact with parents/careers can bring.
- Impact of Watching Porn and Sexting - The impact of watching porn and the possible consequences. The risks involved in sexting and how to stay safe online.

Following the project pupils said they felt far less confused for either a lot of the time or all of the time. This reduced to 5.6% from 31.7% prior to the project. Other pupil data revealed:

	Pre project %	Post project %
Know how emotions feel in their body quite a lot of time	14	29.7
Could **some of the time** ask someone for help when they were feeling sad, angry or worried	26.31	34.4
Could **never** ask someone for help when they were feeling sad, angry or worried	7.4	14.3
There are people who care about them **all** of the time.	41	41.7

41

There are people who care about them **quite a lot** of the time.	40	33.3

- Pupils were asked to name private body parts before and after the project. Post project fewer slang words were used.
- Staff confidence related to teaching pupils about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was 17% very confident pre project, rising to 100% post project.

10 secondary schools and 7 primary schools participated in this project.

Action 4 - Pilot the PERMA model in secondary schools.

Embedded in Positive Psychology, Seligman's PERMA model is suggested as an effective framework for understanding and promoting well-being. Furthermore, PERMA tools are suggested as an easily understood measure which can assess various dimensions of pupil well-being and can account for fluctuations in well-being over time.

16 secondary schools in RCT have now received training and support to use the PERMA wellbeing tool. It has been successfully used in a variety of ways across these schools to meet their bespoke needs and priorities. This includes:

- A mechanism to identify pupils requiring wellbeing support.
- A method to evaluate impact of wellbeing interventions (e.g. ELSA and Nurture).
- An individual and group intervention using strategy bank.
- PERMA has been used to monitor impact of ELSA intervention.
- PERMA continues to be used as baseline measure for Attendance and Wellbeing Services intervention and support in secondary aged pupils.
- MiSpace wellbeing game now available on all computers not just tablets.
- New Mood tracker functionality introduced and being used by schools to track/monitor pupil mood.

Action 5 - Strengthen collection and analysis of data for bullying incidents in schools.

The anti-bullying return for schools has been updated to collect information regarding each of the protected characteristics from September 2022.

Data is collected on a termly basis and is reviewed as part of the local authority's termly monitoring of schools. Any concerns regarding particular trends or individual schools are addressed. The findings also inform training and support for schools.

Early last academic year, following a pupil perception survey which indicated there may be a higher incidence of bullying than was being reported, work was undertaken with schools to raise awareness of reporting. It is positive that a higher number of incidents are being reported this academic year as pupils will feel more comfortable and staff more confident in identifying bullying behaviours. The data is likely to be a truer reflection.

The changes to the reporting format mean that we are able to analyse by the type of prejudiced related bullying in the last academic year.

- The total number of reported bullying incidents has more than doubled (172 to 424).
- The majority of bullying incidents take place in Year 7 and above.
- In the academic year 2021-2022 the % of total incidents that were prejudice based was 16% (27 incidents); in the academic year 2022-2023 it was 20% (85 incidents).
- 2022-2023 academic year data information reflecting characteristics of prejudice based bullying showed the most prevalent was race, religion and culture 36%. In academic year 2022-2023 each category will be collected as a separate type. Our Anti-racism strategy and action plan will address this, and similarly to above may lead to an increase in reported incidents as understanding increases.
- With a third of prejudiced based incidents being recorded as 'other' this will need further interrogation.

	Number of reported incidents 2022-23					
	Through	Secondary	Special/PRU	Primary	Total	% of reported prejudiced based bullying
Race religion culture	11	14	0	6	31	36
Homophobic	0	3	1	2	6	7
Biphobic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transphobic	0	1	0	0	1	1
Sexist or sexual	0	0	2	0	2	2
Related to gender identity	0	6	1	0	7	8
Age	0	2	0	0	2	2
ALN or disability	0	0	0	5	5	6
Family status or CLA	0	3	0	4	7	8
Disadvantage	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appearance	0	0	1	9	10	12
Other	0	7	3	4	14	17

20% of all bullying incidents reported in all schools were prejudice based.

22% of all bullying incidents reported in through-schools were prejudice based.

21% of all bullying incidents reported in Secondary schools were prejudice based.

6% of all bullying incidents reported in Special schools and PRUs were prejudice based.

37% of all bullying incidents reported in Primary schools were prejudice based.

Action 6 - Further develop the freedom programme with Women's Aid to better understand specific needs for victims of domestic violence from underrepresented groups.

RCT domestic abuse service, formerly Women's Aid RCT provide a range of projects and services to support those affected by domestic abuse.

All service users are asked to complete equal opportunity monitoring forms. This supports and informs our future services and assists our organisation to identify potential gaps in service delivery.

A breakdown of the projects findings for the 2022-23 period can be found below.

Sex and Gender Identity

181 women completed the freedom programme, 3 of which identified as trans female.

Ethnicity

Our ethnicity data is shown in the chart below. This data seems to correspond with the recent census (2021), in RCT. There is a slightly greater percentage of people identifying from multiple ethnic back grounds, including Black, Chinese, Indian and Bangladeshi accessing services when compared to the census. This could be due to our refuge accommodation attracting people from out of area. Our refuge accommodation will occasionally accept people with no recourse to public funds this often results in a greater ethnic diversity within our refuge accommodation. This feeds/filters into the courses we provide such as the freedom programme.

Ethnicity
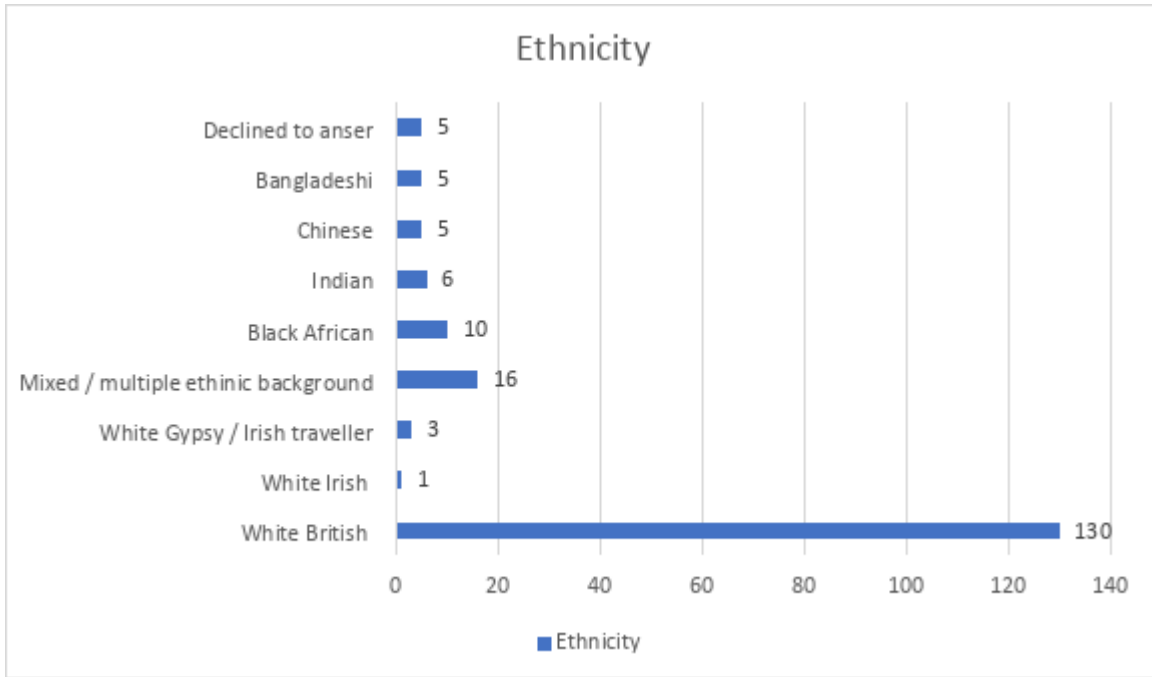
Sexual orientation

Over time the project has adapted and changed its delivery of the Freedom programme due to participants sexual orientation. Traditionally, the Freedom programme was written to deliver to people in heterosexual relationships; where the female is seen as the victim, and the male is seen as the perpetrator. The need for change has been recognised and alterations have been made to support a model of inclusive delivery. The course has included the recognition of the barriers and the unique challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community, is always mindful of its audience and uses gender neutral terms and pronouns.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION
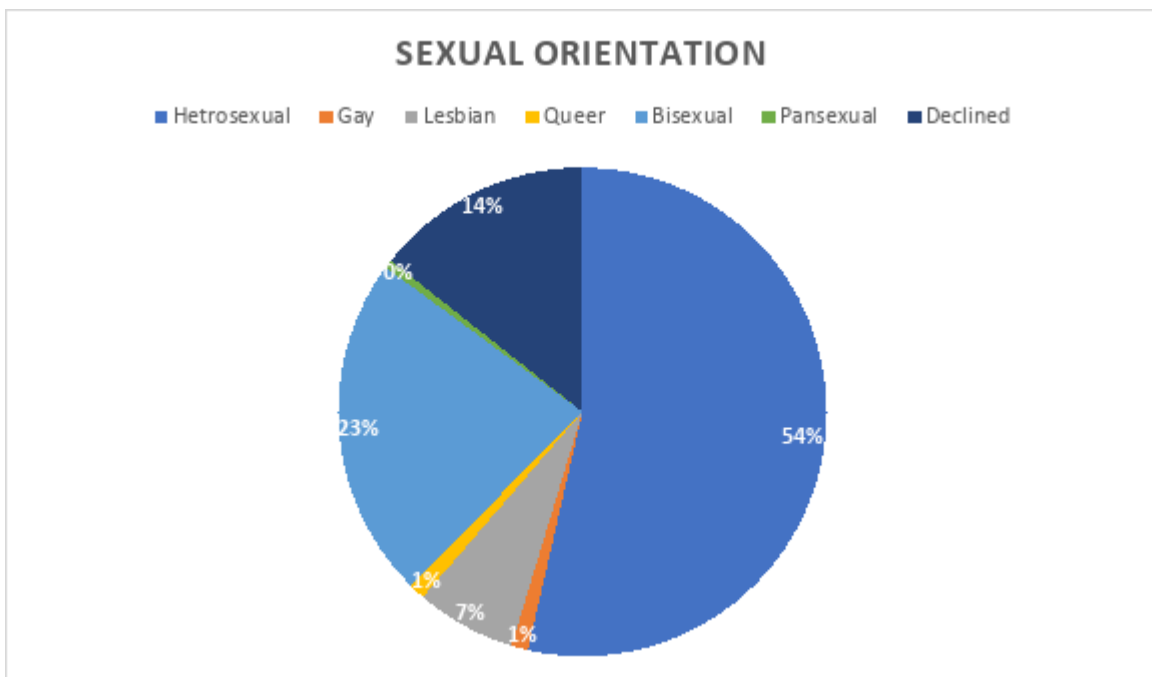
<u>Disability</u>

17 people who accessed the course identified as having a physical disability. To help ensure that they were able to access our services, group sessions were delivered in an online format or within our centres or community venues with disabled access.

<u>Mental health</u>

Due to the nature of our service 90% of those who accessed the Freedom programme felt that they had a mental health support need, such as anxiety, depression, or PTSD. Online group sessions and the opportunity to meet the team prior to attending groups helped facilitate future attendance.

In addition to monitoring the diversity of our client group the project also monitors the effectiveness of our courses including the Freedom programme, using a distance travelled monitoring and evaluation tool.

Of those who attended the Freedom programme

- 90% stated they were able to recognise the early warning signs of abusive behaviour and felt they had increased ability to keep safe within their relationships.

- 90% stated that they felt increased confidence in their ability to create a safe environment for themselves and their family.

- 95% stated an increased knowledge of appropriate agencies from which they could receive support for their emotional and physical well-being.

- 85% stated they felt an increase in their confidence and self-esteem because of attending the sessions.

OBJECTIVE 4 – TO REDUCE THE GENDER PAY GAP

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

The Gender Pay Gap

An organisation's gender pay gap is the difference between the average male and female pay rates. It is calculated by dividing the average female hourly pay rate by the average male hourly pay rate.

The Council is required to publish the gender pay gap between male and female employees. It is also required to publish this data separately on employees in Education (teaching employees).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission strongly advise publishing separate full-time and part-time gender pay gaps. It is considered that any pay gap of 5% or more is considered significant and in need of further analysis.

The mean gender pay gap is the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees. A positive figure denotes a gap to the advantage of male employees. A negative figure denotes a gap to the advantage of female employees.

The Equal Pay Audit identified the following Equal Pay gaps:

March 2023

	Combined	Full Time	Part Time
All Employees	9.49%	-10.54%	3.75%
Non Teaching	10.50%	-9.02%	2.67%
Teaching	4.71%	4.15%	7.50%

The gender pay gap for all employees has reduced from 10.24% to 9.49% in 2022.

The main reason for this was the 2022-2023 pay award for NJC employees of an increase of £1,925 (pro rata) on all grades. This had a more positive impact for employees on the lower grades and as the lower grades are occupied predominantly by female staff the gender pay gap decreased.

The average hourly rate for female employees increased by 7.4% from £12.70 to £13.64 whereas the hourly rate for male employees increased by 6.1% from £14.38 to £15.25.

Action 1 - Deliver the roll out of the performance review process for staff at all grades, and
Action 2 - Improve the monitoring of the performance review process.

As reported last year, the existing performance review process has been reviewed. Moving forward, the corporate process will be improved by ensuring that all staff who have worked for the Council for 12 months or more will have received an annual performance review. The previous approach of rolling out the review a staff tier at a time was not effective as operationally, a rollout to all staff was never achieved.

Progress on this has been delayed due to the implementation and testing of the new HR Payroll system. Once the system is fully operational the performance review process will be rolled out across the organisation.

Action 3 - Better understand whether barriers exist regarding the progression of women into senior positions.

The Women Into Leadership programme ran from September 2021 to July 2022. The programme structure provided delivered elements focussing on a variety of topics specific to leadership combined with networking and facilitated discussions. Barriers that were identified through the programme were around exposure to opportunities, mentoring opportunities and coaching.

Action 4 - Understand more about what prevents women returning to the workplace following maternity leave.

A research study was completed which provided a better understanding into the barriers to retention following maternity leave. The study explored social and organisational barriers that contribute to the issue. The recommendations of the study included:

- Undertake further organisational research particularly with women who have returned to work following maternity leave
- Increase awareness and support for women going on maternity leave
- Review and improve monitoring processes
- Provide opportunities for exit interviews.

Action 5 - Support the EHRC pledge 'Working Forward' and implement its recommendations.

Due to a number of factors which impact on the resources available to undertake this work it is likely this work will be carried over to the next Strategic Equality Plan.

OBJECTIVE 5 – TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below:

Action 1 - Develop a programme of sexual harassment training and awareness.

As previously reported, work in this area was delayed due to the pandemic. We have established a task and finish group to identify key actions and stakeholders. A staff survey was designed and distributed to Council employees. It was important we had

a specific themed survey, and not just included questions in the annual staff survey, to provide a better understanding of sexual harassment in the workplace. We received 602 responses to the survey.

This area of work continues to be a priority, particularly reporting mechanisms. Therefore, we anticipate this area of work will be included in our new Strategic Equality Plan.

Action 2 - Undertake a review of all our mental health activities and develop annual plans which provide education, training and interventions.

This action shifted it's focus as the service had to reprioritise its delivery in response to the Covid pandemic. Therefore, a number of staff wellbeing initiatives were introduced which focus on mental health:

- Wellbeing sessions

  A range of wellbeing bitesize sessions have been developed and delivered based on staff feedback and absence themes. These include sleep, resilience, stress, anxiety, menopause, finances, women and men's health etc, each session is evaluated separately. 19 wellbeing sessions were delivered during the year.

- Bespoke school counselling service

  Funding has been secured to provide a bespoke counselling service for school based staff. Those who require support are contacted within 2 weeks. The service is delivered between 9am to 8pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm on Friday, and Saturday morning. This service is designed to provide support for those in work and out of work, and the operating hours enable the least disruption to the school day.

- Referrals and appointments

  Occupational health provides a range of appointments to assess fitness for work and support staff. Occupational Health managed 2403 referrals and delivered 8526 appointments. Occupational Health developed a wellbeing assessment as part of our mental health focus. This assessment provides a quick intervention to talk to the client, assess the issues and refer on to specific support interventions. 498 wellbeing assessments were conducted.

- Employee assistance programmes (EAP)

CareFirst - an employee assistance programme that delivers a range of wellbeing activities including 24/7 access to in the moment support, an advice centre for financial and legal rights issues, website for online support and information on many health conditions, weekly webinars and an app that staff can use to monitor their mental health and gain interventions to support.

- Wellbeing

Cari - an artificial intelligence system that enables staff to assess their own wellbeing score confidentially and provides a number of support options. This system enables the organisation to target specific interventions based on the data and provides an overall wellbeing score as an organisation.

- Elected member wellbeing sessions

We delivered a number of wellbeing sessions for elected members to raise awareness on physical and mental wellbeing for themselves and those they support in their communities.

- Cost of living challenges

We created a project group with members from across the various services in the Council. This group shared and discussed plans to support communities and staff through the cost of challenges. A staff newsletter was created to signpost both internal and external support available to staff. The newsletters covered a number of themes such as saving money with staff benefits, support for mental health, where to get advice for debt & finances, planning for your future and union support. We have developed 3 newsletters, further developments have included the newsletter being created for staff of the businesses in RCT. The businesses of RCT received their first copy in December 2023 through the town centre forums.

- Partnerships

We have been developing our partnerships through various procurement frameworks and our partners have delivered a number of wellbeing interventions such as Salary finance, our financial partner through staff benefits, provide a number of webinars and guides to support staff through the cost of living challenges.

- Awards

The Council won 2 prestigious awards from CASE UK for supporting mental health.

Action 3 - Source and develop a suite of training for managers on equality and diversity topics.

A suite of 9 Diversity & Inclusion e-Learning modules have been developed for our workforce. The 9 modules are Dignity at Work, Disability and Discrimination, Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace, Equality Act 2010, LGBTQIA+/ Trans Awareness, Neurodiversity Awareness, Race Awareness, Reasonable Adjustments and Unconscious Bias. These have been trialled with service areas and external consultants to ensure their suitability for Council staff and to make sure they are in line with current thinking/legislation.

Feedback on the training has been positive and has provided excellent opportunities to further develop the training program and its content. Roll out to all staff will take place from April 2024.

Action 4 - Become more disability confident as an organisation.

Autism Aware

In April 2022, Senior Leadership and Cabinet approved a trial of the Autism Aware certification training, hosted by Autism Wales. The Council's Human Resources team achieved their Autism Aware Certification after completing this training hosted as part of the trial. This training provided officers with key information on how best to support autistic colleagues and members of the public, and how to adapt processes to ensure barriers are reduced.

Following this successful trial, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Cabinet Members and Senior Leadership Team also achieved their Autism Aware certification in February 2023, becoming the first Cabinet in Wales to achieve this. Senior Leadership also approved a full roll-out of the training to all Council staff and Elected Members, which is ongoing.

The Council's Digital Improvement Office (DIO) also achieved their certification in February 2023. Several other Council service areas are on their way to achieving their certification this year.

In rolling out the Autism Aware training to our HR officers, officers are now more aware and equipped to support autistic and neurodiverse individuals interacting with the Council, whether internally as a member of staff or externally as a customer or resident. As a result, Autistic individuals and other neurodiverse people should have

better experiences with the Council, where they feel safe and able to access Council services.

Disability Confident

The Council has maintained its Level 2 Disability Employer status under the Disability Confident Scheme and hopes to renew its status in October 2023. The Disability Confident scheme is a recognised standard across the UK. This means that customers and applicants should feel more confident when using our services and know what to expect from the Council.

We continue to improve and provide accessible services for residents and customers and support our disabled staff in the workplace. We continue to develop staff awareness by signposting awareness sessions and training held by the Business Disability Forum, including training on reasonable adjustments.
Ensuring our managers and staff have a good understanding of reasonable adjustments and the Council's reasonable adjustments scheme means that staff who require reasonable adjustments have them implemented efficiently.

Action 5 - Undertake workplace equality monitoring.

Following the implementation of a new HR Payroll system, and as part of our continued efforts to ensure our staff HR data is up-to-date and reflects the diversity of our staff, an awareness email was sent to all staff explaining the new data fields included on the new HR and Payroll system. Following this email, over 600 members of staff updated their information, allowing us to better understand the identities and needs of our staff.

Reliable HR data means that we will be able to identify any gaps in recruitment and employment across service areas. However, we recognise there is still work to do on ensuring we have reliable workforce data.

Action 6 - Replicate existing good practice to reflect all protected characteristics.

We continued to raise awareness of significant days, events and our staff networks through articles in the Diversity and Inclusion team newsletters. We shared relevant videos and we worked to raise awareness of our duty to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace, reporting harassment and discrimination and highlighting important dates in the equality calendar.

Carer Confident Employer and Carers Rights Day

The Council have become a Level 1 Carer Confident employer, accredited by [Employers For Carers](#).

To mark Carers Rights Day, the Carers Team held a virtual 'Carers Caffi' and were joined by Carers Wales. The team also organised a Carers Rights Day Celebration at Llantrisant Leisure Centre.

Earlier this year the Council launched its new Working Carers Guidance and introduced new leave arrangements for those with unpaid caring responsibilities.

For more information on being a Carer Confident Employer, or for any questions about being a Working Carer in the Council, please contact the Working Carers team on workingcarers@rctcbc.gov.uk.

LGBTQIA+ inclusion

Working with Cardiff Council we co-presented a series of internal events covering intersectional aspects of LGBTQIA+ issues including trans and faith with the Reverand Canon Sarah Jones of St Johns Church, Cardiff. The event was attended by 68 people across both Authorities.

Work also commenced on an LGBTQIA+ Education group for our educational psychology and youth support teams. Sharing best practice and current information on relevant subjects to allow them to support their service users.

Our work with [Proud Councils](#) continued. Proud Councils is a partnership of 9 Councils in the South East Wales region; Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr, Newport, RCT, Swansea, Torfaen and Powys. The group supported Pride events in Caerphilly, Merthyr, Newport, Powys and Pride Cymru in Cardiff. Our aim is to demonstrate a unified approach to LGBTQIA+ equality across the South East Wales Region. Proud Councils were delighted to have been a finalist for the Public Sector Equality Award in the Pink News Awards 2022. The award celebrated the exceptional parts of our country's governmental or other public bodies that are making change for the better.

Menopause Cafes

Virtual Menopause cafes have continued to provide a space to learn more about menopause and what it's like to experience it. The cafes provide a space to discuss menopause problems and symptoms, and tips and solutions to help manage these, such as nutrition and exercise.

Race Equality

53

In March 2022, Cabinet agreed to the Council signing the BITC's Race at Work Charter. This demonstrates the Council's commitment to improving equality of opportunity in the workplace. We have continued to work with BITC, who undertook a listening circle with some of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff. The findings of this will inform our future strategies.

To mark Black History Month, guest speaker Marilyn Bryan-Jones discussed 'The Welsh perspective,' and examined the history of Black people in Wales, Black History in the workplace and the education around Black History.

Senior Diversity Champions

Our Senior Diversity Champions have continued to champion the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda. They are:

Paul Mee Chief Executive	Race Equality
Dave Powell Director of Corporate Estates	Disability Inclusion
Gaynor Davies Director of Education	Gender Equality
Simon Gale Director of Prosperity and Development	LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

Staff Networks

Our staff networks have continued to grow and develop, providing an instrumental role in providing peer support. Network meetings are still held online. All of our networks (Allies, Disability and Carers, Perthyn LGBTQIA+ staff and Spotlight our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic network) help promote and raise awareness of specific days to all staff to help create an inclusive culture in the workplace.

White Ribbon

In November we were delighted to partner with local organisations within Cwm Taf for this year's White Ribbon vigil, which seeks to end male violence against women.

During the event we had guest speakers talking about supporting 'Ending violence against women and girls.' Those who attended also had the opportunity to sign the 'White Ribbon' pledge to 'never stay quiet about male violence against women.' You can find more information about White Ribbon Day online and how you can support.

We also had members from the Council's Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) who supported the event with a very powerful poem reading.

Wales Interpretation and Translation Service

The Council is a partner in the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) and has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for delivery of the service provided via the City of Cardiff Council. During 2022-2023 there were 675 bookings made through the service using 23 languages and BSL interpreters.

The 5 most requested languages during 2022-2023 were Urdu, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic and Bengali and Kurdish Sorani as joint 5th.

Overall Progress

As we conclude work on our 2019-2022 Strategic Equality Plan, we have demonstrated that significant progress has been made in the majority of the equality objectives. As a consequence of the pandemic, much positive and innovative work has been done to improve the accessibility and inclusion of the services we provide across the borough. This positive change will continue to be embedded within our service delivery.

Our work to deliver equality objectives contained in our Strategic Equality Plan helps us to demonstrate how we are contributing to a more equal Wales - 'a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances'. It also seeks to support all the well-being goals including a Wales of Cohesive Communities and a Prosperous Wales.

7. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's)

The Council has had an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process in place for a number of years which is carried out under the following circumstances:

- Where new policies or practices are developed (including corporate plans, annual business plans and the annual budget);

- Where changes to existing policies or practices are proposed, and when conducting expenditure reviews and programme evaluations;

- Where there are proposals to withdraw from or discontinue an existing policy or practice;

- Where the business planning process has identified relevance to or implications for equality.

The process is regularly reviewed and takes into account the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010.

The table below includes a snapshot of EIA's carried out in financial year 2022-2023.

Equality Impact Assessments

Think Climate RCT – The Council's Tackling Climate Change strategy 2022-2025	June 2022
Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (Formerly 21st Century Schools) – Proposal to Amalgamate Cefn and Craig Yr Hesg Primary Schools to Create a New Community Primary School	June 2022
Community Wardens	June 2022
Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan – Public Consultation Feedback and Project Updates	June 2022
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council – Draft Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-2026	July 2022
Redevelopment Proposal: Former Bronllwyn Residential Care Home	July 2022
Sustainable Communities for Learning (Formerly 21st Century Schools): Mutual Investment Model – Project 2	July 2022
A Report Proposing the Introduction of a New Solar Panel Grant and the Extension of the Domestic Heating Grant	September 2022
Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-2023 to 2025-2026	September 2022
The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022-2027	October 2022
A Report on the Council's Local Housing Market Assessment 2022-2037	October 2022
New Empty Homes Strategy for 2022-2025	October 2022
Council Tax Premiums – Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes	December 2022
Waste Services – Revised Waste Management Strategy	January 2023
Service Review of the Community Meals Service	January 2023
Council Run Nursery Provision – Revised Service Delivery Arrangements	January 2023
Council Fees and Charges Proposals 2023-2024	January 2023

The Council's 2023-2024 Revenue Budget	February 2023
The Council's 3 Year Capital Programme 2023-24 to 2025-26	February 2023

Full details of decisions are included in Cabinet reports which are available on the following link:

https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0

8. Employment Monitoring Data

The Council must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of:

- people employed by the authority on 31 March each year by protected characteristic;

- men and women employed, broken down by:
  - job;
  - grade (where grading system in place);
  - pay;
  - contract type (including permanent and fixed term contracts);
  - working pattern (including full-time, part-time and other flexible working patterns).

- people who have applied for jobs with the authority over the last year;

- employees who have applied to change position within the authority; identifying how many were successful in their application and how many were not;

- employees who have applied for training and how many succeeded in their application;

- employees who completed training;

- employees involved in grievance procedures either as a complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made;

- employees subject to disciplinary procedures;

- employees who have left an authority's employment.

All of the information above must be presented for each of the separate protected groups. The exception to this requirement is the data on job, grade, pay, contract type and working pattern, which must be broken down only in relation to women and men.

This information is attached at Appendix 1 - Employment Monitoring Data.

9. Procurement

The Council operates the SPD (Single Procurement Document) which is part of the [National Procurement Website](#).

The SPD is a standard form, which replaces pre-qualification questionnaires, and should make the process of bidding for a public contract easier and contains a set of core questions commonly asked at the selection stage.
The SPD delivers a number of benefits:

- Increased efficiency for both suppliers and buyers, by allowing standard questions and keeping the number of questions to a minimum, and also by encouraging buyers to only seek information from suppliers if they can be clear about exactly how the information will be used;

- Greater standardisation of the selection stage, whilst also allowing for tailoring of questions to meet the specific requirements of the procurement;

- Increased transparency of the selection process and how responses will be evaluated – so that suppliers are able to work out easily whether or not they wish to bid for a particular opportunity, how to optimise their proposal and how to present it in an effective way;

- Improved opportunities for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and local businesses to compete on a more equal footing as a result of a carefully considered question set that removes some of the barriers to entry for them.

It includes a section on equal opportunities and is in line with the guidance on procurement published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

10. Accessible Information

The Council produces information in a wide variety of formats according to need. Service areas record requests for alternative formats from service users to ensure that these are provided.

Accessibility Guidelines are available to employees on the Council's Intranet, these provide information on the types of accessible information available, what it is and does and includes a list of suppliers so that employees can source requested formats.

The Council has adopted the RNIB Clear Print Guidelines to increase readability of its documents.

11. Future Work

As we have come to the end of the current SEP, our future work will focus on developing our next SEP and embedding existing good practice. We will seek to undertake relevant engagement and gather evidence to develop our new equality objectives.

12. Contact Details

Rhondda Cynon Taf welcomes comments on all aspects of this report, both in what it contains and what it may not make clear enough about the work and progress in delivering equality and removing discrimination.

If you have any comments or want to know more about the work the Council is doing please contact:

Melanie Warburton
Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
Ty Elai
Dinas Isaf East Industrial Estate
Williamstown
Tonypandy
CF40 1NY

Telephone: 01443 444531

email: equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

Employment Monitoring Data

Equality monitoring information is stored against all employees' records in the Council's payroll and human resources information system (Vision). The information is requested at the recruitment stage and entered on to their record at that point.

The Council encourages all employees to provide this information and an equality monitoring survey is carried out on all employees every two years in an attempt to increase the information held.

In preparation for the extended employee monitoring requirements being introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, the Council carried out an equality monitoring survey of all employees in 2011. This survey included questions that covered all protected characteristics except pregnancy. This question was not asked as it was felt that information on pregnancy and maternity would already be held on employee records and the time period allowed for return could mean that the information provided would be out of date.

The Diversity and Inclusion Team worked with other service areas to identify other useful information which resulted in the questionnaire including sections on the use of British Sign Language, Welsh language ability and whether or not an employee had caring responsibilities. This information was provided statistically to the service areas to inform their work and strategies.

Statistical analysis of the information is contained in the following tables and covers all Council employees including teachers and school based employees.

People Employed by Protected Characteristic

The following information has been provided using employees' national insurance numbers; this ensures that where an employee may work in more than one job their details will be included only once to avoid duplication of information. It includes teachers and school based employees. Some comparisons will be made to the local demographic of the borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf as over 80% of employees live in the Council area.

EQUALITY MONITORING DATA FOR THE YEAR 2022-2023

Gender

The table below shows the gender breakdown of employees:

Gender	Total	% of Workforce
Male	2764	25.5%
Female	8065	74.5%
Total	**10829**	

This table clearly indicates that women make up the majority of the Council workforce, this has been consistent for a number of years.

Age

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by age group:

Age Group	Total	% of Workforce
16-24	617	5.7%
25-34	1954	18.0%
35-44	2584	23.9%
45-54	2938	27.1%
55-64	2325	21.5%
65+	411	3.8%
Total	**10829**	

This table indicates, as the figures did last year, that over half of Council employees are within the age range of 35-54.

Disability

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by disabled and non disabled:

Identification	Total	% of Workforce
Disabled	270	2.5%
Non Disabled	9270	85.6%
Prefer not to say	15	0.1%
Information not held	1274	11.8%
Total	**10829**	

Information is held on almost 88% of employees. A small percentage of employees have indicated that they are disabled but this is unlikely to give the true picture of disability in the workplace.

National Identity and Ethnicity

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by ethnicity:

Ethnicity	Number
Asian	6
Asian Bangladeshi	1
Asian British	9
Asian Chinese	4
Asian Cornish	1
Asian Indian	3
Asian Other	5
Asian Pakistani	2
Black	1
Black African	15
Black British	2
Black Other	2
Black Welsh	1
Chinese	4
Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller	1
Mixed Other	13
Mixed White & African	3
Mixed White & Asian	9
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	12
Other Ethnic Group	29
Prefer Not To Say	19
White	3961
White - British	2792
White - Cornish	2
White - English	68
White - Irish	11
White - Northern Irish	1
White - Other	15
White - Scottish	6
White - Welsh	2396
Not Known	1435
Total	**10829**

Information is held on 87% of the workforce. Staff identifying themselves as an ethnic minority other than White is 1.1% of the workforce. This is not representative of people living in RCT as the Census 2021 highlighted the ethnic population of RCT as:

96.7% of people identified as White.
1.5% identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh.
1.0% identified as from Mixed or multiple ethnic groups.
0.4% identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean, or African.
0.3% identified themselves as from other ethnic groups.

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by national identity:

National Identity	Number of Employees
African	2
American	1
Any other Asian background	2
Any other Mixed background	2
Any other White background	9
Australian	2
Bangladeshi	2
British	1871
British Virgin Islands	1
Burundi	1
Canadian	1
Chinese	4
Chinese/Tibetan	3
Croatian	1
Dutch	1
English	211
European	11
German	1
Greek	2
Indian	5
Irish	18
Nigeria	3
Northern Ireland	1
Norwegian	1
Other	4
Polish	8
Portuguese	2
Romanian	3
Scottish	21
Spanish	3
Sri Lankan	2
Thai	1
Ukrainian	2
Welsh	5157
White and Asian	3
White and Black Caribbean	1
Not Known	3466
Total	**10829**

Information is held on 68% of employees with the majority of employees identifying themselves as Welsh followed by British.

Religion or Belief

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by religion or belief:

Religion	Total
Christian	2853
Muslim	17
Hindu	6
Buddhist	14
Sikh	1
Catholic	1
Other	98
% of workforce identifying with a religion	**27.6%**
No Religion	3661
Prefer not to say	417
Information not held	3761
Total	**10829**

Information is held on 65% of employees.

Sexual Orientation

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by sexual orientation:

Sexual Orientation	Total
Heterosexual	4624
Gay Man	57
Gay Woman/Lesbian	51
Bisexual	49
% of workforce identifying a sexual orientation	**44.1%**
Prefer not to say	276
Information not held	5772
Total	**10829**

Information is held on 47% of employees.

Pregnancy and Maternity

As at 31 March 2023 there were 139 employees on maternity leave. During the year 2022-2023, 293 employees had been on maternity leave during this period of time.

Gender Reassignment

Specific information has not been published due to the possibility of identification. The Council has a Gender Reassignment Policy in place which was developed some years ago as a result of an employee asking for support. Since that time the policy has been accessed and support provided as and when required by employees.

Regulation Nine - Gender Specific Information

Regulation Nine of the Specific Equality Duties in Wales requires the following specific information to be provided in respect of gender breakdown.

The number of employees employed at 31 March 2023 broken down by:

- Job
- Grade
- Pay
- Contract type
- Working pattern.

This information has been provided on the basis of actual job numbers so that those employees who work in more than one job are included in all the jobs they are employed in so the numbers may be different to those in the previous section. Once again the information includes teachers and school based employees.

The following table/s provides the specific information required:

Breakdown of Employees by Gender and Job

There are over a thousand job titles within the Council so for ease of demonstration they have been broken down into job families within the competency framework.

Job Family	Female	Male	Grand Total
Administrator	951	265	1216
Ancillary	1263	492	1755
Assistant Headteacher	41	31	72
Community and Social Care	1258	236	1494
Deputy Headteacher	81	38	119
Frontline and Customer Care	383	270	653
Headteacher	99	48	147
Middle Manager	192	95	287
School Support	1668	103	1771
Skilled Manual Worker	46	109	155
Strategic Manager	37	41	78
Supervisor	126	194	320
Teacher	1329	394	1723
Technical, Specialist & Professional	550	433	983
Unqualified Teacher	41	15	56
Total	**8065**	**2764**	**10829**

As last year, the data provides very few surprises with the majority of women working in 'traditional' female areas, particularly in the Community & Social Care, Ancillary and School Support settings; this will be more closely examined as part of the Gender Pay Objective within the Strategic Equality Plan.

Breakdown of Employees by Gender & Grade

The Council operated the following grading systems as at 31 March 2023.

- Chief Officers (Head of Service and above)

- National Joint Council for Local Government Services

- Soulbury (including Heads of Service)

- Teachers/Education

The tables below set out the breakdown of employees by gender and grade:

Employees by Gender & Grade – Chief Officers

Grade	Female	Male	Total
Chief Executive	0	1	1
Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director	0	1	1
Director Level 1	2	5	7
Director Level 2	1	1	2
Service Director Level 1	1	2	3
Service Director Level 2	3	9	12
Head of Service – Soulbury	4	2	6
Head of Service Level 1	10	7	17
Head of Service Level 2	11	9	20
Total	**32**	**37**	**69**

There has been no significant change since the previous year, whereby the majority of Chief Officer posts are held by males. Those held by females are largely on the lower end of the Chief Officer grades**.**

Employees by Gender and Grade – National Joint Council

Grade	Female	Male	Total
GR1	245	69	314
GR2	752	56	808
GR3	444	124	568
GR4	694	212	906
GR5	836	399	1235
GR6	1181	271	1452
GR7	679	229	908
GR8	342	152	494
GR9	245	129	374
GR10	277	184	461
GR11	191	104	295
GR12	178	73	251
GR13	135	71	206
GR14	61	15	76
GR15	37	38	75
GR16	2	0	2
GR17	15	2	17
GR18	0	0	0
Total	**6314**	**2128**	**8442**

Employees by Gender and Grade – Teachers/Education

Grade	Female	Male	Total
Education Psychologists and Advisers	102	32	134
Leadership Group/Headteachers	98	45	143
Deputy & Assistant Headteachers	127	72	199
Teachers	1353	400	1753
Total	**1680**	**549**	**2229**

The figures above indicate that females make up 75% of the education profession.

Individual salary grades of Education is complex to summarise but on analysis there is a fairly even split of male/female across all salary points with no obvious discrepancies in respect of ability to move through the grades. The grades and salary points are based on nationally agreed pay scales and there are specific requirements for each grade and how employees move through them.

Employees by Contract Type/Working Pattern

Contract Type	Female	Male	Total
Permanent Full Time	2622	1864	4486
Permanent Full Time Term Time	144	21	165
Permanent Part Time	1391	211	1602
Permanent Part Time Term Time	2155	95	2250
Temporary Full Time	445	219	664
Temporary Full Time Term Time	12	1	13
Temporary Part Time	100	48	148
Temporary Part Time Term Time	573	69	642
Casual	623	236	859
Grand Total	**8065**	**2764**	**10829**

For permanent members of staff the breakdown of female/male is comparable to the overall workforce. Although 74.5% of the overall workforce is female, a much higher percentage of those females compared to males are working on part-time or term-time only basis.

Applicants for Employment and Promotion

There were a total of 426 vacancies advertised during the year 2022-2023. The following table indicates the results of the recruitment monitoring for the same period.

Applicants for Employment and Promotion by Protected Characteristic

	Applicants	Shortlisted	Appointed
Disabled	320	164	32
Female	3163	1608	469
LGB	457	160	50
Male	1534	783	186
Minority Ethnic	335	149	17
Non Binary	7	2	1
Prefer not to say	20	11	4
Transgender	4	3	0

Leaving Employment

Information gained from the iTrent System shows that a total of 1324 employees left the employment of the Council in 2022-2023, which included 6 employees who were made redundant. It should be noted that these employees were school based, where the decision on redundancy rests with the relevant school in accordance with School Governance Regulations. The tables below indicate the number of leavers and reasons for leaving during 2022-23.

Reasons for Leaving by Gender

Reason for Leaving	Female	Male	Total
Age Retirement	67	26	93
Death in Service	7	2	9
Dismissed	3	2	5
Early Retirement (Teachers)	3	1	4
End of Contract	191	77	268
Failed Probationary Period	6	1	7
Ill Health	23	2	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	1	1
Mutual Agreement	92	26	118
Redundant	6	0	6
Transfer to another Council	38	14	52
Voluntary	515	153	668
Voluntary early retirement and redundancy	39	5	44
Voluntary redundancy	17	7	24
Total	**1007**	**317**	**1324**

Reason for Leaving by Age

Reason for leaving	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Age Retirement	0	0	0	0	30	63	93
Death in Service	0	0	4	1	3	1	9
Dismissed	1	0	0	3	1	0	5
Early retirement (Teachers)	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
End of Contract	45	91	53	32	37	10	268
Failed probationary period	3	3	1	0	0	0	7
Ill health	0	0	0	1	19	5	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mutual agreement	0	9	9	20	58	22	118
Redundant	0	1	1	1	3	0	6
Transfer to another Council	2	18	21	11	0	0	52
Voluntary	76	202	170	126	80	14	668
VER + Redundancy	0	0	0	0	34	10	44
Voluntary Redundancy	0	7	4	3	7	3	24
Total	**127**	**331**	**263**	**198**	**277**	**128**	**1324**

Reason for Leaving by Disability

Reason for Leaving	Total
Age Retirement	5
End of Contract	14
Ill Health	1
Mutual Agreement	6
Voluntary	15
VER + Redundancy	4
Voluntary Redundancy	1
Total	**46**

Reason for Leaving by Ethnicity

Reason	White	Ethnic Minority	Not Known	Total
Age retirement	85	1	7	93
Death in service	9	0	0	9
Dismissed	5	0	0	5
Early retirement (Teachers)	3	0	1	4
End of contract	204	7	57	268
Failed probationary period	4	0	3	7
Ill health	24	0	1	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	1	1
Mutual agreement	102	0	16	118
Redundant	5	0	1	6
Transfer to another Council	39	0	13	52
Voluntary	562	9	97	668
VER + Redundancy	43	0	1	44
Voluntary Redundancy	21	1	2	24
Total	**1106**	**18**	**200**	**1324**

Reason for Leaving by Religion or Belief

Reason	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	No Religion	Other	Prefer not to say	Sikh	Not Known	Total
Age Retirement	38	0	0	14	2	2	0	37	93
Death in Service	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	7	9
Dismissed	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	5
Early retirement (teachers)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
End of contract	67	2	3	112	3	19	0	62	268
Failed probationary period	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	7
Ill health	6	0	0	4	2	2	0	11	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mutual agreement	31	0	0	19	1	2	0	65	118
Redundant	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	6
Transfer to another Council	16	0	0	15	0	1	0	20	52
Voluntary	159	0	1	264	2	41	1	200	668
VER + Redundancy	17	0	0	14	0	0	0	13	44
Voluntary Redundancy	7	0	0	8	0	0	0	9	24
Total	**345**	**2**	**4**	**457**	**10**	**72**	**1**	**433**	**1324**

Reason for Leaving by Sexual Orientation

Reason	Hetero-sexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bi-sexual	Prefer not to say	Not Known	Total
Age retirement	45	0	0	2	46	93
Death in service	0	0	0	1	8	9
Dismissed	1	0	0	1	3	5
Early retirement (Teachers)	2	0	0	0	2	4
End of contract	139	3	5	15	106	268
Failed probationary period	4	0	0	3	0	7
Ill health	8	0	0	2	15	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mutual agreement	40	0	0	1	77	118
Redundant	2	0	0	0	4	6
Transfer to another Council	20	1	0	3	28	52
Voluntary	261	8	7	26	366	668
VER + Redundancy	29	0	0	0	15	44
Voluntary Redundancy	12	0	0	0	12	24
Total	**563**	**12**	**12**	**54**	**683**	**1324**

Training

Equality monitoring is carried out in respect of attendance at internal training courses only and has been undertaken by the use of equality monitoring forms that now monitor all protected characteristics.

Identification of the need for training, learning and development is carried out through the Council's workforce planning and performance review systems. During personal development interviews managers will discuss with employees their training, learning and development needs which are aligned to the performance review and job competencies. The results of these feed into a departmental training plan.

The Council does not currently monitor whether training requests are refused as the process used to identify training does not lend itself to this type of monitoring.

There were a total of 25 equality monitoring forms returned in 2022-2023. This is significantly less than previous years. Discussions took part with the Learning and

Development Team to ensure equality monitoring forms were distributed on training courses.

Training by Sex

Group	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	10	2	0	12
Community & Children's Services	6	2	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	4	0	4
Education & Inclusion	1	0	0	1
Total	**17**	**8**	**0**	**25**

Training by Gender Identity

Group	Non-binary	Trans	Other	Prefer not to say	None of these	Total
Chief Executives	1	0	0	0	11	12
Community & Children's Services	0	0	1	1	6	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	0	0	0	4	4
Education & Inclusion	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**21**	**25**

Training by Age

Group	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	0	5	1	6	0	0	0	0	12
Community & Children's Services	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**0**	**8**	**7**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**25**

Training by National Identity

Group	British	Cornish	English	Irish	Northern Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	2	0	1	0	0	0	8	1	0	12
Community & Children's Services	6	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**11**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**11**	**1**	**0**	**25**

Training by Ethnicity

Group	Arab	Asian	Black	Gypsy / Traveller (inc Sinti & Roma)	Mixed / Multiple	White	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	0	1	0	0	0	11	0	0	12
Community & Children's Services	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
Total	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**24**	**0**	**0**	**25**

Training by Religion or Belief

Group	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Non-religious	Sikh	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	0	6	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	12
Community & Children's Services	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	**0**	**11**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**10**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**25**

Training by Pregnancy and Maternity

Group	Are currently pregnant or have been pregnant during last 12 months	Not currently pregnant, nor have been during last 12 months	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	1	11	0	12
Community & Children's Services	0	8	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	4	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	1	0	1
Total	**1**	**24**	**0**	**25**

Training by Sexual Orientation

Group	Bisexual	Gay man	Gay woman / Lesbian	Heterosexual / Straight	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	0	1	0	10	0	0	12
Community & Children's Services	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	**0**	**1**	**0**	**21**	**0**	**0**	**25**

Disciplinary & Grievance

Disciplinary and Grievance cases are recorded and monitored through the Vision System. There were a total of 139 cases covering disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work and disciplinary action resulting from sickness absence in 2022-2023. The tables below provide equality monitoring information for these cases:

Gender

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Male	**62**	36	20	2	4
Female	**77**	35	21	12	9
Total	**139**	**71**	**41**	**14**	**13**

Age

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
16 – 24	**3**	3	0	0	0
25 – 34	**18**	9	8	0	1
35 – 44	**34**	14	14	2	4
45 – 54	**50**	29	11	6	4
55 – 64	**31**	13	8	6	4
65+	**3**	3	0	0	0
Total	**139**	**71**	**41**	**14**	**13**

Disability

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Disabled	**6**	3	3	0	0
Non Disabled	**115**	59	35	12	9
Information not held	**18**	9	3	2	4
Total	**139**	**71**	**41**	**14**	**13**

Ethnicity

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Asian	**0**	0	0	0	0
Black	**3**	3	0	0	0
Chinese	**0**	0	0	0	0
Mixed	**0**	0	0	0	0
White	**116**	60	37	9	10
Other	**0**	0	0	0	0
Information not held	**20**	8	4	5	3
Total	**139**	**71**	**41**	**14**	**13**

Religion or Belief

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
No Religion	**49**	27	20	0	2
Christian	**30**	16	5	5	4
Other	**0**	0	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	**7**	5	2	0	0
Information not held	**53**	23	14	9	7
Total	**139**	**71**	**41**	**14**	**13**

Sexual Orientation

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Heterosexual	**60**	34	18	3	5
Gay/Lesbian	**2**	1	1	0	0
Bisexual	**1**	1	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	**6**	4	2	0	0
Information not held	**70**	31	20	11	8
Total	**139**	**71**	**41**	**14**	**13**

29 February 2024

Re: Pre-Scrutiny of the Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23 and Draft Strategic Equality Plan

Dear Cabinet Members

I have been instructed by this Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to the Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23 and the Draft Strategic Equality Plan.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the arrangements at its meeting on the 26th February 2024. Members undertook a constructive discussion in respect of the proposals. The Members' comments are summarised below.

Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23

The Committee welcomed and supported the report and during discussions considered the possibility of poverty and class being discriminated against which is a concern. Therefore members *recommended* that this is considered as part of the reporting process in future reports.

In analysing data throughout the report, Members were pleased to note the improved outcomes in a number of areas including the Healthy Relationship Programme. Members *recommended* that the data did not suggest improved outcomes following the project. Members were reassured to hear however that this was not the case and outcomes were positive. Members also noted the Equality monitoring data around national identity and ethnicity and *recommended* more commentary and summary around ethnicity, particularly including information around how the Council is widening recruitment practices to ensure we are an attractive employer to the global majority.

Strategic Equality Plan

Members welcomed the Strategic Equality Plan which was supported by all Members of the Committee. Members thanked the officers for their commitment on the implementation of the plan and were reassured to see a detailed action plan outlining its implementation. Members *recommended* that Scrutiny revisit this item in the future to measure its effectiveness and implementation, particularly in relation to the rollout and delivery of the mandatory training to all staff which they recognised is a vast undertaking.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were grateful for the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the above reports. A copy of the recording of the meeting can be found [here](#)

Yours sincerely,

Christian Hanagan
Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-2028

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES WITH RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR MAUREEN WEBBER, DEPUTY LEADER

Author(s): **Melanie Warburton, Diversity and Inclusion Manager**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information on the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028. This plan highlights the equality objectives the Council will work towards over the next 4 years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1 Consider the comments and feedback, following pre-scrutiny by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, attached at appendix 5; and

2.2 Agree to the content and publication of the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP).

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The SEP has been developed so that the Council can set out how it aims to meet it's commitment to equality and how it will meet it's legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.

3.2 Over the last year, internal engagement has taken place with a range of staff across the organisation. This engagement has highlighted that whilst many Council staff have a good experience in the workplace, others are not being afforded an inclusive workplace culture.

3.3 The Senior Leadership team have renewed their equality commitment and seek to embed this across the Council.

3.4 This internal evidence, along with other relevant data including Welsh Government ambitions outlined in their Anti-Racist Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action plan have led to the development of the equality objectives.

3.5 This SEP has an inward focus, with the viewpoint of developing our staff to create inclusive environments, ensuring the community receive inclusive and

fair services and colleagues are valued and respected. To achieve this ambition the equality objectives are:

- We will embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into every aspect of our service delivery;
- We will attract applicants that represent the diversity of our communities, enriching our organisational capability to meet our ambitions;
- We will respect, value and listen to all our employees by embedding a culture of inclusion.

3.6 An action plan has been developed which will be embedded within the Council's Performance Management arrangements.

3.7 In addition to the above it is the intention, as part of the SEP action plan to establish an EDI Steering group to monitor overall progress of the SEP.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, known as the Wales Specific Equality Duties, require public bodies to publish equality objectives every 4 years. The equality objectives can be contained in a Strategic Equality Plan.

4.2 The aim of these duties is to enable better performance of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which is to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4.3 Whilst there is no statutory direction on what protected characteristics the SEP should cover, apart for the need for focus on Gender Pay, it is generally established that objectives should in some way cover all of the protected characteristics contained in the Equality Act 2010, which are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

5.   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1   The Council must satisfy the Public Sector Equality 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 (1)
        eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3)
        foster good relations based on protected characteristics.

5.2   An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and is attached. The
        Assessment will be published on the Council's website, in accordance with the
        requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations
        2011 and Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

5.3   There are 8 positive impacts and 3 neutral impacts indicated in the protected
        characteristics section. Whilst the 3 neutral characteristics were identified, it is
        expected that due to the intersectional aspects of these characteristics and the
        broad aims of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028, there will be an overall
        positive impact on these characteristics.

5.4   The socio-economic assessment has been categorised as having a neutral
        impact. However, engagement with residents and the Disability Forum, along
        with robust EDI policies and equality impact assessments embedded within the
        Council's service delivery, it is hoped the equality objectives will have a positive
        impact on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage..

6.   WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1   A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared and is attached in
        Appendix B (to follow). This will be published on the Council's website together
        with a consultation document that outlines the proposal in further detail and in
        accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure
        2011.

6.2   There are no negative or adverse Welsh Language implications associated with
        this report.

7.   CONSULTATION

7.1   A 10 week public consultation ran from 12 December 2023 to 9 February 2024.
        The consultation report is shown in Appendix 1.

7.2   Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with the Council's objectives and
        approach. There were, however, varied opinions expressed in the free text
        section. Some supporting the Council's aspirations, others not supporting this
        area of work, and others making suggestions on areas that could be included.

7.3   As a result of consultation responses, additional narrative has been added to
        the SEP and action plan. These additions are highlighted in yellow. As the SEP

is a high-level plan, it has not been possible to add all suggestions as some go into specific detail on particular themes e.g. unpaid carers, loneliness, dropped curbs. Though these suggestions will be re-examined and considered when developing specific areas of work within the action plan.

7.4 There were some comments around how the plan will be monitored going forward. This will be considered as part of the EDI Steering Group, which is to be established a result of the SEP.

7.5 Some respondents reflected that communication of the SEP action plan should be consistent across the Council. Communicating with all Council staff can be problematic, therefore there is a Corporate focus to address this issue, with a view to improving internal communication.

7.6 The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26th February 2024 and the feedback is attached at appendix x (to follow).

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any financial implications arising from this report will be dealt with by individual service areas, e.g. staff replacement costs to attend relevant training sessions.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

The SEP has been developed to meet the requirements in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, known as the Wales Specific Equality Duties.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN, NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

10.1 The SEP compliments the Council's new Corporate Plan, in that equality, diversity and inclusion will be embedded across all service delivery plans.

10.2 Due regard has been made to all 7 well-being goals and the 5 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. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

11.1 This applies to all electoral wards.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 The Council's Strategic Equality Plan has been developed in line with legislative requirements and guidance produced by the Equality & Human Rights Commission.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee-
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer:
Melanie Warburton, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

Item: STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-2028

Background Papers
None

Officer to contact:
Melanie Warburton, Diversity and Inclusion Manager

DRAFT – STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024 to 2028

ADD PICTURE

Contents:

1. Foreword
2. About our Strategy
3. About Rhondda Cynon Taf
4. Our Commitment to Equality
5. How we developed our objectives
6. Our Equality Objectives
7. How we will measure performance
8. Get in touch with us

Appendices:

- Action Plan
- Consultation Feedback

This document can be made available in alternative formats and languages. To make a request please telephone 01443 444529 or email equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

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

1.   Foreword

Welcome to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Strategic Equality Plan. This plan contains important information about the work the Council is doing to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

EDI is an essential element of the Council's work. We recognise and value the benefits of a diverse workforce that works together to provide responsive and flexible services that take account of the different needs of people within our communities.

We believe we have a duty to tackle discrimination and disadvantage so that people feel safe from harassment, and everyone has access to high quality services.

The Council will use its leadership role to promote EDI and embed this within the delivery of our services. In developing this plan, we have engaged with our residents, our workforce, our partners and other stakeholders. Their opinions and experiences have helped us to shape the equality objectives it contains.

We have developed this plan following a period of tumultuous and challenging times. People within our communities were severely affected by Storm Dennis, the Covid-19 pandemic and aftermath of the pandemic, and we have seen an exacerbation of inequalities for many. Evidence shows that disabled people in Wales persistently face barriers to achieving a similar standard of living to non-disabled people; that discrimination and inequalities for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority people exists in many areas of society; that female workers are more likely to be in low paid occupations and part-time jobs than male workers. These are just some of the instances of inequalities faced by many people. We all have a part to play in reducing these inequalities and preventing people from harm, and we are optimistic that the equality objectives contained in this plan will make a positive difference to the lives of people in our county.

We believe our workforce has an important role in eliminating discrimination and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. Therefore, this Strategic Equality Plan significantly focusses on developing and equipping our 10,000 plus employees with the awareness and behaviours needed to create an inclusive working environment. Doing this will enable us to provide equitable and inclusive services to the people of the county. This is a challenge for us, we are operating in unprecedented times in

respect of our budget situation and our resources are fewer than ever. Nonetheless, we are committed to EDI being central to our service delivery and for RCT to be a county where we can be proud to be inclusive to all.

ADD PHOTO   ADD PHOTO

Councillor Maureen Webber   Paul Mee

Deputy Leader   Chief Executive

2.   About our Strategy

Purpose:

Our Strategic Equality Plan has been developed so that we can set out how we aim to meet our commitment to EDI and how we will meet legal obligations contained with the Equality Act 2010.

Within the Equality Act 2010, public bodies have an additional responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. These are outlined below:

Public Sector Equality Duty

The General Duty

When making decisions and delivering services we must have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained later in this report).
- Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When thinking about how to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't, we also need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and are connected to that characteristic.
- Meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

We also have to particularly think about how it will tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

The Specific Duties

The Equality Act provides a power to make regulations imposing duties on public bodies to support better performance of the general duty; these are known as the Specific Public Sector Equality Duties and are different in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Specific Duties underpin the General Duty and have been developed around four main principles:

- Use of evidence
- Consultation and Involvement
- Transparency
- Leadership.

The Welsh Government published regulations that introduced the Specific Duties for Wales in March 2011, these set out the actions the Council must take in order to comply and include the following areas:

- Setting Equality Objectives and publishing a Strategic Equality Plan
- Ensuring it engages with people who have an interest in how the Council's decisions affect them

- Collecting and publishing information relevant to compliance with the General Duty
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and publishing the results if there is a substantial impact on the Councils identified
- Publish employment monitoring information annually
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the General Duty amongst its employees and use its performance assessment procedures to identify and address the training needs of its employees in relation to the General Duties
- Set a gender pay equality objective where a gender pay difference is identified
- Think about including conditions relevant to the General Duty in its procurement processes.

Who is protected under the Equality Act 2010?

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of their protected characteristic.

Here are the terms used in the Equality Act 2010 to identify the types of things that affect how people are treated and can mean people may experience discrimination. The law is designed to protect them, they are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

This strategy is designed to build on the progress we've already made and ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded into everything we do.

Our progress to date:

We believe we have a positive record in delivering on EDI. Our [Annual Equality Reports](#) detail the areas where progress has been made. Some highlights are outlined below:

- We know more about the people we serve and are more responsive to their needs

  We do this by collecting and analysing equality monitoring data and community insight data. We have developed an equality monitoring toolkit so our service areas have a consistent approach to equality monitoring and are more confident in collecting and using equality data.

- We have strengthened the scrutiny of the Equality Impact Assessment process

  This ensures that timely and relevant evidence and data is used when making decisions that affect our service delivery to people in RCT.

- We have embedded the Socio-economic Duty into our strategic decision making processes

  This allows services areas to reflect and evidence how the key decisions we make can improve outcomes for residents who may be more adversely affected by socio-economic disadvantage.

- We proactively recognise, celebrate and promote diversity

  We are proud of our commitment in supporting inclusion. We've held many awareness sessions on EDI topics. We are committed to:

Armed Forces Covenant	Autism Aware
Disability Confident	Race at Work Charter
Stonewall Diversity Champions	Zero Racism Wales

  - Senior Diversity Champions and Staff Networks - Several members of the Senior Leadership Team are Diversity champions: Disability and

Carers, Gender, LGBTQIA+, Neurodiversity and Race. As champions, they promote diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation.

- o   Staff Networks – we have 5 staff networks who provide a voice and peer support for our employees.

- o   Youth Engagement – have hosted a number of youth events to promote EDI.

- o   Anti Racism – our Education and Inclusion team have launched and shared a number of anti-racism resources for Schools.
- o   Gender Pay – we delivered a Women in Leadership programme.
- o   Carers – we launched our Working Carers Guide.
- o   Women - we launched our Menopause Guide and have annually held International Women's Day events.

- Supported Employment Opportunities

Pathways to employment – we offer a number of schemes such as Care 2 Work, Step in the Right Direction, Gateway to Employment and the Green Light programme (year 11 pupils). These provide supported and inclusive working environments to young people who are facing challenges in life.

Vision Products – provides meaningful support, training and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the local community.

- Diversity in Democracy

We have improved accessibility for our elected members in a number of ways. We have refurbished our Council Chamber making it fully accessible. We offer translation facilities, audio equipment within the Chamber, hybrid meeting opportunities and promote reasonable adjustments to elected members. We also promote inclusion to prevent any perceived barriers for any future candidates.

- Improved accessibility of Council services and buildings

Many of our service areas have undertaken Autism Aware and Dementia Friendly training. Changing Places facilities have been installed in 3 visitor attractions across the county.

3.   About Rhondda Cynon Taf

Rhondda Cynon Taf is the 3rd largest Council area in Wales and is made up of communities with different needs and aspirations. Covering a wide geographical area it has a population of just over 237,000 people. Like much of Wales, we have a population that is growing older and an increase of people aged over 65, with 1 in 5 people in this age group. The majority of the county's population identify as White Welsh and British, though the ethnic minority population has slightly grown in recent years. Over half of the population have no religion, of the rest of the population, Christianity is the predominant religion.

1. Information relating to this section is taken from ONS Census 2021.

ADD VISUAL – MAP OF RCT

The Council is governed by 75 elected members and operates a Cabinet system. It has a Senior Leadership Team headed by the Chief Executive and attended by Senior Directors, and employs over 10,000 employees in a variety of service areas and roles based within the following groups:

- Chief Executive
- Community & Children's Services
- Education & Inclusion Services
- Finance Digital & Frontline Services.

We are a major employer in the area and over 80% of our employees live within RCT. Following the pandemic, many of our employees now work in different ways, with many traditional office workers working in a hybrid way - a mixture of working from an office and working from their homes.

Our workforce is made up of 74% female and 26% male employees. Reflecting societal trends, many of our female employees work in lower paid, part-time roles. This has an impact on our gender pay gap. The predominant ethnicity of our workforce is White Welsh, though we have ethnic minority employees working across all service areas. Unfortunately, we do not have reliable data on the disability status of our employees, but we know many of our employees have a disability as we routinely make reasonable adjustments for many colleagues. We have LGBT employees working across all areas of the Council and we have an increasing number of employees who identify as non-binary. However, we have only recently started collecting equality data on gender identity so it will take some time to collect reliable data. Just over a quarter of our staff are in the age range of 45 to 54 years. This means we need to have workforce succession plans in place to ensure our service areas are sufficiently staffed in the future.

4. Our Commitment to Equality

The Senior Leadership Team have used this plan to outline the equality objectives that reinforce the Council's values and commitment to EDI. As such the Council will provide equality of opportunity for all, where all staff feel valued and can reach their full potential.

Our commitment:

- We recognise that to meet the needs of future generations of staff and communities we need to lead change and to be brave in what we can achieve.

- We will create a safe working environment where people are able to be who they really are, feel listened to, and are able to raise concerns, knowing we have their backs to do so.

- We will communicate the rationale for decisions so that people understand why actions have been taken and decisions made.

- We will take action to support the experience and career progression of under-represented groups and support everyone to understand the benefits of equity for all.

- We recognise that people's experiences across the organisation differ, and we will build a culture where everyone has a great experience.

- We will call out behaviour that harms or devalues people and there will be clear consequences for behaviour that falls below our organisation's standards.

- We commit to listening and seeking to understand the experiences of all. We will support and listen to staff to enable them to outline the culture they want to see.

5.   How we developed our Equality Objectives

The Council's Vision is for a Rhondda Cynon Taf where:

People, communities, and business can grow and live in a healthy, 'green', safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future.

To help us achieve this vision we have a number of ambitious strategies and objectives in place with the aim of reducing inequalities and improving the outcomes of people within our county. These strategies are delivered by our service areas. Some of the strategies are in partnership with external agencies such as Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board and South Wales Police.

We have robust performance monitoring arrangements in place to ensure we are delivering on what we say we are going to do. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on all of our strategies, ensuring we are mindful of how our decisions and the services we offer impact on the wide diversity of people in the county. Many of these strategies can be found here (hyperlink to Corporate plan when available)

As well as reflecting upon individual strategies, in developing this Strategic Equality Plan, we have aligned our equality objectives with our Corporate Plan 2024-2029 <mark>(hyperlink when available).</mark> The Corporate Plan outlines the Council's 4 wellbeing objectives:

1. **People and Communities** - Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
2. **Work and Business** - Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.
3. **Nature and the Environment** - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
4. **Culture and Heritage** - Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.

The Corporate Plan outlines the framework that will guide and shape what we do. It directs how and where we spend our budgets, manage, and mitigate strategic risks and inform how we train and develop our staff and Councillors to meet the current and future challenges. Challenges like:

- A growing and aging population, many of whom may experience poor health with complex care and support needs.

- The need to attract investment, high quality jobs and support the green economy whilst addressing the skills gap.

- The impact on lives and the risk to homes and businesses from extreme weather events.

- Tackling inequalities in health, education, work and improving life chances.

- Dealing with rising energy costs and energy security, higher prices because of the supply chain disruptions.

In developing the Corporate Plan we aligned with important regional documents such as the [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board Population Needs Assessment (2022-2027)](#) and [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board Wellbeing Plan (2023-2028)](#). The findings and ambitions of both of these documents have been

reflected in wellbeing objectives contained in our Corporate Plan <mark>(hyperlink when available)</mark>.

Whist it is important to align our equality objectives to our Corporate Plan, there are key external factors that have been important in developing our equality objectives. We wish to reflect the Welsh Government's ambitions outlined in their Anti-Racist Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan. We have considered information from the Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023: 'Is Wales Fairer?', and from an Audit Wales report relating to Equality Impact Assessments, as well as a report from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales – Access Denied: Older people's experience of digital exclusion in Wales. As members of organisations such as the Business Disability Forum, Business In the Community, Stonewall and Tai Pawb it is important to reflect upon relevant evidence and research they publish.

We are mindful of forthcoming recommendations from the Welsh Government's Disability Rights Taskforce, in particular on embedding and understanding the Social Model of Disability. When the Disability Rights Action Plan is released in 2024, we will incorporate it's recommendations into this plan's accompanying action plan.

To ensure our equality objectives are evidence based we have engaged with residents and our workforce through face-to-face meetings, focus groups, surveys, manager's briefings and on-line sessions as well as analysing community and workforce data. Having objectives that are evidenced based ensures that we not only reflect significant societal issues and trends but the regional issues that affect and matter to our residents and employees.

6.   Our Equality Objectives

Objective 1

We will embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into every aspect of our service delivery.

Why we are doing this:

- We recognise, and are concerned about, the growing inequalities that face some people living and working in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- Residents have told us that we need to improve the accessibility of our towns and county.
- Whist some of our services areas have a good knowledge of their customers, others have told us they'd like support to be more responsive to the diversity of their customers.
- Feedback has told us that we need to engage in genuine and meaningful communication with residents.
- We need to foster respect and trust between different communities and generations.
- Whilst we already have good governance processes in respect of Equality Impact Assessments, we need to do more to ensure we monitor the progress on the things we said would do. In particular, tasks in respect of any mitigating actions identified.

What we will do:

1. Embed EDI into all of our strategic decision-making processes.
2. Establish a monitoring process for Equality Impact Assessments.
3. Incorporate actions contained within Welsh Government Action plans (Anti-Racism, LGBTQ+ and the forthcoming Disability Rights Action Plan) into service areas delivery plans.
4. Ensure EDI is regularly monitored and discussed at Senior Leadership team and Service Area Senior Management team meetings.
5. Ensure all Service Area Delivery plans have robust EDI actions that recognise the diverse nature of our communities.
6. Annually challenge service areas on their EDI record.
7. Ensure our engagement with residents is continuous and inclusive and further developing relationships with diverse and underrepresented groups.
8. Ensure communication to residents is in accessible versions such as BSL, Easy Read and non-digital formats.
9. Collaborate with relevant organisations to better understand the needs of communities.
10. Raise awareness of the benefits of undertaking equality monitoring.

How we measure:

- Monitor Equality Impact Assessments.
- Review Equality Monitoring data.
- Review EDI achievements in service area self-assessment process.
- Review engagement and consultation responses.
- Review equality monitoring data that is collected.

What will success look like:

That RCT residents, regardless of their background, culture or identity, feel listened to and represented in our decision-making processes.

Objective 2

We will attract applicants that represent the diversity of our communities, enriching our organisational capability to meet our ambitions.

Why we are doing this:

1. We have identified gaps in our workforce equality monitoring data. This does not provide us with an accurate picture of our workforce.
2. Analysis of workforce monitoring data shows that some groups of staff are not progressing as well as others in their careers.
3. Whilst we have narrowed our gender pay gap there is still work to do, but we also need to understand our disability and ethnicity pay gaps.
4. Analysis of our recruitment data indicates there may be barriers to some groups of people joining the organisation, particularly ethnic minority people and people with disabilities.
5. We need to continue to undertake actions that reduce our gender pay gap.

What we will do:

- Improve the uptake of completion of workforce equality monitoring data.
- Publish our pay gaps on Disability, Ethnicity and Gender.
- Improve the number of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority candidates applying for jobs.
- Review our existing Recruitment and Selection policy and practices with the intention of removing any bias.
- Actively promote the positive benefits of working for the Council. Whilst policies benefit all employees, some will have a particular benefit to women e.g. flexible working, support for carers, shared parental leave, menopause guide.
- Offer initiatives such as mentoring programmes that benefit under-represented groups of staff.

How we will measure:

- Monitor workforce equality monitoring data.
- Monitor the number of applicants for jobs by protected characteristic.
- Monitor the progression of people in the workforce, with particular focus on ethnic minorities, disability and women.
- Conduct pulse surveys to hear experiences of applicants through the recruitment process.

What will success look like:

- We attract diverse applicants for our jobs, and we have diverse teams across the Council which genuinely celebrate the value of difference.

Objective 3

We will respect, value and listen to all our employees by embedding a culture of inclusion.

Why are we doing this:

- Engagement with our employees has told us that not all staff are having a positive experience at work. We have heard about experiences of discrimination and harassment in the workplace. This is particularly apparent for some ethnic minority colleagues and colleagues with disabilities. We have also heard about examples of sexism and ageism.
- Members of our staff networks told us their networks are important in providing peer support. In addition to this they want a greater role in driving inclusive culture change across the organisation.
- Evidence from [Welsh Government Anti Racist Wales action plan](#), [BITC - Race at Work Charter report](#) and [Race Alliance Wales – Deconstructing Unsafe Spaces](#) shows there is much organisations need to do to create race equality. Our ethnic minority staff told us that many white colleagues have little understanding of factors that may impact upon them. Issues such as microaggressions, lack of cultural awareness and racism.
- Some of our neurodiverse staff, as well as our managers, have told us that we need to do more to raise awareness about neurodiversity.
- The [BDF Great Big Workplace Adjustment Survey 2023](#) highlights that most participants felt the onus is on the disabled employee, rather than their employer, to initiate the process of reasonable adjustments. This is echoed by some of our employees. We've also heard about unnecessary delays for some employees in obtaining reasonable adjustments and the anxiety this can cause.
- Our managers have told us they need more awareness to have conversations around disability and reasonable adjustments, gender identity, neurodiversity and race.

What we will do:

1. We will take a Zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and improve our policy and mechanisms for reporting harassment.
2. We will roll out mandatory equality training for all staff on a range of EDI topics.
3. We will hold awareness raising sessions and reflective spaces for staff on a range of EDI topics.

4. We will support safe spaces for staff to share any concerns they may have in respect of EDI issues.
5. We will improve Cultural awareness across the organisation.
6. We will review our existing HR policies with the intention of removing bias.
7. We will review and improve the reasonable adjustment process to ensure it supports the staff that need it.
8. We will ensure our workforce development plan includes actions to reduce our gender pay gap.

How we will measure:

- Monitor reports of bullying and harassment.
- Monitor attendance of training.
- Monitor disciplinary action in relation to complaints of harassment and discrimination.
- Ask questions about inclusion in pulse and annual surveys.
- Develop mechanisms to monitor reasonable adjustments.

What will success look like:

- Our employees will feel valued, respected and safe in the workplace.

7. How we will measure performance

The actions within this plan (Appendix 1) will be delivered through Service Delivery plans. Service Delivery plans set out the key priorities for each service area to be delivered over 12-18 months.

In addition to assisting the service with monitoring progress against its priorities, the Delivery Plans also:

- support delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities
- demonstrate how the service is aligning with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

- provide a framework to ensure the priorities arising from the Council's Corporate Assessment are addressed
- facilitate co-ordination of cross cutting strategies
- inform Personal Development Reviews
- enable Internal Audit to conduct its review of Risk Management arrangements as part of agreed work programme.

All Service Delivery Plans are monitored by the Group Director and Cabinet Member as part of the Council's performance management arrangements.

Self-Assessment

In addition to Service Delivery Plans we have a well-established and effective self-assessment process in place. The self-assessment process focuses on impact and outcomes of the services being delivered, it leads to improvements in the experiences and the outcomes for our customers.

At the heart of self-assessment are three questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How can we improve things further?

The process of self-assessment is continuous and an embedded part of the Council's working life.

Performance Report to Cabinet

Performance Reports are prepared every quarter. These reports enable Council officers and Councillors to monitor and scrutinise the progress of all Council priorities and services.

We regularly assess and review our progress in the delivery of actions set out in the Council's key plans and also the performance measures within the Council's Corporate Plan and Service Delivery Plans.

Publication of the Annual Equality Monitoring Report

The main purpose of an Annual Equality Monitoring Report is to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and

Specific Equality Duties which includes its progress in delivering the Equality Objectives.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that all public authorities covered under the specific duties in Wales should produce an Annual Equality Report by 31 March each year.

6. Get in touch with us

We welcome comments on all aspects of this report, both in what it contains and what it may not make clear enough about the work we intend to do.

If you have any comments or want to know more about the work the Council is doing please contact:

Melanie Warburton
Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Telephone: 01443 444531
Email: equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

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APPENDIX 1

DRAFT

Strategic Equality Plan 2024 to 2028

Action Plan

Equality Objectives:

1.   **We will embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into every aspect of our service delivery.**

2.   **We will attract applicants that represent the diversity of our communities, enriching our organisational capability to meet our ambitions.**

3.   **We will respect, value and listen to our all our employees by embedding a culture of inclusion.**

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Action **Objective 1: We will embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into every aspect of our service delivery.**	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer	Measurement	Protected Characteristic
Establish an EDI Steering Group to oversee the delivery and monitoring of the Strategic Equality Plan (Chaired by Deputy Leader)	September 24	Chief Executive	Bi annual updates to Senior Leadership Team	All
Incorporate WG Anti-Racist Action Plan into Service Delivery Plans	April 25	Heads of Service	Quarterly performance reports / Updates to EDI Steering Group	Race Religion

Incorporate WG LGBTQ+ Action Plan into Service Delivery Plans	April 25	Heads of Service	Quarterly Performance reports / Updates EDI Steering Group	Sexual Orientation Gender Reassignment
Review and improve communication methods to residents ensuring accessible versions such as BSL, Easy Read and non-digital formats.	April 26	Service Director of Democratic Services/Service Director of Digital and ICT	Quarterly Performance Reports/Updates to EDI Steering Group	Age Disability Race
Establish a governance process monitoring Equality Impact Assessments actions	April 25	Service Director of Democratic Services	Quarterly Performance Reports	All
Monitor the inclusion of EDI actions Service Delivery Plans	April 25	Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Service Delivery Plans Self Assessment	All
Establish service area EDI working groups	April 25	Heads of Service	Feed into EDI Steering Group	All
Monitor engagement and consultation activity	April 25	Service Director of Democratic Services	Feed into EDI Steering Group	All
Monitoring the use of equality monitoring toolkit	April 25	Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Feed into EDI Steering Group	All
Action **Objective 2: We will attract applicants that represent the diversity of our communities, enriching our organisational capability to meet our ambitions.**	**Delivery Date**	**Responsible Officer**	**Measurement**	**Protected Characteristic**
Campaign to improve uptake of employees inputting their equality data into ITrent	April 26	Diversity and Inclusion Manager/Payroll Manager	Workforce Data	All

Review our Recruitment and Selection policy and processes to ensure we meet our commitment to DWP's Disability Confident Scheme.	April 26	Director of HR	Monitoring applicant, progressing throughout process	Disability
Review our Recruitment and Selection policy – marketing, job description design on onboarding process to ensure they are free of bias and promote the benefits of working for the Council.	April 26	Director of HR	Monitoring numbers applying, progressing throughout process	All
Produce recruitment guidance for managers on avoiding bias in the recruitment process	April 26	Service Director of Organisational Development	Monitoring applicants progressing throughout process	All
Provide training to recruiting managers on potential bias in recruitment processes	April 28	Director of HR/Service Director of Organisational Development	Attendance on training	All
Provide meaningful job opportunities for young people through our Apprenticeship/Graduate/Care to Work programmes	April 26	Service Director of Organisational Development	Numbers on programmes	Age
Develop induction programmes that are inclusive, recognising different backgrounds and experiences.	April 26	Heads of Service/Service Director of Organisation Development	Numbers of programme Retention data	All
Offer coaching and mentoring initiatives for under-represented groups in the workforce	April 26	Service Director of Organisational Development	Numbers attending	Age Sex Race
Monitor career progression for staff by protected characteristic	April 26	Service Director of	Bi annual workforce data	All

Action **Objective 3: We will respect, value and listen to our all our employees by embedding a culture of inclusion.**	**Delivery Date**	Organisational Development **Responsible Officer**	**Measurement**	**Protected Characteristic**
Roll out a programme of mandatory training across the organisation covering all protected characteristics	April 26	Heads of Service/Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Number of staff completing training	All
Communicate a zero-tolerance approach to bullying harassment	September 24	Chief Executive	Number of reported cases Monitor Dignity at Work complaints and Disciplinary numbers relating to protected characteristics	Age Disability Gender Reassignment Race Religion Sex Sexual Orientation
Deliver monthly on-line EDI and reflective sessions for staff and managers	Ongoing	Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Number of staff attending sessions – monitored by EDI steering group	All
Launch a revised Multi Cultural awareness resource	April 25	Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Pulse surveys	Race Religion
Support staff networks and safe spaces for to enable peer support of under-represented groups of staff	April 25	Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Number of members of Staff Networks EDI Steering Group	All

Review reporting mechanisms for reporting identity based harassment	April 25	Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Annual Staff Survey Pulse Survey Staff Network feedback	Age Disability Gender Reassignment Race Religion Sex Sexual Orientation
Undertake a review of Reasonable Adjustment scheme and supporting processes	April 26	Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Pulse survey	Disability
Review HR policies ensuring they are free of bias	April 26	Director of Human Resources/Head of Employee Relations	Monitoring by EDI Steering Group	All
Publish our Disability, Ethnicity and Gender Pay Gaps	April 26	Workforce Development Manager	Monitoring by EDI Steering Group	Disability Race Sex
Commitment to the actions BITC's Race at work Charter	April 26	Heads of Service/Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Workforce Data Pulse Survey	Race
Build reducing gender pay gap actions into the Workforce Development plan	April 25	Service Director of Organisational Development	EDI Steering Group	Sex Pregnancy and Maternity

tudalen wag

Dewch i siarad RhCT
Let's talk RCT

Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

February 2024

Let's Talk
Equalities

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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Tudalen 534

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This section provides a summary of the Let's Talk Equalities consultation carried out in 2023/ 2024.
- The consultation was conducted in-house and ran from 12th December 2023 to 9th February 2024.
- The purpose of the consultation was to gather the thoughts and opinions of stakeholders on Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Draft Strategic Equality Plan, prepared in 2023.
- The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders (described more fully in Section 3, Methodology):
    - Online survey and "Ideas Board" via the Let's Talk Equalities website
    - Invitations to respond were sent to multiple stakeholders/ groups
    - Development of an Easy Read format document that was circulated
    - Attendance and engagement at multiple community and advocacy group meetings for direct feedback
    - Engagement via multiple staff events and groups
- 90 survey responses were received
- 5 ideas were posted to the online board
- Feedback was also received via email and through various engagement activities. These are available in a confidential appendix for officers.
- Over 400 people were engaged in this consultation

4

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   This report presents the findings of the Let's Talk Equalities consultation 2023/2024.

1.2   Section 2 outlines some brief background to the consultation process.

1.3   Section 3 details the methodology.

1.4   Section 4 provides the results from the consultation activities carried out on the Let's Talk Equalities website.

Appendix 1 containing the full text of all comments received in the online consultation and Appendix 2 containing feedback via other routes can be viewed separately and is available for Cabinet and Officers to view.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1   Our Strategic Equality Plan has been developed so that we can set out how we aim to meet our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and how we will meet legal obligations contained within the Equality Act 2010.

2.2   The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, known as the Wales Specific Equality Duties require public bodies to publish equality objectives every 4 years. The equality objectives can be contained a Strategic Equality Plan.

2.3   The aim of these duties is to enable better performance of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which is to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

2.4   Whilst there is no statutory direction on the what protected characteristics the SEP should cover, apart for the need for focus on Gender Pay, it is generally established that objectives should in some way cover all of the protected characteristics contained in the Equality Action 2010, which are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

2.5   In advance of presenting to Cabinet, we wished to consult with stakeholders including staff, members of the public, advocacy and support groups and community groups for feedback on the Draft Strategic Equality Plan.

6

3   METHODOLOGY

3.1   The Let's Talk Equalities project was conducted in-house and the consultation ran from the 12th December 2023 to 9th February 2024. This report presents the results from the project run on the Let's Talk website. This report will be presented to Cabinet and Officers to consider the feedback received.

3.2   The consultation approach used the Let's Talk online engagement platform, which provides a user friendly and interactive form of engagement. Engagement tools used in this consultation included a short survey (focused on the Equality Objectives set out in the Draft Strategic Equality Plan) and an online "Ideas Board" which allows respondents to post open suggestions for improvement and comment on ideas posted by others.

3.3   The online engagement was promoted in a number of ways and across a number of channels, including social media. Direct emails to stakeholders including Stonewall, Tai Pawb, Fighting for Pride, People First, Race Alliance Wales, Wales Council for the Deaf, Interlink, Cwm Taf Community Cohesion Group, Elected Members and Town & Community Councils were circulated with an invitation to feed back on the Draft Strategic Equalities Plan either directly or via the website. Posters advertising the consultation and the Draft SEP were displayed in community venues including YMa, Libraries, Leisure Centres etc.

3.4   Engagement with staff also included information via email (global internal email updates, all staff networks, YEPs Equality Group, BAME Education Group, schools, unions, front-line managers, Senior and Chief officers) and direct engagement through online Equality Clinic events. Posters were also displayed at staff sites including Occupational Health, Vision Produce and depots.

3.5   All posters and emails were presented in both Welsh and English, and there are both Welsh and English versions of Let's Talk (Dewch i Siarad) available.

3.6   Staff also lead direct engagement at a number of community meetings including Disability Forum, Valleys Veterans, Taff Ely Veterans, Innovate, Valley Ethnic Minority Support Group.

4   LET'S TALK EQUALITIES

4.1   The following section outlines the results from the main consultation activities carried out on the Let's Talk Equalities website.

In total there were 521 visits to the Let's Talk Equalities page, of which 336 visitors were Aware (meaning the page was viewed), 217 were Informed (meaning they viewed multiple pages and/ or opened files, downloaded documents etc.) and 95 Engaged (meaning they took part in one of the engagement tools on the page). The majority of page traffic came via direct links.

4.2   There were two ways for page visitors to engage with the consultation. Firstly, the full survey, which posed three questions about the Equality Objectives set out in the Draft Strategic Equality Plan as well as an open comment question for any other suggestions. Secondly, an online "Ideas Board" which allowed respondents to post suggestions and comment on suggestions made by others. The survey could be filled in without any registration, but the Ideas Board required at least an email address to be able to post – email addresses are not made public, however.

Survey Results

4.3   Respondents were asked to read the Equality Objectives set out in the Draft SEP before completing the survey. A total of 90 completed surveys were received. For the purposes of this report, any blank responses to individual questions have been discounted. Therefore, all percentages quoted are a percentage of the total responses for that individual question.

4.4   **Question 1: Do you agree with our proposed equality objectives?**

81.1% of respondents (73) stated that they agree with the proposed objectives. 10.0% (9) stated that they did not agree, and 8.9% (8) stated that they did not know whether they agreed or not.

Q1 Do you agree with our proposed equality objectives?
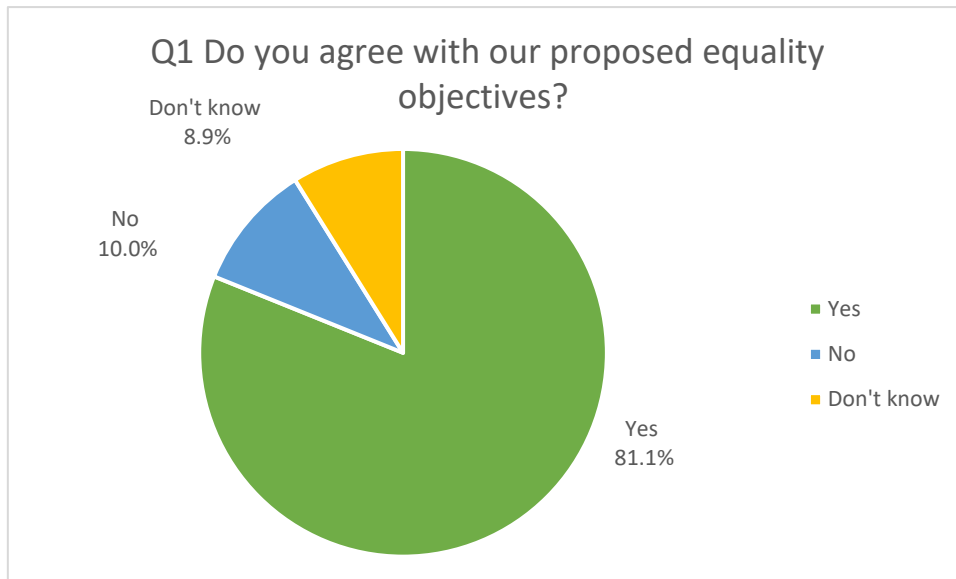
Q1 Do you agree with our proposed equality objectives?	Count	%
Yes	73	81.1%
No	9	10.0%
Don't know	8	8.9%
Text responses	8	

Figure 1: Q1 Do you agree with our proposed equality objectives?

4.5 Respondents who selected "No" were asked to explain why. 8 comments were received, expressing views including a perceived unfair bias in favour of people with protected characteristics, concerns that experience and qualifications are overlooked in favour of demographic considerations and a lack of consideration in the objectives for unpaid carers.

Quotes include:

Everybody should be treated the same, treating some groups differently for whatever reason is unfair

I am disappointed that unpaid carers, including our working staff who are unpaid carers, are not mentioned or referenced in any of the objectives.

The council needs to focus on providing basic services cost efficiently not playing identity politics which serve to divide the public.

4.6 **Question 2: Do you think that our proposed equality objectives will promote and embed equality and diversity into the services the Council provides?**

65.6% of respondents (59) stated that they believe the proposed objectives will promote and embed equality and diversity into Council services. 13.3% of

respondents (12) stated that they do not believe this to be the case and 21.1% (19) stated that they did not know either way.
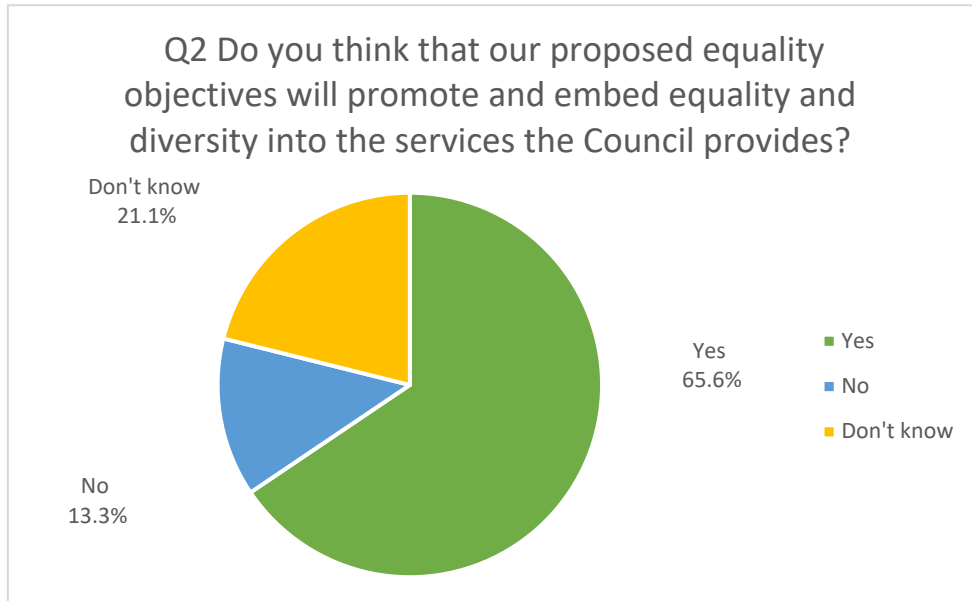
Q2 Do you think that our proposed equality objectives will promote and embed equality and diversity into the services the Council provides?	Count	%
Yes	59	65.6%
No	12	13.3%
Don't know	19	21.1%
Text responses	11	

Figure 2: Q2 Do you think that our proposed equality objectives will promote and embed equality and diversity into the services the Council provides?

4.7   Respondents who selected "No" were asked to explain why. 11 responses were received, many of which repeat the concerns from the previous question. Additionally, some comments raise concerns about the practical implementation of the stated objectives during times of financial and resource constraints, and other comments listed personal experiences that respondents felt the objectives will not address.

Quotes include:

RCT has failed in recent times for certain demographics of people who were linked within the council. In 2023 alone, they resulted in RCT Pride disbanning due to the Pontypridd Pride event being cancelled

There is little capacity to prioritise this in addition to other requirements placed on managers already

10

It needs to be something everyone believes in and part of. Not all staff will get to see or feel part of this until someone take the time to devolve the information to all staff.

4.8 **Question 3: Do you think that it is important for our proposed equality objectives to focus on developing our workforce?**

80.0% of respondents (72) stated agreement that it is important for the proposed objectives to focus on workforce development. Equal numbers (9, or 10.0%) stated disagreement or that they did not know.

Q3 Do you think that it is important for our proposed equality objectives to focus on developing our workforce?	Count	%
Yes	72	80.0%
No	9	10.0%
Don't know	9	10.0%
Text responses	*8*	
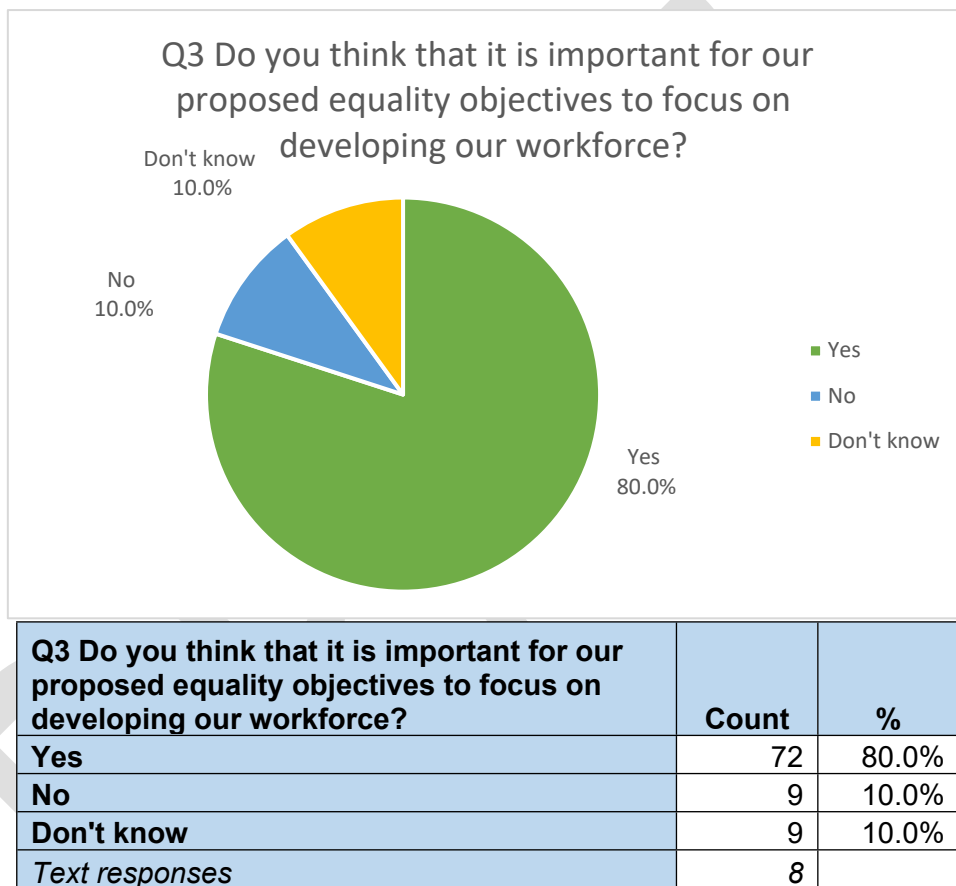
Figure 3: Q3 Do you think that it is important for our proposed equality objectives to focus on developing our workforce?

4.9 Respondents who selected "No" were asked to explain why. 8 comments were received, with themes including the view that there should be more focus on communities, that experience and long service should be rewarded with progression and that money spent on this work could be used elsewhere.

Quotes include:

This work is costing money and during a period in our lives when the council is cutting services to save money, this is zero priority.

There is no room for advancement through experience/time spent in the job.

The workforce would develop naturally if more work was done in communities (given most of the workforce lives IN THOSE COMMUNITIES)

4.10 **Question 4: Do you have any other comments about the proposed Strategic Equality Plan?**

Respondents were asked to provide any further comments they would like to make. A total of 38 comments were received for this question, and as well as building upon the themes already raised previously these comments included:

Support for the proposals

Overall, the plan feels thought out, evidence-based and seems to have strong rationale

Nothing to add, I feel that the STP is well written and sets out clear achievable objectives.

Satisfying the public and workforce needs, Really important and a great plan

Concerns about vague commitments

it sounds a bit vague and I'm not sure I can support it fully without real targets and promises

It is very wishy-washy

It doesn't say what you are going to do

Questions and comments regarding implementation

It would be great to also have some additional manager guidance on recruiting from a diversity perspective, for example in terms of recruitment adverting

I feel in order to create inclusive and supportive workplaces this plan needs to cover elements of equality and diversity that aren't strictly speaking covered by legislation, such as unpaid caring responsibilities.

The Strategic Equality Plan needs to be shared across the whole of the council and not just the office based workforce. The staff not based in offices feel they have no voice in some aspects of what the council do or are providing.

Other criticisms

Seems a little to involved and timely both to set up so far and looking at the requiremtns going forward, when we could focus on our work

Just stop. It's good to be different but don't make that the main driving force in everything.

There is too much reporting on meeting targets or complying with needless legislation.

A number of comments also raised specific examples and personal stories related to EDI, or provided specific technical commentary on aspects of the Draft SEP or Equality Objectives. These, and all comments received in this survey, are available in a separate appendix for officers to read.

Ideas Board

4.11   A total of 5 ideas were posted to the online board, from 4 users. There was 1 comment made in response.

Share your ideas

about 2 months ago
Do you have any ideas that would help us reduce inequalities in the workplace and in our communities?

Add your idea

about 2 months ago
Dropped Curbs
These are important and the council could speed up response times to these
1 Comment   0 ♡

about 2 months ago
Go beyond the usual media channels when advertising vacancies
Take the adverts to the places where particular communities congregate, especially if wanting to win trust and so
0 Comment   0 ♡

about 2 months ago
Support for unpaid carers
Continue the Carers Caffi peer support group, allow Carers Leave to be taken in hours rather than as a half day minimum, improve line managers understanding of
0 Comment   0 ♡

about 2 months ago
Organise community events that focus on different aspects of communities e.g. International day to celebrate ethnic makeup of RCT.
0 Comment   0 ♡

about 2 months ago
Progression
The council could more efficiently share our progression on products with members of the public.
0 Comment   1 ♡

Figure 4: Ideas Board - Do you have any ideas that would help us reduce inequalities in the workplace and in our communities?

13

4.12   The full text of these comments is available in an appendix for officers to view.

APPENDIX 2

This Appendix contains comments and notes from in-person and online engagement activities around the Let's Talk Equalities project, and an emailed response from People First.

These comments are confidential and should not be published publicly.

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Veterans' Consultation	3
People First Feedback	4
Valleys Ethnic Support Group Feedback	4

Equality Clinic SEP Comments

Backing from Senior Leadership Team is great
Balanced
Diverse
Participants planning more training and has taking notes as can ensure it falls in line
Thinking about their own work

Complaints being centralised and ensuring they are followed through correctly and not forgotten

Everyone gets listened to
Removing the Bias
Aligning and embedding throughout the council will help within our communities

Culture change

Allowing everyone to be made aware that Equality is for everyone and benefits everyone

Young people
More positive and visual training for young trans people and the organisation and communities

intergeneration work

Breaking down the perception of young and old

Inclusive communities

Safe Place

Survey feedback seems to be the same that they give views but the nothing comes from it so ensuring we are showing we are doing what staff are asking.

engaging with staff

how we communicate with our staff

SEP taking on board our comments and feeding back into this

effective communicating

2

Veterans Consultation
Taf Ely Veterans 31/1/2024
Present 22
General agreement that all three priorities were appropriate, especially agreeing on ensuring training for Council staff. Issues raised included Disabled access, Parking, scheduling of events, and clarity of responsibility.
Comments:
"Can we make sure that Armed forces days do not coincide with other events like Pride."
"Disabled access with transport in RCT is shocking at the moment. Particularly in Ponty."
"How will we know if you are doing what you say?"
"Pavement Parking is getting worse."
"Sometimes it feels like we are getting a runaround, Council say speak to the police and the police tell us to talk to the Council." Related to pavement parking.

Valley Veterans 1/02/2024
Present 45
General agreement on all three priorities from all concerned. Issues raised included Reliance on IT systems, training on neurodiverse matters, funding for charity groups, Race, recycling.
Comments:
"The Council do amazing work supporting us, especially Councillor Webber, we are very lucky to have her fighting our corner."
"The funding strategy for RCT needs reviewing, for support groups, this first come first served doesn't work, the causes should be assessed."
"More training on autism and ADHD should be given to people in education, some of them have no idea how to deal with children with autism, they just assume and treat them like naughty kids."
"More awareness for veterans please."
"Training for Council staff is needed, along with awareness of what support is out there for people, I had to explain to one of the Council resettlement staff on the phone that the Council has an Armed Forces Liaison Officer."
"Race is still a big issue in the valleys, but it's just how people speak sometimes."
"For me it's all this digital stuff, I don't have a mobile phone, I don't want one, but if I need to do anything I have to rely on people here to help me as I don't do computers."
"Disability hasn't really been looked at, especially hidden disabilities, lots of people make assumptions, and there isn't enough information out there."
"Recycling is too confusing, I'm sure most peoples rubbish must end up in the landfills because they get it wrong, and now I have to take some of my rubbish to supermarkets. How am I supposed to do that?"

3

People First Feedback

Here is some feedback on the Equality plan 2024 - 2027 from People First members:

The plan is a good plan to make it better there could be:

* More paid employment and voluntary opportunities for people with a learning disability within the council.
* More reasonable adjustments need to be made for people to access apprenticeships with the support they need
* the council should produce easy read information in all departments
* all council staff should have learning disability equality awareness training

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Valleys Ethnic Support Group Feedback

Valleys Ethnic Support Group (VEMS)
Attendance at Coffee Morning – 7 February 2024
5 members present
Consultation on SEP

Recruitment/Working for the Council
You can't access the Council- it's like an institution. Not just a problem for the Council but also the police and NHS. We don't know where to find out about the jobs.
We need some support on the recruitment process and help with applications
Specific sessions on sponsorship would be helpful.
An individual shared they had had a difficult experience whilst working for the Council. There was possible racism involved. They felt isolated and there was a lack of understanding from colleagues. One of their friends also works for the Council and they too are having a difficult experience.
There needs to be a safe place to report concerns without having to worry about consequences from colleagues.

Awareness
Raising awareness of issues with the workforce is importance.
Someone needs to go to all schools and talk about Anti-Racism.
It's difficult to find out about Council services – there should be a newsletter or leaflets.

Support
Clarification is needed on peoples' role in the Council, for example, community cohesion and equality. How do these roles support us?

Other
Council libraries are really important to members of the group. The ESOL classes are run there. Pontypridd Library is attractive and inclusive. It's used as a community space more than a library – to do jigsaws and read papers.
Need to be more creative with foster care – ethnic minority families have a lot to offer.

4

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when competing 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: Melanie Warburton

Service Director: Richard Evans

Service Area: Human Resources

Date: 05/02/2024

1.a)   What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

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

Strategic Equality Plan 2024

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

The Strategic Equality Plan covers a 4-year period and sets out how the Council will meet its commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and how the Council will meet the legal obligations contained in the Equality Act 2010.

The SEP will demonstrate:

- That the Council understands the need for and will create a safe working environment where people are able to be who they really are, feel listened to, and are able to raise concerns, and feel supported.

- That the Council will communicate the rationale for decisions so that people understand why actions have been taken and decisions made.

- That the Council will take action to support the experience and career progression of under-represented groups and support everyone to understand the benefits of equity for all.

- That the Council recognises that people's experiences across the organisation differ, and we will build a culture where everyone has a great experience.

- That the Council will call out behaviour that harms or devalues people and there will be clear consequences for behaviour that falls below our organisation's standards.

- That the Council will commit to listening and seeking to understand the experiences of all. We will support and listen to staff to enable them to outline the culture they want to see.

This Equality Impact Assessment covers Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2024 - 2028.

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

Within the Equality Act 2010, the Council has an additional responsibility to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty's General and, as set out by Welsh Government, the Specific duties.

The Public Sector Equality Duty ensures that all public bodies play their part in the creation of a fairer society by eliminating discrimination and providing equal opportunity for all. This is achieved by showing "due regard" to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.

- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. These characteristics are defined as:

  - Age

  - Disability

  - Gender Reassignment

  - Marriage or Civil Partnership

  - Pregnancy and Maternity

  - Race

  - Religion or Belief

  - Sex

  - Sexual Orientation

- Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Welsh Government has published its <u>Specific Duties for Wales</u>, which the Council must comply with.

This Strategic Equality Plan has been aligned with the equality objectives in the Council's <u>Corporate plan 2024 – 2029.</u>

This Strategic Equality Plan has also taken into consideration the Socio-Economic Duty, which came into force in Wales in April 2021. The Socio-Economic Duty ensures that some public bodies must consider if strategic decision, objectives, and public services, can improve inequality of outcome for people at Socio-Economic disadvantage.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- o Service users   ☒
- o Employees   ☒
- o 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.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age *(Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people)*	Positive	The Council will embed EDI into its decision-making processes, ensuring service areas are monitored, and reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for our diverse communities. This will include the use and monitoring of Equality Impact assessments on all strategic and policy decisions affecting, staff, service users and the community. This will include work on all aspects of Equality Monitoring, in particular the benefits of equality monitoring data in relation to the workforce. Engagement with residents and the Council's Disability Forum has highlighted issues of accessibility within our town centres. Most up to date evidence shows that older people (65+) are more likely to have a disability or long-term health condition, meaning they will be positively impacted by any work to town centre accessibility. We will ensure that through Equality Impact Assessments that these issues are addressed through delivery plans for our town centre improvements. By communicating with appropriate organisations we will aim to make communication available in accessible formats, including BSL, Easy Read and	**Staff Workforce data** 74.5% female and 25.5% male employees 5.7% are 16-24 18% are 25-34 23.9% are 35-44 27.1% are 45-54 21.5% are 55-64 3.8% are 65+ The Council hosts an external Disability Forum, attended by members of the community there have been 4 meetings in 2023 attended by 40 members of the public. Many of the members are older people and there is a representative from OPAG on the group. Engagement with them recognises the intersects between disability and age in respect of accessibility of transport and highways. 14% of people aged 65+ claim Attendance Allowance across Cwm Taf Morgannwg (payable to people over 65 who are so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that they need a great deal of health with personal care or supervision). ([Cwm Taf Needs Assessment, pg. 10](#)) Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for all strategic and policy decisions. 19

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		non-digital formats, we will aim for staff, service users and the community to have access to all Council messages. The Council have developed new training, including e-Learning modules covering a range of EDI issues to improve staff knowledge and awareness. There will be a mandatory roll out of these modules. By improving our recruitment and selection processes, we can aim to remove bias, promote the advantages of working for the Council and target underrepresented groups. Mentoring programmes across the Council will benefit underrepresented groups. Improved policy and mechanisms for reporting harassment will help to raise awareness of reporting and communicate a zero tolerance message. By reviewing our existing HR policies with the intention of removing bias, and introducing mandatory training, we can recruit and support a more diverse and inclusive workforce.	Equality Impact assessments have been carried out in the year 2022-2023. Full details on the decisions and cabinet reports are available here. 'Research shows that older people are most at risk of digital exclusion […]. [31% of over 75s do not have access to the internet at home, and 33% of over 75s do not use the internet at all, compared to 13% of 65-74s […]' Pg. 10, Access Denied: Older people's experiences of digital exclusion in Wales, Older People's Commissioner for Wales (2024). The Council have launched a standard equality monitoring toolkit and form for all service areas to use. The purpose of this form is to improve the quality of equality of data collected by the Council's services. 2 Equality Monitoring Awareness sessions have been carried out. These sessions highlighted the importance of accurate EDI monitoring as a tool to understanding our employees. They were attended by 30 staff. This kind of session will be run again in future. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has identified and recommended that that Welsh Government along with local authorities work on improving collection, analysis and reporting of equality data in general.

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			Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 The Council also host apprenticeship, graduate, and work experience schemes to attract skilled individuals to the Council. From 2018 -2023 2011 apprentices have been recruited. LINK TO ANNUAL REPORT Whilst the schedules are not targeted specifically to young people, the majority of successful applicants have been young people. Our objectives were developed after engaging with residents and our workforce, and listening to their feedback. Our staff told us that not everyone is having a positive experience at work, and told us specific examples of ageism. (SEP 2024-2028, pg. 16) Internal engagement took place as part of the Annual Workplace Survey, the Sexual Harassment Survey, the Listening Circle with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff as well as with engagement with our staff equality networks, service areas and staff through managers briefings, awareness sessions and equality clinics. **RCT Population Information.** Age of people in RCT: • 17.3% are aged 14 and under • 11.7% are 15-24

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			• 13% are 25-34 • 12.1% are 35-44 • 13.2% are 45-54 • 13.1% are 55-64 • 11% are 65-74 • 8.7% are 75 and over (Census 2021, Population Maps)
Disability *(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)*	Positive	As part of the SEP, we will be reviewing and improving, our Reasonable Adjustment scheme. By doing this we will aim to ensure that current and future staff are able to access the support they need easily, and feel supported in their employment. Engagement with residents and the Council's Disability Forum has highlighted issues of accessibility for disabled residents, and some older people, within our town centres. This includes issues with paving, public transport and Wheelchair accessible vehicles. We will ensure that through Equality Impact Assessments that these issues are addressed through delivery plans for our town centre improvements.	**RCT Staff Workforce data** • 2.5% self identified as disabled • 85.6% self identified as non disabled • 01.5 % preferred not to say • 11.8% information not held Staff data on disability is at 88% of staff. This indicates that further work is required on our Equality Monitoring recording to obtain a more accurate figure. This also highlights more work is required to ensure our recruitment processes are encouraging applicants from underrepresented groups. <mark>LINK TO ANNUAL REPORT</mark> We developed our objectives after engaging with and speaking to residents and staff. Managers have told us that they need more awareness to have conversations around disability and reasonable adjustments, and disabled members of staff highlighted that our

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		We are mindful of forthcoming recommendations from the Welsh Government's Disability Rights Taskforce, in particular on embedding and understanding the Social Model of Disability. When the Disability Rights Action Plan is released in 2024, we will incorporate it's recommendations into the SEP action plan. The Council will embed EDI into its decision-making processes, ensuring service areas are monitored, and reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for our diverse communities. This will include the use and monitoring of Equality Impact assessments on all strategic and policy decisions affecting, staff, service users and the community. This will include work on all aspects of Equality Monitoring, in particular the benefits of equality monitoring data in relation to the workforce. By improving our data monitoring and paying specific attention to improving data on pay gaps in Disability, Ethnicity and Gender, publishing our findings appropriately.	Reasonable Adjustments scheme can be improved. The BDF Great Big Workplace Adjustment Survey 2023 highlights that most participants felt the onus is on the disabled employee, rather than their employer, to initiate the process of reasonable adjustments. This is echoed by some of our employees. We've also heard about unnecessary delays for some employees in obtaining reasonable adjustments and the anxiety this can cause. The Council hosts an external Disability Forum, attended by members of the community there have been 4 meetings in 2023 attended by 40 members of the public. The Council has a designated members of the Senior Leadership as Disability and Carers Champion and Neurodiversity Champion The Council has Disability Confident Employer at Level 2 status. The Council has a Disability and Carers staff network. This staff network is a forum for employees to raise concerns and highlight issues faced by disabled employees.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		The Council have developed new training, including e-Learning modules covering a range of EDI issues to improve staff knowledge and awareness including specifically around disability. There is also a focus for the organisation to become more Autism Aware. By communicating with appropriate organisations we will aim to make communication available in accessible formats, including BSL, Easy Read and non-digital formats, we will aim for staff, service users and the community to have access to all Council messages. By improving our recruitment and selection processes, we can aim to remove bias, promote the advantages of working for the Council and target underrepresented groups. Mentoring programmes across the Council will benefit underrepresented groups. Improved policy and mechanisms for reporting harassment will help to raise awareness of reporting and communicate a zero tolerance message.	The Council also has a Neurodiversity staff network that provides peer support to neurodiverse employees and to guide the senior leadership team on relevant matters and to ensure awareness is maintained in this emerging field. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for all strategic and policy decisions. 19 Equality Impact assessments have been carried out in the year 2022-2023. Full details on the decisions and cabinet reports are available here. The Council have launched a standard equality monitoring toolkit and form for all service areas to use. The purpose of this form is to improve the quality of equality of data collected by the Council's services. 2 Equality Monitoring Awareness sessions have been carried out. These sessions highlighted the importance of accurate EDI monitoring as a tool to understanding our employees. They were attended by 30 staff. This kind of session will be run again in future. The disabled employment gap in Wales is 36.2% with disabled workers earning 15.1% less than non-disabled workers. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		By reviewing our existing HR policies with the intention of removing bias, and introducing mandatory training, we aim to recruit and support a more diverse and inclusive workforce.	**RCT Population Information** 23.8% of people in RCT are classified disabled under the Equality Act (2010). Of this group: • 33.8% of people say their day to day activities are limited in some way. RCT has a higher percentage of disabled people than the Wales average (21.6%). (Census 2021, Population Maps) 14% of people aged 65+ claim Attendance Allowance across Cwm Taf Morgannwg (payable to people over 65 who are so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that they need a great deal of health with personal care or supervision). (Cwm Taf Needs Assessment, pg. 10) The Equality and Human Rights Commission report 2018, highlights the disparity in the collection of data relating to Disability, Ethnicity and Gender and the requirements for employers to address this issue as a matter of good practice. Measuring and reporting on disability and ethnicity pay gaps 2018

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			SLT, Cabinet members, HR, Public Health and Protection and the Digital Improvement Office have attained Autism Awareness certification. An Equality clinic on inclusive language relating to disability was carried out and attended by 47 staff. Another clinic covering Reasonable Adjustments was also hosted for all staff and managers of RCT and was attended by 58 members of staff.
Gender Reassignment *(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)*	Positive	We have aimed to align the Strategic Equality Plan with the Welsh Government's LGBTQ+ Action plan. The Council have developed new training, including e-Learning modules covering a range of EDI issues to improve staff knowledge and awareness and specifically around gender identity. The Council will embed EDI into its decision-making processes, ensuring service areas are monitored, and reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for our diverse communities. This will include the use and monitoring of Equality Impact assessments on all strategic and policy decisions affecting, staff, service	**RCT Workforce Information** There is no information available due to the potential identification of individuals. We developed our objectives after engaging with and speaking to residents and staff. During manager briefings, managers have told us that they need more awareness about gender identity in the workplace. The Council has a range or relevant polices covering Gender Reassignment. We are working on a Transitioning at Work policy and a guide for HR officers to assist when advising managers in supporting employees that are transitioning, and our Dignity at Work policy.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		users and the community. This will include work on all aspects of Equality Monitoring, in particular the benefits of equality monitoring data in relation to the workforce. By improving our recruitment and selection processes, we can aim to remove bias, promote the advantages of working for the Council and target underrepresented groups. Mentoring programmes across the Council will benefit underrepresented groups. Improved policy and mechanisms for reporting harassment will help to raise awareness of reporting and communicate a zero tolerance message. By reviewing our existing HR policies with the intention of removing bias, and introducing mandatory training, we aim to recruit and support a more diverse and inclusive workforce.	The Council has a senior leadership LGBTQIA+ champion. The Council is a founding member of the Proud Councils partnership, which seeks to ensure a unified approach to supporting staff and residents that self-identify as from the LGBTQIA+ community, including those that fall under the category of Gender Reassignment. The Council is an active member of the Stonewall Cross Local Authority Education Group. This collective share support and best practice across England and Wales, relating to LGBTQIA+ young people in in education. The Council has an LGBTQIA+ staff network, Perthyn which provides support for employees that self-identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The network also advises on policy and matters relevant to sexual orientation. **RCT population Information.** 0.36% of people aged 16 and over in RCT have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth. (Census 2021, Population Maps)

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			In 2021/22, 62% of school children who identify as neither a boy nor a girl report having been bullied in the past couple of months, compared to 28% of girls and 34% of boys. Those who identify as neither a boy or girl report having poorer mental health. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 "However, trans people in Wales are afraid of facing discrimination in the workplace. A 2018 survey found almost half of trans respondents hid their gender identity at work and almost a third experienced negative comments from co-workers." Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023" Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for all strategic and policy decisions. 19 Equality Impact assessments have been carried out in the year 2022-2023. Full details on the decisions and cabinet reports are available here. The Council have launched a standard equality monitoring toolkit and form for all service areas to use. The purpose of this form is to improve the quality of equality of data collected by the Council's services. 2 Equality Monitoring

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			Awareness sessions have been carried out. These sessions highlighted the importance of accurate EDI monitoring as a tool to understanding our employees. They were attended by 30 staff. This kind of session will be run again in future.

The Equality and Human Rights commission has identified and recommended that that Welsh Government along with local authorities work on improving collection, analysis and reporting of equality data in general. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023

Recognising the intersections with our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant we support and sponsor "Served with Pride", a support network with Cardiff Council and the charity Fighting with Pride, for armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families, from the LGBTQIA+ Community, who may find integrating with other veterans or armed forces personnel and their families.

The Council has attained the Pride in Veterans Standard from the charity Fighting with Pride. This standard identifies that The Council understand the challenge faced by LGBTQIA+ armed forces personnel and veterans. |

Protected **Characteristics**	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			Staff awareness raising sessions have been introduced as part of the Equality Clinics. An example, the Personal Pronouns session had 40 attendees .
Marriage or Civil Partnership *(people who are married or in a civil partnership)*	Neutral	The SEP's actions do not directly relate to marriage and civil partnership. However due to the nature of the SEP and the intersecting nature of protected characteristics, all objectives and actions within the SEP will have a positive impact.	**RCT Population information.** 42.4% of people aged 16 years and over in RCT are married or in a registered civil partnership. Of this group, 41.3% in an opposite-sex marriage or civil partnership, and 0.3% are in a same-sex marriage or civil partnership. (Census 2021, Population Maps)
Pregnancy and Maternity *(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)*	Neutral	The SEP's actions do not directly relate to pregnancy or maternity. However due to the nature of the SEP and the intersecting nature of protected characteristics, all objectives and actions within the SEP will have a generally positive impact. The Council's new training on EDI topics, review of our recruitment and selection process, mechanisms for reporting harassment and HR policies with the	Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for all strategic and policy decisions. 19 Equality Impact assessments have been carried out in the year 2022-2023. Full details on the decisions and cabinet reports are available here. The Equality and Human Rights commission has identified and recommended that that Welsh Government along with local authorities

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		intention of removing bias, all have a cumulative positive impact on this protected characteristic.	work on improving collection, analysis and reporting of equality data in general. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023
Race *(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)*	Positive	We have aimed to align the Strategic Equality Plan with the Welsh Government's Anti- Racist Action plan. The Council will embed EDI into its decision-making processes, ensuring service areas are monitored, and reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for our diverse communities. This will include the use and monitoring of Equality Impact assessments on all strategic and policy decisions affecting, staff, service users and the community. This will include work on all aspects of Equality Monitoring, in particular the benefits of equality monitoring data in relation to the workforce. The Council have developed new training, including e-Learning modules covering a range of EDI issues to improve staff knowledge and awareness and specifically around Race.	All our objectives were developed by speaking to our residents and staff. We also held a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic listening circle for our employees in conjunction with Business in the Community. Our ethnic minority staff told us that many white colleagues have little understanding of factors that may impact upon them. Issues such as microaggressions, lack of cultural awareness and racism. (SEP 2024-2028, pg. 26) **RCT Workforce information** Information is held on 87% of the workforce. Staff identifying themselves as an ethnic minority other than White is 1.1% of the workforce. This is not representative of people living in RCT as the Census 2021 highlighted the ethnic population of RCT as; 96.7% of people identified as White.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		By improving our data monitoring and paying specific attention to improving data on pay gaps in Disability Ethnicity and Gender, publishing our findings appropriately. By improving our recruitment and selection processes, we can aim to remove bias, promote the advantages of working for the Council and target underrepresented groups. Mentoring programmes across the Council will benefit underrepresented groups. Improved policy and mechanisms for reporting harassment will help to raise awareness of reporting and communicate a zero tolerance message. By reviewing our existing HR policies with the intention of removing bias, and introducing mandatory training, we aim to recruit and support a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Having accurate data on pay gaps in Disability Ethnicity and Gender, will provide the evidence we need to address the disparity.	1.5% identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh. 1.0% identified as from Mixed or multiple ethnic groups. 0.4% identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean, or African. 0.3% identified themselves as from other ethnic groups. **National identity** 17.28% identified as British only 47.62% identified as Welsh only 1.92% identified as English only 0.03% identified as Cornish 0.37% identified as any other UK identity 0.78% identified as non UK identity 32.01% of staff information was not known There were 35 other distinct national identities were self identified. The Council has signed up to the Business in the Community Race at work Charter. Highlighting the need for work in recruiting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and work on the ethnicity Pay gap.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		Childrens Services have begun Cultural competency training with Diverse Cymru to attain Cultural Competence in Practice standard. The Multi Cultural guide is being reviewed and amended to bring it up to date.	The Council has a member of the Senior Leadership Team as Race Champion. The Council has a Spotlight staff network. This staff network is a forum for employees to raise concerns and highlight issues faced by ethnic minority employees. The Education and Inclusion team have developed an Anti-Racism action plan and launched an Anti-Racism Reflection Group and Anti Racism Monitoring Group. **RCT Population Information.** According to Census 2021 the ethnic population of RCT was identified as; 96.7% of people identified as White. 1.5% identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh. 1.0% identified as from Mixed or multiple ethnic groups. 0.4% identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean, or African. 0.3% identified themselves as from other ethnic groups. Census 2021

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			According to the Census 2021, the national identity breakdown of RCT is; • 11.5% had a British only identity • 69.8% had a Welsh only identity • 9.8% had a Welsh and British only identity • 3.9% had an English only identity • 0.8% had an English and British only identity • 1.3% had any other combination of UK identities • 2.3% had a non-UK only identity • 0.6% had both a UK and non-UK identity Census 2021 In Wales, ethnic minority workers are more likely to be in insecure employment (8.0%) than White British workers (14.2%) in 2019/20. Ethnic minority workers were also more likely to work in a low paid occupation. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 Ethnic minority groups in Wales are more likely to report experiences of discrimination and bullying in the workplace. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023

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			Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for all strategic and policy decisions. 19 Equality Impact assessments have been carried out in the year 2022-2023. Full details on the decisions and cabinet reports are available here. The Council have launched a standard equality monitoring toolkit and form for all service areas to use. The purpose of this form is to improve the quality of equality of data collected by the Council's services. 2 Equality Monitoring Awareness sessions have been carried out. These sessions highlighted the importance of accurate EDI monitoring as a tool to understanding our employees. They were attended by 30 staff. This kind of session will be run again in future. The Equality and Human Rights commission has identified and recommended that that Welsh Government along with local authorities work on improving collection, analysis and reporting of equality data in general. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 The Equality and Human Rights Commission report 2018, highlights the disparity in the

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			collection of data relating to Disability, Ethnicity and Gender and the requirements for employers to address this issue as a matter of good practice. [Measuring and reporting on disability and ethnicity pay gaps 2018](link) Customer complaints and internal engagement has cited a lack of cultural awareness.

Equality Clinics were held for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, attended by 18 staff and Black History Month Attended by 24 staff. |
| **Religion or Belief** *(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)* | Positive | The Council is aware that cultural awareness across the workforce needs to improve. We have been told this through engagement with our staff at the listening circle for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff.

By improving our recruitment and selection processes, we can remove bias, promote the advantages of working for the Council and target underrepresented groups.

The Council will embed EDI into its decision-making processes, ensuring service areas are monitored, and | **RCT Workforce Information**
• 27.6% of staff identified as having a religion
• 26% identified as Christian
• 1.27% identified as either Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Catholic or Other
• 3.85% preferred not to say
• 33.81% identified as having no religion
• 34.73% information not held

RCT Population Information.
• 56.2% of people in RCT have no religion.
• 36.4% of people in RCT are Christian. |

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		reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for our diverse communities. This will include the use and monitoring of Equality Impact assessments on all strategic and policy decisions affecting, staff, service users and the community. This will include work on all aspects of Equality Monitoring, in particular the benefits of equality monitoring data in relation to the workforce. Mentoring programmes across the Council will benefit underrepresented groups. Improved policy and mechanisms for reporting harassment will help to raise awareness of reporting and communicate a zero tolerance message. By reviewing our existing HR policies with the intention of removing bias, and introducing mandatory training, we aim to recruit and support a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Childrens Services have begun Cultural competency training with Diverse Cymru to attain Cultural Competence in Practice standard.	0.2% of people in RCT are Buddhist. 0.2% of people in RCT are Hindu. 0.6% of people in RCT are Muslim. 0.1% of people in RCT are Sikh. 0.5% of people in RCT reported "any other religion". (Census 2021, Population Maps) Religious Minorities (53% in 2019/20) and specifically Muslims (60% in 2019/20) were less likely to be employed than those with No Religious affiliation. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 Staff data on Religion is at 65% of staff. This indicates that further work is required on our Equality Monitoring recording to obtain a more accurate figure. This also highlights more work is required to ensure our recruitment processes are encouraging applicants from underrepresented groups. <mark>LINK TO ANNUAL REPORT</mark> Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for all strategic and policy decisions. 19 Equality Impact assessments have been carried out in the year 2022-2023. Full details

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		The Multi Cultural guide is being reviewed and amended to bring it up to date.	on the decisions and cabinet reports are available here. The Council have launched a standard equality monitoring toolkit and form for all service areas to use. The purpose of this form is to improve the quality of equality of data collected by the Council's services. 2 Equality Monitoring Awareness sessions have been carried out. These sessions highlighted the importance of accurate EDI monitoring as a tool to understanding our employees. They were attended by 30 staff. This kind of session will be run again in future. The Equality and Human Rights commission has identified and recommended that that Welsh Government along with local authorities work on improving collection, analysis and reporting of equality data in general. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 Customer complaints and internal engagement have cited a lack of cultural awareness.
Sex *(women and men, girls and boys)*	Positive	The Council will embed EDI into its decision-making processes, ensuring service areas are monitored, and reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for our diverse communities. This will	**RCT Staff Information** 74% female and 26% male employees (Workforce data)

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		include the use and monitoring of Equality Impact assessments on all strategic and policy decisions affecting, staff, service users and the community. This will include work on all aspects of Equality Monitoring, in particular the benefits of equality monitoring data in relation to the workforce. By improving our data monitoring and paying specific attention to improving data on pay gaps in Disability Ethnicity and Gender, publishing our findings appropriately. The Council have developed new training, including e-Learning modules covering a range of EDI issues to improve staff knowledge and awareness. By improving our recruitment and selection processes, we can aim to remove bias, promote the advantages of working for the Council and target underrepresented groups. Mentoring programmes across the Council will benefit underrepresented groups.	With most Council staff being female and 25% of staff are aged between 45 and 54, it is important for the Council to support staff that may be affected by the Menopause. The Council has introduced a Menopause Guide for staff and managers. The Council's Occupational Health Unit hosts monthly Menopause "Café's" to allow staff the opportunity to share lived experience, support and be supported by other staff experiencing the Menopause. **RCT population information**. 51.1% of people in RCT are female 48.9% of people in RCT are male (Census 2021, Population Maps) The gender pay gap on a median hourly full-time basis (excluding overtime) in April 2023 was 5.6% in Wales and 7.7% in the UK. In Wales the gap was unchanged and, in the UK, it has widened by 0.1 percentage points compared to the previous year. The gender pay gap on a median hourly basis (excluding overtime) for all employees in April 2023 was 11.8% in Wales and 14.3% in the UK. In Wales the gap widened by 0.9

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		Improved policy and mechanisms for reporting harassment will help to raise awareness of reporting and communicate a zero tolerance message. By reviewing our existing HR policies with the intention of removing bias, and introducing mandatory training, we aim to recruit and support a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Whilst the Women in Leadership programme was successful in raising awareness, more work needs to be considered to address the Gender Pay Gap. The Performance Review process is now being rolled out to all staff across the Council, providing an opportunity for women to discuss opportunities for development.	percentage points and in the UK, it has narrowed by 0.2 percentage points compared to the previous year. Welsh Government Annual Survey of hours and Earnings 2023 The Council's Gender Pay Gap was reduced in 2022 from 10.24% to 9.49%. The average hourly rate for female employees increased by 7.4% from £12.70 to £13.64 whereas the hourly rate for male employees increased by 6.1% from £14.38 to £15.25. (RCT Council Annual Report 2022-2023) The EHRC outlines it recommendations regarding the Gender pay gap in its report The Gender Pay Gap 2019. This highlights the requirement for accurate reporting. The Equality and Human Rights commission has identified and recommended that Welsh Government along with local authorities work on improving collection, analysis and reporting of equality data in general. Is Wales Fairer? 2023 Women are still more likely to be unpaid carers (12.0%) compared to men (9.0%) in 2021.

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023
Sexual Orientation *(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)*	Positive	We have aimed to align the Strategic Equality Plan with the Welsh Government's LGBTQ+ Action plan. The Council will embed EDI into its decision-making processes, ensuring service areas are monitored, and reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for our diverse communities. This will include the use and monitoring of Equality Impact assessments on all strategic and policy decisions affecting, staff, service users and the community. This will include work on all aspects of Equality Monitoring, in particular the benefits of equality monitoring data in relation to the workforce. The impacts on this protected characteristic are expected to be positive. The Council's new training on EDI topics, review of our recruitment and selection process, mechanisms for reporting harassment and HR policies with the intention of removing bias, all have a cumulative positive impact on this protected characteristic.	**RCT Workforce Information** 42.7% self identified as heterosexual 1.45% self identified as LGB 2.55% preferred not to say 53.3% information not held Staff data on sexual orientation is less than 50% of staff. This indicates that further work is required on our Equality Monitoring recording to obtain a more accurate figure. LINK TO ANNUAL REPORT **RCT Population information** Sexual orientation breakdown of people aged 16 and over in RCT: • 90.06% are straight or heterosexual. • 1.52% are gay or lesbian. • 1.11% are bisexual. • 0.21% have another sexual orientation. (Census 2021, Population Maps) Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for all strategic and policy decisions. 19 Equality Impact assessments have been carried out in the year 2022-2023. Full details

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			on the decisions and cabinet reports are available here. The Council have launched a standard equality monitoring toolkit and form for all service areas to use. The purpose of this form is to improve the quality of equality of data collected by the Council's services. 2 Equality Monitoring Awareness sessions have been carried out. These sessions highlighted the importance of accurate EDI monitoring as a tool to understanding our employees. They were attended by 30 staff. This kind of session will be run again in future. The Equality and Human Rights commission has identified and recommended that that Welsh Government along with local authorities work on improving collection, analysis and reporting of equality data in general. Is Wales Fairer? 2023 The Council has a senior leadership LGBTQIA+ champion. The Council has an LBGTQIA+ staff network, Perthyn which provides support for employees that self-identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The network also advises on policy and matters relevant to sexual orientation

Protected Characteristics	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			The Council is a founding member of the Proud Councils partnership, which seeks to ensure a unified approach to supporting staff and residents that self-identify as from the LGBTQIA+ community, including those that fall under the category of Gender Reassignment. The Council is an active member of the Stonewall Cross Local Authority Education Group. This collective share support and best practice across England and Wales, relating to LGBTQIA+ education and young people in general.

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 *(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)*	Neutral	The SEP's actions do not directly relate to a person's veteran status. However due to the nature of the SEP and the intersecting nature of protected characteristics, all objectives and actions	RCT population information. • 3.2% of people in RCT have previously served in the UK regular armed forces. • 0.7% of people in RCT have previously serviced in the UK reserve armed forces.

| | | within the SEP will have a generally positive impact.

The Council's new training on EDI topics, review of our recruitment and selection process, mechanisms for reporting harassment and HR policies with the intention of removing bias, all have a cumulative positive impact on the Armed Forces community. | • 0.2% of people in RCT have previously served in both regular and reserve UK armed forces.

(Census 2021, Population Maps)

The Council has signed the Armed forces Covenant, which is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community of Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Armed Forces Community based in the County Borough. The pledge recognises the dual respect between the Council, its partner agencies, its communities, and our Armed Forces Personnel (serving and retired) and their families.

In 2022 the Council signed up to the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Veterans. Aimed at all Service leavers, Veterans and Reservists who meet the required essential criteria for any vacancy set out in any Council employment pack, this initiative will guarantee the individuals an interview invitation for the position available, further cementing the relationship between the Council and its Armed Forces.

Valley Veterans is a veteran-led organisation, supported by the Council, based in the Rhondda Valley. Founded over 10 years ago as an informal support group for PTSD sufferers, with 140 members. Valley Veterans were consulted with directly for this Strategic Equality Plan. |

				Taf Ely Veterans is a veteran led organisation based in Rhydyfelin. and is supported by the Council, through our Armed Forces Covenant team. Taf Ely Veterans were consulted with directly for this Strategic plan and highlighted that awareness of veterans in the wider community was low and issues relating to both age and disability were important for veterans. The Council has attained the Pride in Veterans Standard from the forces LGBTQ+ charity, Fighting with Pride. This standard identifies that the Council understand the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ armed forces personnel and veterans. By Supporting "Served with Pride", the Council not only strengthens its support for LGBTQIA+ armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families, but to its overall commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.
Carers *(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)*	Positive		When looking at workplace action, carers rights, will be considered, to build upon the recent launch of the Working Carers Guide. The Council's new training on EDI topics, review of our recruitment and selection process, mechanisms for reporting harassment and HR policies with the intention of removing bias, all have a cumulative positive impact on those with caring responsibilities.	The Council has a senior leadership Disability and Carers champion. The Council has a disability and Carers staff network to support employees that have a disability or have a caring responsibility. In addition to the Council's EDI policy, the Council has launched a Working Carers Guide to support employees and managers when dealing with the challenges faced by employees who are working carers. Feedback

in the consultation report highlights that Working Carers rights needs to be included in the SEP action plan.

A Working Carers Support Plan has been introduced through the Working Carers Guidance to help employees track and manage their caring responsibilities with their working responsibilities.

RCT Population Information.

11.2% of people aged 5 years and over in RCT provide unpaid care. Of this group:

- 4.5% provide 19 or less hours unpaid care a week
- 2.5% provide 20 – 49 hours unpaid care a week
- 4.2% provide 50 or more hours unpaid care a week

(Census 2021, Population Maps)

Women are still more likely to be unpaid carers (12.0%) compared to men (9.0%) in 2021.

Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023

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: Gareth Mugridge

Position: Temporary Diversity & Inclusion Officer

Date: 26/02/2024

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

DUE TO THE NATURE OF THE STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN, ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY AND ASSESSMENT HAVE BEEN REVIEWED TOGETHER, LOOKING AT CUMALATIVE IMPACT.

Tudalen 584

Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/Income Poverty *(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)*	Neutral	Due to the nature of the Strategic Equality Plan, socio-economic outcomes for residents of RCT are not affected by this proposal. However, we recognise that RCT has a number of low socio-economic areas, including a number of areas with high levels of poverty. While the objectives in the SEP don't directly relate to those experiencing low income or income poverty, low or no wealth, material deprivation or socio-economic background, it's important to recognise the intersects and that there may be some wider positive impacts to these groups. Data shows that disabled people, ethnic minorities, young carers and single-parent households are more likely to live in poverty, meaning that the SEP's work may benefit the socio-economic status of those with these protected characteristics inadvertently.	According to the overall deprivation domain in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation: • RCT contains 27 LSOA's in the 0-10% most deprived LSOA's in Wales • Above works out to 17.5% of RCT • 1.4% of most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD Population Map: Overall) 31.3%of children in Wales live in Poverty EHRC Is Wales Fairer 2023 There are 8,200 young carers in Wales, who are more likely than others of their age to live in deprived areas and experience disruption to their education. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 89.1% of single-parent households in Wales are headed by women. Households most likely to be living in poverty are single parent households (38%). Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 31.1% of households in RCT are one-person households.
Low and / or No Wealth *(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)*			
Material Deprivation *(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical*			

goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)		Engagement with residents and the Council's Disability Forum has highlighted issues of accessibility for disabled residents, and some older people, within our town centres. This includes issues with paving, public transport and Wheelchair accessible vehicles. We will ensure that through Equality Impact Assessments that these issues are addressed through delivery plans for our town centre improvements. By ensuring that EDI objectives and robust Equality Impact Assessments are embedded throughout Council services, we hope to positively impact those experiencing area deprivation in RCT, by making sure that their local areas are accessible and safe spaces for all.	Of this group: 13.6 are one person aged 66 years and over 17.5% are one person aged less than 66 years 64% of households in RCT are single-family households. Of this group: 8.8% are single-family households of a lone parent family with dependent children 4.8% are single-family households of a lone parent family with non-dependent children. (Census 2021: Population Maps) Ethnic minorities in Wales are more likely to be living in poverty, as 40% of ethnic minority-headed households (excl. White minorities) were living in poverty, compared to 22% of White-headed households. Some ethnic minority groups are also more likely to experience homelessness and overcrowding and are less likely to be homeowners. Equality and Human Rights Commission Is Wales Fairer? 2023 "Poverty is consistently higher for disabled people – 32% of disabled people, compared to 20% of non-disabled people." "While more disabled people are working, they are still less likely to be able to access full-time work, and then must rely on income-related benefits to supplement income." Joseph Rowntree Foundation **WIMD Physical Environment:**
Socio-economic disadvantage **Area Deprivation** *(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)*			
Socio-economic background *(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)*			
Socio-economic disadvantage *(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)*			

"The purpose of this domain is to measure factors in the local area that may impact on the wellbeing or quality of like of those living in an area. The indicators are:

- Air concentrations
- Air emissions
- Proximity to waste disposal and industrial sites
- Flood risk

According to this definition:

- RCT contains 11 of the most deprived areas in Wales within the physical environment domain.
- This is 7.1% of RCT, and 0.6% of Wales.

(WIMD Population Map: Physical Environment)

WIMD: Access to Services:

RCT has 12 of the most deprived (0-20%) LSOAs in Wales in terms of access to services. 'Access to services' as a domain aims to "capture deprivation as a result of a household's inability to access a range of services considered necessary for day-to-day living." A full list of the services that are considered can be found on the WIMD website.

Of the people aged 16 and over in employment in RCT,

- 21.8% work mainly at or from home
- 4.5% travel using public transport
- 0.2% travel by taxi
- 66.7% travel by car, van or motorbike/scooter either as a driver or passenger
- 0.4% cycle to work
- 5.6% walk to work

			• 0.8% use other transport means (Census 2021, Population Maps) 23.8% of people in RCT are classified disabled under the Equality Act (2010). Of this group: • 33.8% of people say their day-to-day activities are limited in some way. **Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation Maps – "Deep rooted deprivation"** "Small areas (LSOAs) of 'deep-rooted' deprivation are those that have remained within the top 50 most deprived – roughly equal to the top 2.6% - small areas in Wales for the last five publications of WIMD ranks." (Stats Wales, Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, para 2) Of the LSOAs in RCT, 4 are considered to be "deep-rooted deprivation (StatsWales, Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, Deep-rooted deprivation)

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.**

8 positive impacts and 3 neutral impacts were identified. While neutral impacts were identified, all characteristics are expected to be positive due to the wide ranging scope of this Strategic Equality Plan. Many of the impacts are intersectional in nature which will further strengthen the effect of the Strategic Equality Plan.

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

Not applicable

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.

Information sources for this impact assessment include:

Consultation with Service users / staff and members of the public. Over 400 engaged in the consultation through face-to-face conversations and an online survey accessed through the Councils website.

Census 2021 – Population data on RCT and Wales.

Itrent Workforce Data – Information on RCT Staff workforce demographics.

Stats Wales – Welsh Index of Material Deprivation.

Equality and Human Rights Commission – Is Wales Fairer Report 2023.

Cwm Taf Needs assessment 2023 – Information on Disability and care needs.

Welsh Government Annual report on Hours and Earnings – Gender Pay data.

RCT Data Insights Data Library – Additional population information.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation – For information on Disability and poverty.

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.

An electronic consultation was used to canvas public opinion of the Strategic Equality Plan. This consultation was for a 10-week period from 12th December to 9th February 2024. It was accessible on the Councils consultation website and advertised on social media and posters in Libraries and Leisure centres. Over 400 people were engaged in this consultation with 86 online surveys received and 5 online "ideas" collected from the website.

In addition, Face-to-face consultations with RCT Disability Forum, Taf Ely Veterans, Valley Veterans and Valleys Ethnic Support Group. Additional lived experience qualitative data was obtained from Fighting with Pride – LGBT+ Veterans Charity and the RCT Council staff networks; Allies, Disability and Carers Network, ND Neurodiverse Network, Perthyn LGBTQIA+ Network and Spotlight.

Comments raised as part of this engagement have been added to the draft SEP to better reflect the needs of residents and staff that responded.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

SECTION 5 – MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING

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

The plan will be monitored for the duration of its 4 year period. As part of the SEP, an EDI Steering Group will be developed to monitor the progress of the action plan. Actions within individual service area delivery plans will be monitored though established performance management processes.

Progress of the SEP will be reported annually in the Annual Equality Report.

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

The Strategic Equality Plan will be reviewed in 2028. The evaluation will support the replacement Strategic Equality Plan.

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

Diversity and Inclusion Manager and Director of Human Resources

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

The results of the monitoring will be used and integrated in the creation of future Council strategies and delivery plans.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 7 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, 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 Equality

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.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows:-

The main focus of Impact Assessment is to assess the Strategic Equality Plan 2024- 2028 to ensure that it complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality duty, ensure that due regard has been paid to the Strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2028, that all protected characteristics have been given due regard in its creation. This includes the Socio-Economic impact of this proposal.

There are 8 positive impacts and 3 neutral impacts indicated in the protected characteristics section. Whilst the 3 neutral characteristics were identified, it is expected that due to the intersectional aspects of these characteristics and the broad aims of the Strategic Equality Plant 2024-2028, there will be an overall positive impact on these characteristics.

The socio-economic assessment has been categorised as having a neutral impact. However, engagement with residents and the Disability Forum, along with robust EDI policies and equality impact assessments embedded within the Council's service delivery, it is hoped the equality objectives will have a positive impact on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage...

SECTION 8 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Melanie Warburton

Position: Diversity & Inclusion Manager

Date: 28/02/2024

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: Richard Evans

Position: Director Human Resources

Date: 28/02/2024

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

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:	Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028
Department	Diversity & Inclusion
Service Director	Richard Evans
Officer Completing the WLIA	Gareth Mugridge & Jessica Morgan
Email	equality@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	01443 444529
Brief Description	This is the new RCT Council strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2028. It sets out how the Council will aim to meet our commitment to EDI and how we will meet legal obligations contained with the Equality Act 2010.
Date	
Please outline who this proposal affects? **(Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)**	Employees Service users Wider community

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What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	The Strategic Equality Plan sets out how the Council will aim to meet our commitment to EDI and how we will meet legal obligations contained with the Equality Act 2010.
	The Welsh language is not part of the Equality Act 2010, as it is covered by its own specific legislation, namely Welsh Language Act 1993 and Welsh Language Measure 2011, but it is not less important. As such, in Rhondda Cynon Taf, there is a particular statutory need to have regard to the Welsh Language, and there is a considerable tie-in between the council's wider approach to equalities and diversity and the commitment the council has towards the Welsh Language – and especially the need to ensure that people can use the language of their choice (Welsh or English) when dealing with the council. The requirements to Assess for Impact in relation to the nine characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010, applies equally to the Welsh Language via its on Impact Assessment process.
	The Strategic Equality Plan and subsequent Specific and General duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty ensure that due regard is given to individuals that are covered by the 9 Protected Characteristics specified in the Equality Act 2010. These are:
	Age Disability Gender reassignment Marriage and civil partnership Pregnancy and Maternity Race Religion Sex Sexual Orientation
	Although this plan does not directly relate to the Welsh language as language is not protected under the Equality Act 2010, we appreciate that in conjunction with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy and the legislation listed above, due regard will be given to the Welsh Language.
	The Strategic Equality Plan will be available in Welsh and English language versions.

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Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.	Although the Strategic Equality Plan will focus on underrepresented groups in our community through their specific protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010, this will not specifically affect or benefit Welsh language groups.
	However, due consideration has been given to the understanding of the intersectionality of the protected characteristics and the Welsh Language.
	For example.
	Easy Read formats in the Welsh and English languages for all documentation to ensure greater accessibility for all.
	Audio versions of the Strategic Equality Plan and associated documentation available in Welsh and English language versions for individuals who may need that option.
	Gender Identity terminology and the Welsh language is a complex challenge as the Welsh language itself is a gendered language. We are working with the Welsh Government, the Senedd and Stonewall Cymru in this area.
	Consideration about using both Welsh and English languages when communicating with all religious organisations to meet the needs of worshippers who may use the Welsh language.
	The ethnic population date for RCT is listed below, it is important remember there is a duty to ensure that the Welsh language is accessible to those requesting it, regardless of the requesters ethnicity.
Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned	Census 2021 states a population in RCT of 237,700.
	Census 2021 states that 14.1% of RCT respondents identified themselves as "can read, speak or write Welsh". Although the National Survey of Wales cites that up to 34% of adults in Wales can speak Welsh to some degree with 11% identifying themselves as fluent.
	Census 2021 states that 81.3% of RCT respondents identified themselves as "have no skills in Welsh".

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	The National Survey of Wales cites this number as 66% of respondents that have identified that they can speak no Welsh at all. When asked in 2019, for the National Survey of Wales, the following results were identified. 55% of Welsh speakers identified that they spoke Welsh to people outside their organisation at work. 61% of Welsh speakers identified that they spoke Welsh to other colleagues at work. 72% of respondents identified that they had Welsh speaking colleagues at work. 31% of respondents identified that their employer offered the option to learn Welsh at work. Within RCT Staff as of May 2023 the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report cites; 58.7% of staff identified themselves as having no Welsh language skills. 41.3 % of staff identified as having Welsh language skills to at least Level 1. 9.6% of staff identified as being fluent in the Welsh language. According to Census 2021 the ethnic population of RCT was identified as; 96.7% of people identified as White. 1.5% identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh. 1.0% identified as from Mixed or multiple ethnic groups. 0.4% identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean, or African. 0.3% identified themselves as from other ethnic groups. Census 2021 Within this ethnic mix there is a duty to ensure that the Welsh language is accessible to those requesting it. RCT Workforce information 29 distinct ethnicities have been self identified 85.44% identified as variation of White 0.20% identified as variation of Asian 0.19% identified as a variation of Black 0.61% identified as a variation of Mixed Race
Other relevant data or research	No other relevant data applies in this section.

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?**
Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language e.g. staff, residents and visitors The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work	Positive	Although the Strategic Equality Plan does not directly provide opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, consultation, and the plan itself will be available Welsh and English language versions. Consultation and communication will be available	Bilingual Strategic Equality Report, Bilingual consultation options. 14.7% of RCT residents identify as "can read, speak or write Welsh". Census 2021 However, the National Survey of Wales cites that up to 34%	No further action at this time. This will be monitored over the period of the consultation, prior to the finalisation of the Strategic Equality Plan and amended appropriately, as required.

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| | | in Welsh and English languages.

Consideration is also given to ensure the Welsh language versions of the Strategic Equality Plan is available in an accessible Welsh language format, including easy read and audio versions.

The Strategic Equality Plan is a high-level overview which will consist of independent action plans and Impact Assessments, these will support the wider Strategic Equality Plan. These independent action plans will contain and speak specifically to the Welsh Language Impacts in their respective areas. | of adults in Wales can speak Welsh to some degree

The Council's Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2023 cites 41.7% of staff identify as being able to speak Welsh to some degree. With 9.6% of staff identifying as fluent in the Welsh language.

All documentation produced is available in the Welsh and English languages at point of launch and other formats and languages upon request.

Advertising the consultation process will be available in both Welsh and English languages, and by allowing employees, service users and residents to respond in Welsh or English languages, will provide respondents the opportunity to respond in Welsh and use their Welsh language skills. | |

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

	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?
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	Neutral	The Strategic Equality Plan will be available to Welsh and English speakers at the same time. Employees, service users, and residents will also be able to discuss the contents of the Strategic Equality Plan in the Welsh language if they choose to do so. The Strategic Equality Plan is a high-level overview which will consist of independent action plans and Impact Assessments, these will support the wider Strategic Equality Plan. These independent action plans will contain and speak specifically to the Welsh Language Impacts in their respective areas.	Census 2021 14.7% of RCT resident respondents identified themselves as "can read, speak or write Welsh". However, the National Survey of Wales cites that up to 34% of adults in Wales can speak Welsh to some degree According to the Welsh Language standards Report 2023, 41.7% of staff identify as being able to speak Welsh to some degree. With 9.6% of staff identifying as fluent in the Welsh language.	No further action currently. This will be monitored over the period of the consultation, prior to the finalisation of the Strategic Equality Plan and amended appropriately, as required.
Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh	Positive	The Strategic Equality Plan will be available to Welsh and English speakers at the same time.	By ensuring that the Strategic Equality Plan, it's consultation and feedback are advertised and conducted in both Welsh and English language, will promote	No further action currently. This will be monitored over the period of the

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

| in everyday life in work and in the community

Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time | | The Strategic Equality Plan consultation and the plan itself will clearly state that it is available in Welsh, English and other formats upon request".

Employees, service users, and residents will also be able to discuss the contents of the Strategic Equality Plan in the Welsh language if they choose to do so.

The Strategic Equality Plan is a high-level overview which will consist of independent action plans and Impact Assessments, these will support the wider Strategic Equality Plan.
These independent action plans will contain and speak specifically to the Welsh Language Impacts in their respective areas. | the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

This action will also reinforce the Councils commitment to the promotion of the Welsh Language amongst its employees, service users and residents. | consultation, prior to the finalisation of the Strategic Equality Plan and amended appropriately, as required. |
|---|---|---|---|---|

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?
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. Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work	Positive	The Strategic Equality Plan will be available to Welsh and English speakers at the same time. Employees, service users, and residents will also be able to discuss the contents of the Strategic Equality Plan in the Welsh language if they choose to do so. Consultation and correspondence will be in both the Welsh and English languages. The Strategic Equality Plan is a high-level overview which will consist of independent action plans and Impact Assessments, these will support the wider Strategic Equality Plan. These independent action plans will contain and speak specifically to the Welsh Language Impacts in their respective areas.	Providing the Strategic Equality Plan, consultation, correspondence and allowing discussion in both the Welsh and English languages, at the same time fulfils the expectations of the Councils Welsh Language Standards.	No further action currently. This will be monitored over the period of the consultation, prior to the finalisation of the Strategic Equality Plan and amended appropriately, as required.

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| | Positive | The Strategic Equality Plan will be available to Welsh and English speakers at the same time.

Employees, service users, and residents will also be able to discuss the contents of the Strategic Equality Plan in the Welsh language if they choose to do so.

Consultation and correspondence will be in both the Welsh and English languages.

The Strategic Equality Plan is a high-level overview which will consist of independent action plans and Impact Assessments, these will support the wider Strategic Equality Plan. These independent action plans will contain and speak specifically to the Welsh Language Impacts in their respective areas. | The Councils Statutory Welsh Language Standards sets out the requirements for all Council communication and operation to not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

By ensuring adherence to these standards, and ensuring that all documentation, correspondence, discussion, and feedback are available in both Welsh and English languages, with Welsh being listed before English, and at the same time, will ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language. | No further action currently.

This will be monitored over the period of the consultation, prior to the finalisation of the Strategic Equality Plan and amended appropriately, as required. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language** | | | | |

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.

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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?
No further actions at this time.		

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?
No further actions at this time.	

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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
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

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Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

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

The Diversity & Inclusion team will be responsible for reviewing the schemes effectiveness. The results of the monitoring will be used and integrated in the creation of a new Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2028 – 2031.

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 -

The Strategic Equality Plan sets out the Councils equality actions for the next 4 years. In line with the Welsh Governments Welsh language standards, and the Strategic Equality Plan, all communications, including email, digital, and in – person, will be provided in Welsh and English at the same time. This will include any Easy Read versions of communication. In the case of in-person events, these will be monitored and assessed and will be conducted in the Welsh language as outlined in the Welsh language Standards.

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Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Gareth Mugridge	Service Director Name:	Richard Evans – Director Human Resources
Position	Temporary Diversity & Inclusion Officer	**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		**Date**	

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF

29 February 2024

Re: Pre-Scrutiny of the Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23 and Draft Strategic Equality Plan

Dear Cabinet Members

I have been instructed by this Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to the Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23 and the Draft Strategic Equality Plan.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the arrangements at its meeting on the 26th February 2024. Members undertook a constructive discussion in respect of the proposals. The Members' comments are summarised below.

Draft Annual Equality Report 2022-23

The Committee welcomed and supported the report and during discussions considered the possibility of poverty and class being discriminated against which is a concern. Therefore members *recommended* that this is considered as part of the reporting process in future reports.

In analysing data throughout the report, Members were pleased to note the improved outcomes in a number of areas including the Healthy Relationship Programme. Members *recommended* that the data did not suggest improved outcomes following the project. Members were reassured to hear however that this was not the case and outcomes were positive. Members also noted the Equality monitoring data around national identity and ethnicity and *recommended* more commentary and summary around ethnicity, particularly including information around how the Council is widening recruitment practices to ensure we are an attractive employer to the global majority.

Strategic Equality Plan

Members welcomed the Strategic Equality Plan which was supported by all Members of the Committee. Members thanked the officers for their commitment on the implementation of the plan and were reassured to see a detailed action plan outlining its implementation. Members *recommended* that Scrutiny revisit this item in the future to measure its effectiveness and implementation, particularly in relation to the rollout and delivery of the mandatory training to all staff which they recognised is a vast undertaking.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were grateful for the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the above reports. A copy of the recording of the meeting can be found here

Yours sincerely,

Christian Hanagan
Service Director Democratic Services and Communications
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20th MARCH 2024

WORKING TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides information to Members in relation to the Council's continued commitment to being an Age-Friendly Community and its proposed application to the become a member of the World Health Organisations Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet consider the information within this report and approves the submission of an application to become a member of the World Health Organisations Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To inform Members of the Council's continued work in recognition of RCT as an Age-Friendly Community.

3.2 To gain recognition for RCT as an Age-Friendly Community through submitting an application to become a member of the World Health Organisations Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

3.3 To continue to develop community resilience, recognising that an age-friendly community supports each other, and creates community-based opportunities for early intervention and prevention.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Welsh Government's Strategy for an Ageing Society (2021) sets out a vision for an Age Friendly Wales with 4 identified aims:
   - Enhancing wellbeing.

- Improving local services and environments.
- Building and retaining people's own capacity.
- Tackling age-related poverty.

4.2   In 2013, the Council committed to collaborate on developing policy and to be proactive to create age friendly communities by 2020 in signing the Dublin Declaration.

4.3   As a result, a Cwm Taf Ageing Well in Wales Plan was produced and revised in 2019, setting out the vision for Cwm Taf to be a good place to grow older for everyone, where Older People can continue to do the things that are important to them.

4.4   Recent discussions at the RCT Community Support Steering Group, consisting of membership from public and third sector partners, including the Older People's Advisory Group Chair, have raised the opportunity for RCT to be recognised as an Age-Friendly Community by the World Health Organisation.

4.5   Furthermore, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales is supportive of the work in RCT and considers that an application to become a member of the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities has merit and reflects the significant progress being made in RCT.

4.6   Progress to date has included significant activities such as piloting Cwm Taf Morgannwg's Dementia Listening Project and events such as Turning Ponty Blue, in support of Dementia Action Week.

5.   WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

5.1   The World Health Organisation Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities, and organisations across the world with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow.

5.2   Age-friendly cities and communities improve access to key services and enable people of all ages to be and do what they value through action across eight domains:
- Housing.
- Transportation.
- Outdoor spaces and buildings.
- Community support and health services.
- Communication and information.
- Social participation.
- Respect and social inclusion.
- Civil participation and employment.

5.3 There are currently three existing Welsh members of the network: Cardiff City Council, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Isle of Anglesey County Council and Flintshire County Council and other local authorities are working towards membership.

5.4 Considering the proposed new Corporate Plan, becoming a member of the global network will meet the People and Communities Wellbeing objective, supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; and also increasing community resilience through shared learning and opportunities to explore innovative and practical approaches to age-friendly community development with our community partners.

5.5 The Older Persons Co-ordinator within the Community Development Team, has prepared an application to become a member of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, which will highlight RCT as an excellent place to live well and age well, celebrating our older population, and ensuring that we are committed to older people being valued and active participants in our communities.

5.6 The vision for RCT stated within the application (see Appendix A) is that "**Rhondda, Cynon Taf is a great place to grow older and a place where older people feel valued, heard, included and respected, and can get out and about; stay informed; afford to do things they want to do; and lead healthy and active lives.**"

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

6.1 There are no implications as a direct result of this report.

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 / INVOLVEMENT

8.1 There are no consultation implications as a direct result of this report; however, it should be noted that developments to date and those in future, rely upon significant involvement from all key partners and agencies.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

10.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS *OR* LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1   There are no legal implications aligned to the recommendations in the report.

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

11.1   Becoming an Age-Friendly Community contributes to all four of the Wellbeing Objectives within the new Corporate Plan:

People and Communities: supporting and empowering residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives; whereby they can take care of their health and wellbeing so that they can live healthy and independently; with access to affordable, good quality and energy efficient homes; and safeguarding vulnerable residents of all ages.
Work and Business: helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy, with thriving town centres and a well-connected County Borough.
Nature and the Environment: a green and clean RCT that improved and protects our environment and nature, using Natures Assets to benefit our residents and communities.
Culture and Heritage: recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future where culture and heritage are vibrant, preserved and recognised as enhancing well-being,

11.2   The work in this area reflects the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, with age-friendly communities based on long-term considerations and focus on preventative and precautionary action, contributing specifically to the Resilience and Global Responsibility Goals of the Act.

12.   STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

12.1   The Age-Friendly Communities work takes place across the whole of the County Borough.

13.   CONCLUSIONS

13.1   Becoming a member of the World Health Organisations Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities highlights Rhondda Cynon Taf as an excellent place to live well and age well, celebrating our older population, and ensuring that we are committed to older people being valued and active participants in our communities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2024

WORKING TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Background Papers:

None

Officer to contact:

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

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Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Working Towards an Age Friendly Rhondda Cynon Taf

2024

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

As the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, I fully acknowledge, and appreciate the responsibilities of statutory services to support older people to stay well and at home in their communities.

I also recognise the whole range of other factors, including community support, that are required to maintain the health and wellbeing of our older residents, as identified by the World Health Organization in the eight age friendly domains.

Within Rhondda Cynon Taf we are proud to work with our older people in communities across the county borough, to support older residents to establish and sustain age friendly activity which enhances wellbeing and enables residents to age well. Information gathered from the most recent UK census data in 2021 indicates that there are 237, 658 people living in Rhondda Cynon Taf of which **46,625** are aged 65+, with 1,796 of these aged over 90 years.

The population as a whole, in Rhondda Cynon Taf, is predicted to increase by around 4.5% over the next 20 years according to the most recent UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) predictions made in 2018.

Notably, we are expecting a continuous increase in the number of people aged 65 years and over, with a predicted 21% increase, with the most significant rise in those aged 90 years and over predicted at more than 80%

The UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) predictions suggest that by 2040 there is likely to be over 57,500 people aged 65 and over, 3,300 of which could be 90 plus living in Rhondda, Cynon, Taf.

Such an increase will unavoidably see a growth in demand for support services, communities and inevitably on individual residents, so we are taking positive steps to ensure we have resourceful and resilient communities that are able to respond.

This is in line with the predictions for the whole of Wales where we continue to see an increase in the numbers of people living longer. 2021 National Census data confirms over one-fifth (21.3%) of the Welsh population in 2021 (662,000) were aged 65 years and over, up from 18.4% (562,544) in 2011. The size of the population aged 90 years and over (29,700, 1.0%) has increased since 2011, when 25,200, 0.8%, were aged 90 years and over.

In response and launched in 2021, the Welsh Government Strategy for an Ageing Society sets out a vision for an Age Friendly Wales, with four identified aims:

- ❖ enhancing well-being;
- ❖ improving local services and environments;
- ❖ building and retaining people's own capability;
- ❖ tackling age-related poverty.

This was further supported by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales's priorities which include ageing well and the development of age friendly communities across Wales.

An ageing, healthy population that have a sense of belonging and which are supported by their community is something to be celebrated, and I am delighted to present the application for an Age-Friendly Rhondda, Cynon Taf on behalf of those communities.

The application, and supporting documents, showcase the outstanding work that has already taken place, and which will continue in our communities, confirming our commitment to working with partners in order to make Rhondda Cynon Taf a better place for us all as we grow older.
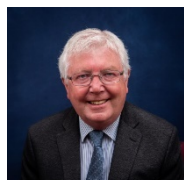
Councillor Caple, Cabinet Member and Age Friendly Champion, Rhondda Cynon Taf

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Purpose of the Document

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This document has been prepared in support of Rhondda, Cynon Taf's application to join the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. It provides background information on local age friendly developments in Rhondda, Cynon Taf together with an overview of existing age friendly initiatives, services and activities under each of the WHO domains. It further shares information on the engagement methods, demonstrating how older people have been involved and identifies key areas for action to improve age friendly provision across the local authority geographic footprint taking stock of feedback from local residents.

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Contents

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Section 1: Age Friendly Vision

Rhondda, Cynon Taf is a great place to grow older and a place where older people feel valued, heard, included and respected, and can get out and about; stay informed; afford to do things they want to do; and lead healthy and active lives.

The World Health Organisation Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities, and organisations across the world with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow older.

Rhondda Cynon Taf hopes that by joining the Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities this will bring opportunities to:

- ❖ Share good practice and inspire other communities

- ❖ Connect with other Age Friendly Cities and Communities across the globe to share information, knowledge, and experience

- ❖ Learn from others and discover innovative evidence-based solutions to challenges faced by older people

All with the aim of improving the lives of older people across Rhondda Cynon Taf

Section 2: Background and Context

In Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) the Local Authority is proud to support and value Older People, working in close partnership with other agencies and organisations since 2004.

Since that time, and following the development of The Strategy for Older People in Wales, the appointment of an elected member as Older Persons Champion, a dedicated Older Persons Coordinator was appointed to develop this area of work, funded by the Local Authority continuously reaffirming the commitment for improvement.

5

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's signed the [Dublin Declaration](#) in 2015, which was the first and significant formal step to committing to developing Age Friendly communities.

A [Local Ageing Well Plan](#) has been produced and was revised in 2019. The Plan covers the Cwm Taf region, which includes Rhondda, Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil local authority areas.

The Ageing Well plan identifies key actions for delivery across five priority areas (defined by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales) that are essential for supporting older people to age well. The plan puts in place positive actions which support the development of age-friendly activities across RCT. This was further complemented with the support of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG) which overarches five local 50+ Forums which were developed from 2004 and continue to thrive today acting as a key voice of older people in our local communities.

This work continues to be a priority for the Council and its partners, supporting Welsh Government's vision to create an age friendly Wales.

In 2021, the role of the Older Persons Coordinator was refocussed onto ensuring integration was assured for older people in terms of the RCTCBC Community Resilience Hub, Neighbourhood Network and Community Grant model.

At the current time there are seven Community Resilience Hubs across the County Borough that each reflect a recognisable community in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Each Community Resilience Hub has at least one Neighbourhood Network which is a collection of stakeholders, organisations large and small, active in each area. Neighbourhood Networks encourage sharing of good practice and resources, identifying local need and creating local action plans.

The integration of Age Friendly Communities has seen increased membership of Older People's groups, such as 50+ forums, within Neighbourhood Networks. Neighbourhood Networks have a fair, proportionate representation of Older People's groups within these forums which ensures Older People's voices are heard, considered, and acted upon.

Members of the Neighbourhood Networks have access to a suite of grant funding that is set aside for not-for-profit community groups. These grants support local activity and encourage participation and innovation. Community Grants, both large and small, are available throughout the year. Older People's groups are supported to apply, manage, and report on community grants in a way that is bespoke to individual circumstances. This is especially important where group leaders are digitally excluded. In total during 2022-23, **66 Council managed grants** totalling **£147,976.00** were awarded to groups and organisations supporting **3274** older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Similar levels of funding continue to be available to groups in 2023/24.

Older People in RCT now have increased access to:

- ❖ A single point of contact within communities to access good quality information, advice, and assistance.
- ❖ Encouragement to stay active and connected.
- ❖ Opportunities to improve their mental health, well-being, and confidence.
- ❖ Opportunities to improve or maintain their physical health.
- ❖ Opportunities to seek support and be signposted to other services as appropriate.
- ❖ Community spaces to meet, share interests and socialise, thereby tackling loneliness and social isolation.

In 2023, partners including older people and the Local Authority felt RCT were in a strong enough position to apply to the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

Section 3: Who is involved?

The development of Age Friendly Communities in RCT has involvement and support from a plethora of stakeholders, including local communities and older individual residents.

There are five **50+ Forums** across RCT, made up of representatives of smaller community based Older People's groups within each geographical area, which together form a representative and trusted voice of older people.

Members from each of the 50+ forums are nominated to sit on the **Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG)** for collective representation of older people across the county.

Membership of OPAG also includes RCT's Age-Friendly Older Persons Champion, Cllr Gareth Capel, the Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care.

OPAG has a Service Level Agreement with the Councils Consultation Team and are the go-to voice for key consultations that impact older people. Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board regularly consult OPAG on service changes. OPAG also has representation on the Adult Social Services Scrutiny Committee within the Council.

OPAG represents RCT on a Wales-wide level, for example, on the Cymru Older People's Alliance.

The established **Neighbourhood Networks** membership includes community stakeholders, community groups and service providers. Neighbourhood Networks meet monthly to have conversations, share good practice and resources and identify and plan actions against locally identified need. Current membership of Neighbourhood Networks in RCT is **134 organisations**.

OPAG and the 50+ Forums have been encouraged and supported to join Neighbourhood Networks, which has ensured Older People's voices are being championed and heard when local plans are being made. This ensures older people

are integral to the development and coproduction of an age friendly Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Members of Neighbourhood Networks have access to a suite of available grant funding opportunities including Neighbourhood Network Fund, Winter Hardship Fund and the UKG Shared Prosperity Fund RCTCBC Community Grant. Many of these groups have successfully bid and were awarded funding enabling them to run projects for the benefit of older people in their local community.

Neighbourhood Networks report to the RCT Community Support Steering Group a partnership of over 20 organisations, public, voluntary and third sector who meet routinely to work together to support community endeavour and consider issues.

The **Community Support Steering Group (CSSG)** was initially established in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, when they coordinated a response to support vulnerable residents including older people who were shielding providing assistance with shopping, essential medicines etc. The current purpose of the group across RCT is to:

- Monitor demand for resident support and respond to any pressures/changes in national guidance which affects residents across RCT.
- Foster collaboration to address issues of concern.
- Identify opportunities to work in partnership on funding bids and applications that will support community resilience across RCT.

The CSSG meets bi-monthly where Age Friendly Communities is a standing agenda item. The following organisations are represented on the CSSG:

❖ Age Connect Morgannwg
❖ Care and Repair
❖ Citizens' Advice
❖ Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board
❖ Department for Work and Pensions
❖ Foodbanks/Trussell Trust
❖ Home start
❖ Interlink
❖ Probation Service
❖ Public Health Wales
❖ Regional Commissioning Unit
❖ Registered Social Landlords
❖ Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
❖ South Wales Police

❖ OPAG

The CSSG reports out the Public Service Board (PSB) ensuring that key messages from all those involved in Neighbourhood Networks are heard.

Utilising engagement information from a range of existing sources including the RCT Together Residents Survey, consultation activity undertaken in respect of both the Wellbeing Assessment and Population Needs Assessment a broad picture of existing age friendly activity, initiatives and services has been identified. This information has been further enhanced by specific engagement activity undertaken across the Rhondda Cynon Taf area in support of our age friendly communities developments. To capture information from key stakeholders, our Community Support Steering Group was approached to complete age friendly proformas detailing specific initiatives and services they are involved in which support older people in line with the principles of age friendly communities. In addition, the further partners including PSB partners and those linked with transport have also been directly engaged in this process.

A key focus of our engagement activity has of course been with older people themselves, as mentioned the approach has included our day to day engagement with Neighbourhood Networks, the Older Persons Advisory Group – which includes our Age-Friendly Older Persons Champion, Cllr Gareth Capel, the Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care, 50+ Forums and Community Groups for older people.

Recent **Local Engagement** events have taken place across RCT during 2023 including International Day for Older Persons, Dementia Action Week, Dementia Listening Campaign. Other events linked to the Dementia Care Pathway of Standards included the 'Hackathon' and a "Hear our Voices" performance where participant stories were shared via a range of creative means including drama, song, art and poetry.

We have also been keen to ensure the sometimes lesser-heard voices of older people, for example those who don't engage with formal groups and activities, are represented. In pursuit of this we continue to work closely with partners within the housing sector, including Care and Repair who support older people in their own homes, Extra Care Housing providers and Registered Social Landlords with Sheltered and Independent Living Schemes with a view to utilise their existing engagement tools continuing to feed this into our work.

The partnerships in RCT are keen to ensure consultation at events is followed by feedback and action. For example, the Dementia Listening Campaign identified a lack of local activities and support for people living with Dementia and their carers. Using this evidence, a pilot project has been developed and funded by the Regional Integration Fund, the Community Dementia Prevention Programme, this programme is led by the Older Persons Coordinator for RCTCBC, as a result of our active role in Cwm Taf Morgannwg's Dementia Standards workstream. This has led to 20 community organisations receiving funding to put on opportunities for social interaction and physical activity which align with the six simple steps outlined in the

Dementia Action Plan for Wales. This funding also includes Dementia Friends information sessions which has raised awareness of dementia across RCT.

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Section 4: Wellbeing

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[The Wellbeing of Future Generations 2015 Wales Act](#) places a duty on public bodies to work collaboratively to improve the environmental, economic, cultural and social wellbeing of their region by setting objectives that will achieve the Wellbeing goals outlined in the Act.

This is achieved using the sustainable development principle, ensuring that the future impacts of decisions made are fully considered. In the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, which covers Rhondda Cynon Taf alongside Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend the following five ways of working have been adopted.
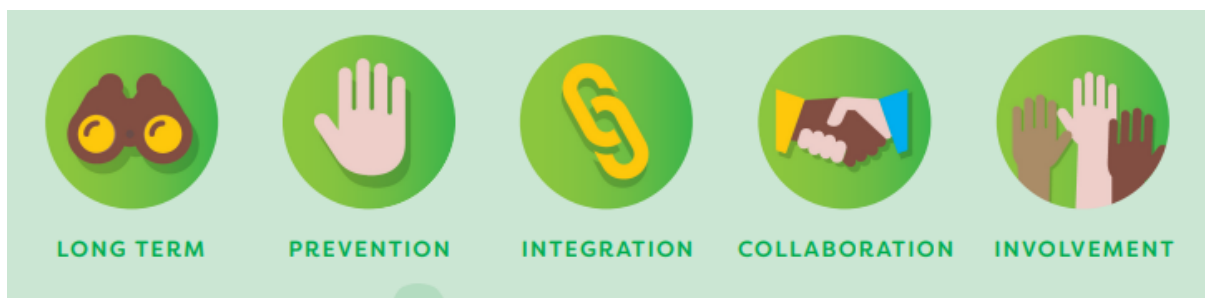
The new [Wellbeing Plan](#) for the area has the overarching theme of a More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Wellbeing Assessment provides the evidence base for the new plan highlighting that not all communities within the CTM area have fair access to opportunities and face different challenges that impact wellbeing.

The plan identifies two objectives which partners will achieve together to bring about A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Healthy Local Neighbourhoods – where our communities are inclusive, feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported, and valued.

❖ Supporting communities to be inclusive

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- ❖ Promoting healthier lifestyles in communities
- ❖ Building a sense of belonging in communities
- ❖ Providing help so people can access support, services, and opportunities

Sustainable and Resilient Local Neighbourhoods - A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities. To do this we must value, manage and enjoy our green and blue spaces responsibly.

- ❖ Protecting and enjoying our natural green and blue spaces responsibly
- ❖ Increasing opportunities for active travel and using public transport
- ❖ Reducing carbon use and waste
- ❖ Tackling Climate Change and its impact

In pursuit of these objectives, as was the case with original 2017 Wellbeing Plan for the region, which identified a cross cutting theme of Tackling Loneliness and Isolation to support Thriving Communities, Healthy People and a Strong Economy, a number of improvements will be made which will positively contribute to Age Friendly developments in the area, aligning with the World Health Organisation's domains.

RCT Council also has it's own priorities, developed and presented in the Making a Difference' Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the new draft summary 'Working with our Communities' Corporate Plan 2024-2030 which is currently being consulted upon.

The 2024-2030 plan sets out four Well-being Objectives:

1. **PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES** - *Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. This includes:*
   - Children and young people have the best start in life and can learn and grow safely,
   - Residents can take care of their health & well-being so they can live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives,
   - Residents having access to affordable, good quality and energy efficient homes,
   - Safeguarding our most vulnerable residents of all ages, providing protection, care and support when they need it most so that they can maximise their potential.

2. **WORK AND BUSINESS** - *Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy. This includes:*
   - Supporting people into rewarding and secure work,
   - Supporting businesses to prosper and be sustainable,
   - Thriving town centres, and
   - A well-connected County Borough.

3. **NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT** - *A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature. This includes:*
   - Protecting and enhancing the natural environment,
   - Clean, Safe and Sustainable RCT,
   - Using Natures Assets to benefit people and communities.

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4. **CULTURE AND HERITAGE** - *Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future where:*
   - Culture and heritage is vibrant, and difference is celebrated in strong communities that enhance well-being.
   - We celebrate and preserve the cultural, industrial and sporting heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Section 5: Age Friendly Domains

The World Health Organisation has identified eight domains that encompass all aspects of community life:

- ❖ outdoor spaces and buildings
- ❖ transport
- ❖ housing
- ❖ social participation
- ❖ respect and social inclusion
- ❖ civic participation and employment
- ❖ communication and information
- ❖ community support and health services

A brief description of each domain is provided below:

Civic Participation and Employment Volunteering	Training, Employment, volunteering and valuing older people's contributions
Communication and Information	Access to good information, jargon free, access to assistive technology and opportunities for digital inclusion or information in a range of formats where digital is not accessible to individuals.
Community Support and Health Services	Accessible and affordable health and social care which supports older people to remain healthy, independent and active.
Housing	Safe, affordable, and appropriately designed, with low maintenance, and access to the wider community
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Safe, appropriate access. Clean and green, adequate provision to rest, safe pavements, roads, footpaths, cycleways and buildings, which are free from trip hazards. The provision of accessible toilets, including beyond retail hours.

Respect and Social Inclusion	Ageism should not be present, intergenerational opportunities are available, older people are economically included
Social Participation	A good range of appropriate activities which integrate with the wider community, and which cater for a wide range of interests
Transport	Available, accessible, affordable, reliable, integrated, safe and comfortable. Parking, Blue badges, Public and Community provision, Taxis.

Many of these domains will interact and complement one another, often with no clear-cut distinctions. For example, improvements within the domain of outdoor spaces and buildings, such as improvements to roads and pavements to make communities more walking or cycling-friendly will also positively impact the transportation domain. Other examples include volunteering, which has obvious links to Civic Participation and Employment but can equally contribute to other domains including Social Participation and Community Support and Health. Identifying age-friendly domains encourages people to consider an age-friendly community in the broadest sense.

The following sections will explore each of the age-friendly domains further highlighting existing examples of good practice in our communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf, providing a baseline assessment whilst also identifying areas where improvements can be made.

A range of examples are included, some are community led and delivered with local organisations often working in partnership, others are initiated by public or third sector agencies. Good practice community based examples are included, these have been grouped by age friendly domain although often activities will cut across domains and bring benefits in multiple domains. Please note that this assessment aims to give an overview and as such will not detail all age-friendly activity currently available in the area, the Connect RCT website which is managed by our Community Voluntary Council Interlink RCT, who the council work closely with, details additional examples, including community activities and volunteering opportunities. Alongside the Dewis Cymru website also acting as a useful resource for the range of local services available. In addition, as this work continues to progress our web presence and an Age Friendly RCT Newsletter will be developed to reflect existing and newly developed examples to showcase the good practice across the age friendly domains which is available in our communities whilst ensuring this information is accessible to older people in a range of formats.

Section 6: Domain 1: CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

What is our Shared Age Friendly Vision within this domain?

- ❖ Older people have economic security, ensuring their independence is maintained.
- ❖ Older people have opportunities where they can continue to utilise their skills and experience, or to build and develop new skills.
- ❖ Older people have opportunities to play an active role in their communities where desired, including socially or via volunteering for example.

Overview

Older people do not simply stop contributing to their communities when they retire, or reach 60 years of age. In Rhondda Cynon Taf many older people continue to provide unpaid and voluntary work for their families and the wider community. Data from the ONS reveals that there are also increasing numbers of older people who remain in paid employment beyond State Pension Age. Given the current economic situation and the increased burden on residents due to the cost of living crisis older people may find themselves delaying retirement and having to remain in work for longer. Welsh Government data on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation confirms that Rhondda Cynon Taf is an area with higher levels of deprivation, with more of our population (27%) living in these areas compared to the Welsh average (19.5%). We have 6785 local residents in receipt of pension credit (UK Government Department for Work and Pensions data), and more than 15% of our residents live in fuel poverty (Welsh Government data). [Welsh Government](#) advise that poverty in later life is often linked to high levels of social isolation and ill health.

For other older people they may continue working because they feel a sense of fulfilment and purpose benefitting from the social connections provided by work, as mentioned others may continue for financial reasons. In an age-friendly community there are opportunities for older people to continue to be part of their community, through paid or voluntary work if they wish. Another feature of this domain is continued learning and training opportunities. Adult Community Learning can be a great means for older people to improve their skills to re-enter the job market, to learn something new or of interest, to provide an opportunity to connect with new people, or simply a means of staying busy during retirement. In Rhondda Cynon Taf more than 820 over 50s enrolled in Adult Community Learning Courses during 2022-23.

Older people bring with them a life's worth of experience and knowledge, something which is often overlooked and underappreciated. Recognising older people's experiences, knowledge and value goes hand in hand with tackling age discrimination which is a priority for the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and underpins the Welsh Government Strategy for an Ageing Society.

What is working well in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Community-based examples

In Rhondda Cynon Taf there are many opportunities for older people to participate in volunteering or adult learning activities. Older people's groups are supported to take up such opportunities for their members in their own communities as well as at central venues like RCT's LifeLong Learning Centre in Garth Olwg and at sessions facilitated by the [RCT Work and Skills Team](#) who can support older people to access employment opportunities and who also host regular Digital Fridays sessions in venues across the county. Between April 2023 and December 2023 more than 500 individuals over the age of 50 were supported by their programmes. There are also civic participation opportunities for older people via our established 50+ Forums and Older Persons Advisory Group.

U3a opportunities are available in communities across RCT, including Tonyrefail, Aberdare, Church Village and Pontyclun where there are various interest groups available for older people to enjoy, providing opportunities to learn for fun, to explore new ideas, skills and interests alongside like-minded people. Local opportunities include art, history, poetry, languages, book club and craft as well as organsied trips and social opportunities for members to enjoy. Recent feedback from U3a members includes: **"You're never too old to learn, it's all about mindset – I'm not going to give up just because I've reached a certain age!"**

OPAG / 50+ Forums – the Forums meet across RCT in five local communities to ensure older people have the information they need to enable them to live healthy and active lives – providing guest speakers for a range of partnership organisations from public and third sector. These speakers provide advice, support and can signpost to a range of services. The five forums work under the umbrella of the Older Persons Advisory Group which has links with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Cymru Older People's Alliance and the Senedd. OPAG work closely with the consultation team in both the local authority and the UHB ensuring older people's voices are represented in relevant consultations which affect the lives of older people.

Bryncynon Strategy – in one year 34 volunteers, around 40% of who are over the age of 50, signed up to take on a range of roles and responsibilities, the volunteers are key to the success of this organisation – they are valued, respected and looked after by the organisation, receiving meals whilst on duty, having access to volunteer events, they also receive uniform, so they have a sense of belonging as part of the

team. Volunteers include people of all ages, supporting the generations to work together and bridging the gaps often experienced.

"Volunteering has led to social connections, allowing me to make friends and find out what else is happening in my community. It is also so rewarding!"

Areas for further development

Through engagement with our local communities, residents have told us these things could be better and these are the things they would like to see developed under this domain:

- ❖ Older people are not always sure how and where they can access volunteering opportunities, especially when they first retire and suddenly have lots more free time and capacity.
- ❖ Older people would like to see more opportunities for digital inclusion training, but often feel excluded as they cannot afford broadband, especially at the moment, when costs are high and broadband is not seen as an essential utility.
- ❖ Carers feel isolated and unable to access opportunities for the things they would like to do.

Section 7: Domain 2: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

What is our Shared Age Friendly Vision within this domain?

- ❖ Continue to provide information in a range of formats to ensure older people are aware of available advice, support, services, events and activities whilst being mindful of those who may be digitally excluded.
- ❖ Continue to facilitate, promote and signpost opportunities for digital inclusion to encourage and support those who do wish to access information in this way.

Overview

Knowing what is happening locally and having access to timely practical information to manage one's needs is crucial for ageing well. The World Health Organisation state that in an age-friendly community it is important to have accessible relevant information for older people who may have a range of capacities and resources. This is so important nowadays when many sources of information have moved to a default digital position. Some older people may be excluded by this approach if they do not have access to the internet, and it is important that information is available in a range of formats to ensure that digital exclusion is avoided. A high proportion of older people in Wales do not use the internet, with only 49% of those aged over 75 included according to data from the National Survey for Wales in 2018-19. This will not only bring challenges in terms of accessing information but can also make it difficult for them to keep in touch with friends and family, making them feel lonelier and more isolated (Digital Communities Wales).

Age can also be accompanied by a number of challenges including sensory impairment, reduced mobility, frailty or cognitive decline these factors can also bring communication challenges which can impact a persons ability to access information further highlighting the importance of the availability of information in a range of formats ensuring inclusivity to take account of the varying needs of older people.

What is working well in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Community-based examples

In Rhondda Cynon Taf a significant body of work has been undertaken to promote information about local opportunities for older people, including local groups and activities, as well as raising awareness of relevant services and sources of advice to support older people. The Connect RCT website is one such example. There are also a range of digital inclusion opportunities available to older people which continue to be promoted for older people to access, these opportunities allow older people to access digital information, services and sources of advice and support. Notwithstanding this, information and access to services is often provided via a range of means and formats, including written resources, telephone-based services and via face-to-face for example local Community and Wellbeing Coordinators based in GP surgeries and other community venues, this ensures older people are in receipt of the advice and support they need. With OPAG being well represented on our Community Support Steering Group and Neighbourhood Networks, older people have direct access to the range of information, services and advice available via the partners present.

Winter Welcome Centres and other community venues are used to provide informal information and advice including on matters such as pension credit, benefit maximisation and managing the rising costs of utilities. These information pop up sessions are a popular way for older people to have face to face conversations with a range of partners who are on hand to provide expert advice and information supporting older people with any issues they may have. These sessions are particularly helpful to those who are unable to access information via digital means.

Local NHS Health Services Directory produced by Cwm Taf Morgannwg is posted in hard copy to all households in the region detailing how to access the full range of local health services available to residents. This important reference guide supports individuals who may be unable to access this information online.

Local NHS Health Services

How to access local health services

Carers News is a regular publication produced by the RCT Carer's Support Project. This details a full range of opportunities available to carers including sources of advice, information and support as well as social activities, peer support groups and counselling services, many of which are hosted by the **Carers Support Project** based at the Carers Support Project Hub in central Pontypridd. The Project has successfully linked with more than 40 third sector organisations to support their delivery, and are now able to offer a leisure discount scheme, respite offer and emergency card scheme. Many of these initiatives have been developed in consultation with carers to ensure the support offered is of most benefit to individuals in unpaid caring roles taking time to check what is working well, what can be improved and what barriers are faced.

In 2022/23, Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority achieved **Carer Confident Employment** status and is now a Carer Confident Council, introducing a new Carer's Leave Policy and setting up a Working Carers Support Group. The Support Group offers employees information, advice and support through regular events. The policies in place support the needs of unpaid carers working for the Council, enabling them to balance caring responsibilities with their employment ensuring managers apply a consistent and equitable approach to supporting staff with caring responsibilities including access to additional leave, the Carer's Support Project and Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit.

Areas for further development

Through engagement with our local communities, residents have told us these things could be better and these are the things they would like to see developed under this domain:

- ❖ Many older people talk about the challenges of knowing what support and services are available to them, especially regarding support around the cost of living.

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- ❖ Older people often talk about the challenges of everything being online, stating that this has become worse since the pandemic.
- ❖ A high proportion of older people (based on the Council's Adult Services annual service user survey) state that they had the right information or advice when they needed it, but our engagement with older people in communities informs us that more can be done to improve this.
- ❖ There is a lack of information available to support those living with dementia.
- ❖ Information needs to be provided via a range of means – online, written resources, word of mouth, signposting – so that everyone has access to information when they need it.

Section 8: Domain 3: COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

What is our Shared Age Friendly Vision within this domain?

- ❖ Continue to provide local health and social care services including non-statutory support in communities which helps to maintain older people's health and independence as they age. Aligning with the Council's Corporate Plan where there is a commitment for people to be able to live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives.
- ❖ Continue to develop services and activities which support those affected by dementia in our communities, together with activities and services focused on prevention and early intervention where simple lifestyle changes as highlighted in the Dementia Action Plan for Wales can reduce the risk of dementia onset.
- ❖ Continue to manage contracts held with community service providers to ensure they remain responsive to the needs and wants of older people.

Overview

The health of a person can impact their ability to work, participate in society and affect their quality of life. Age and health are intrinsically linked, with many illnesses being more common as you age and many conditions increasing in severity as age increases. Older people are therefore at increased risk of poor health, and this can have a greater impact on them. Having access to services is important to maintain health and independence for older people, so they can remain living independently in the communities. Older people can have varied health care needs and preferences. A range of services are required to support the diverse needs of people as they age, such as screening services, clinics, hospitals, respite care, residential and nursing care, home care and palliative care. In order to best support people, the services should be convenient and accessible. For example, locating care homes within residential areas allows for older people living there to remain connected to their community, family and friends. Public services are having to manage increasingly difficult budgets, so there needs to be continued effort to consider alternative approaches to meeting the health and care needs of an ageing society to include increased focus on prevention and support to maintain independence.

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2021 National Census data informs us that in RCT we have 32,883 residents providing unpaid care, this is higher percentage than in other areas across Wales (12.6% in RCT compared to 12.1% in Wales as a whole). There are 9389 residents providing more than 50 hours of unpaid care each week. Again, this is a higher percentage than in other areas of Wales (4% in RCT compared to 3.4% across Wales). The role of unpaid carers is hugely valued and it is recognised that carers too may need help and support to continue to care, such as the provision of information, advice or counselling or more practical help for the carer and the person for whom they care.

The Local Wellbeing Assessment informs us that dementia across the local health board region is increasing with a larger rise in Rhondda Cynon Taf compared to Bridgend and Merthyr. According to predictions by Social Care Wales there will be continued significant increase over the next 20 years. By 2040 it is predicted that in excess of 5,190 people over the age of 65 in RCT will be living with dementia.

Data from the Department of Work and Pensions confirms that more of our local residents are living with disabilities and claiming a range of disability allowances, including attendance allowance (14.2% compared to 13.8% for the Wales average). ONS data identifies that the life expectancy (77 in RCT compared to 78 across Wales) and healthy life expectancy here (64 in RCT and 68 across Wales) are both lower than in other areas of Wales. 42% of our population live in health deprivation hot spots which is more than double the Welsh average (19.3%), with more than a quarter of our local residents live with a limiting long term illness (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014).

What is working well in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Community-based examples

In Rhondda Cynon Taf there has been a great deal of work to develop community support and services to improve the health of older people.

British Red Cross Community Support Service is delivered in RCT and aimed at people over 50. The team works with residents who may be lonely, socially isolated, or where personal resilience, independence or confidence have been impacted leading to an inability or reluctance to engage in activities in their communities. To support individuals trust and confidence is built between the team and service users with the care received centred on their needs and tailored to their circumstances. Each case is reviewed together with service users and their family if appropriate. Support plans are co-produced to ensure needs, preferences and aspirations are identified and supported with individual goals set at the outset and monitored throughout as individuals needs change. The support is individually tailored and may broadly include the following.

- ❖ A listening ear so concerns can be discussed and goals can be set
- ❖ Practical support – for example requesting housing adaptations or carers assessments, or support to attend medical appointments
- ❖ Resilience and confidence building

Individuals can be referred by social workers, health professionals, other organisations, family, friends or via self referral.

Resident Support Services

Strengthened partnership between Single Point of Access and community support services via Community Resilience Hubs allows residents to access good quality information, advice and assistance which support the social prescribing model avoiding the need for statutory social service intervention and ensuring residents receive the support they need in a timely manner through community support. Support is coordinated from the Community Resilience Hubs where residents can ask for support, alternatively via the request for support form online, or by calling the team. Support will be provided by; Council Staff, Community Resilience Volunteers; 3rd Sector and community partners.

Support & Assistance includes:

- ❖ Shopping support within the community
- ❖ Support to find work or receive work related training
- ❖ Information and guidance about money or benefits
- ❖ Information about the 'At Home' library service
- ❖ Information about the Lifeline Plus Service
- ❖ Wellbeing support if you are feeling lonely or isolated or would like to be put in contact with a local Community Group in your area.
- ❖ Wellbeing Assessment – includes a home visit to discuss and record the position of the whole family, including things that are going well and things you may need help with from our Community Partners

Further to this, non-statutory wellbeing assessments form part of the resident support service, ensuring that the Community Resilience Hubs can document and plan support around an individual's wellbeing needs. This included the launch of a Winter Pressures Pilot with partners in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board Primary Care Team and GP Cluster within the Taf area. Using a multi-disciplinary approach targeted support is provided to patients with chronic conditions through the winter pressure period. Teams within the hub receive direct referrals from Health Colleagues within this area and Community Coordinators follow up with the wellbeing assessments. During the initial pilot period 21 referrals were received with a range of support put in place in response to the identified needs of the individuals receiving support.

Dementia Support Group, Gilfach Goch

Through the local Dementia Listening Campaign and conversations with a range of local partners and residents at Taf Ely Neighbourhood Network meetings to better understand local need and to identify where additional support is required locally, it was identified that there was a lack of provision for those with dementia and their carers.

Feedback included:

"There's isn't anywhere for us to signpost people to locally if they have dementia."

"There is no support for people with dementia in this area, when my mum needed help there was nothing."

"There needs to be more help, support and opportunities for carers and more things to do for families who care for someone with dementia."

"Something informal could work, there are dementia cafes in other areas, perhaps this could be replicated."

Following this feedback, the Older Persons Coordinator consulted with the NHS Memory Team, Age Connects Morgannwg and the Alzheimer's Society and a pilot project was initiated to give local people with dementia and their carers somewhere safe to go, where they will be able to access a range of information, opportunities, advice, and support helping people with dementia and their families to better maintain health, wellbeing and social connections.

The project increased local capacity, where previously there was no provision at all, to meet identified need and gaps in dementia provision in Gilfach Goch. The support group now acts as a hub for information and advice, helping people access appropriate local support and more opportunities.

There are regularly 12-16 people attending the group and benefitting so far. They were referred to the group via local partnership working with the relevant groups and agencies.

Feedback has been positive:

"It's wonderful to have a group like this on the doorstep."

"It is great to have somewhere locally to come to get support as a Carer and heart-warming to see the delight on my partners face when playing games and making friends with others."

Specific services run by **Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board** include initiatives which enable older people to remain in their own homes, including the following:

@Home service for frail elderly patients approaching a crisis admission, for example those experiencing frequent or recurrent unexplained falls, acute changes to gait and balance or sudden changes un mobility, challenging polypharmacy with complex comorbidity, unexplained weight loss which is unlikely to be malignancy and patients requiring intravenous antibiotics at home. The service is based at Dewi Sant Health Park and is made up of an interdisciplinary team of Health Professionals aiming to offer an alternative to hospital admission. Patients are referred for assessment which takes place at Dewi Sant or in the patient's own home, once interventions have been completed patients are discharged to their GP with a full summary.

Stay Well@ Home: The purpose of the service is to keep people safe and supported at home so they do not have to go into hospital unnecessarily. The service is open 7 days a week 8.30am-8pm and provides a direct link to assessment teams *(known as Single Point of Access)* by taking referrals from community health and social care professionals. This includes GPs, district nurses and the Welsh Ambulance Service. If somebody is unwell but does not need to go into hospital, the person's health or social care professional can ring the *Single Point of Access* team, and a

tailored package of support can be agreed within four hours. This means that the person will receive the right support and care to stay safe in their own home. Adult Services in partnership with Health also has a new hospital discharge service called "**discharge to recover and assess**" to improve patient flow, supporting people to be discharged as soon as they are well enough. This runs along with the Stay Well@Home service.

Areas for further development

Through engagement with our local communities, residents have told us these things could be better and these are the things they would like to see developed under this domain:

- ❖ Those with dementia and their loved ones report that they feel their condition isn't understood, even by GPs.
- ❖ There is no continuity of medical people or places, with older people having to tell their story from scratch over and over again.
- ❖ Travel to hospital appointments can be challenging due to distance, lack of transport and timing of appointments.
- ❖ Older people report that medical terminology feels alien to them and there is too much paperwork to read, understand and complete.
- ❖ Those diagnosed with dementia felt a lack of support was available during initial diagnosis.
- ❖ Those receiving support via dementia cafes, support groups etc would like to see a more frequent offer available.
- ❖ Lack of specific older persons counselling support available.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge about what support is available for unpaid carers, also where to attend which is of interest to both the carer and the cared for.
- ❖ Delays to hospital treatment impacts older people's ability to get out and about for social opportunities which can affect emotional wellbeing.
- ❖ Concern for those who are housebound.
- ❖ Access to GP appointments is challenging with difficulty navigating / long waits associated with automated telephone systems.
- ❖ There are concerns about delays in emergency response when older people fall.
- ❖ Cost of lifeline services can be prohibitive.
- ❖ There is a lack of awareness about lifeline service being available.
- ❖ Carers of those with dementia highlighted a lack of support for them, linked with deteriorating mental health, and being lonely was a common concern for those caring for people with dementia.
- ❖ People say they need access to social groups and peer support service where they can chat to people and socialise.
- ❖ Access to improved financial support was also raised by a number of people.

Section 9: Domain 4: HOUSING

What is our Shared Age Friendly Vision within this domain?

❖ Working in partnership to continue to ensure older people have access to safe, warm affordable homes which are suitable for their needs as they age. This may include support to maintain independence to remain in their own homes or to move to alternative accommodation locally ensuring they remain connected to their community, but which may include the need for additional support services to be in place – this support may be in place from a range of sources within the community or via services where needed.

❖ Continue to promote the availability of housing support via agencies like Care and Repair.

Overview

Housing is a basic necessity, and human right. The type, location and condition of housing can have impacts on the health, well-being and safety of older people. There are links between housing and access to services in communities which influence independence and quality of life for older people. The World Health Organisation research shows that housing and the availability of support to allow older people to remain in their own homes and communities as they age is something that is valued by many. Good quality housing, which supports older people to remain active, independent, yet connected to their community is key.

More than 50% of the homes in RCT were built prior to 1939 – this can present significant challenges to older people living in these properties. According to *The State of Older People's Housing in Wales* report, from Care & Repair Cymru, vulnerable older adults are at risk of ill health and hospitalisation because of the condition of their home.

Across Wales, over 56,000 low-income older people needed urgent and essential repairs and adaptations to their home in 2022, and it is predicted that figure will rise this year. As Wales has some of the oldest housing stock in Western Europe, with 26% of housing being built before 1919, repairs and adaptations are vital to ensure safety at home. Given the high proportion of older housing stock in RCT this is likely to be of significant concern for older people locally. Recent history with the global pandemic, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, including significant increases in household utility costs which can be particularly challenging for older people on fixed income via their pensions, alongside the UK political and financial uncertainty has created a perfect storm that has led to a decline in housing conditions in the homes of our older generations. This has put agencies like Care and Repair under further pressure with larger caseloads, increased complexity of cases in terms of health and housing needs combined with rising costs for materials to undertake repairs and a shortage of reliable contractors available to deliver services.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that most older people would prefer to stay living independently for as long as possible.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 puts a focus on preventative interventions. In the context of housing and older people, this means ensuring timely adaptations of existing homes, providing information to ensure informed choices can be made, and enabling the availability of a range of affordable, suitable and good quality accommodation types which will assist with prolonging independence for people in later life.

What is working well in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Community-based examples

A range of housing options for older people are available within Rhondda Cynon Taf. For example, extra care facilities have been developed in recent years. This type of accommodation provides a balance allowing older people to maintain their independence but with support available as and when needed, this is particularly useful as care needs can change with time. Additional accommodation options are available to older people including independent living, traditional nursing and residential settings and sheltered housing. Older people are also supported to remain in their own homes via the services of Cwm Taf Care and Repair.

Rhondda Cynon Taf's 'Plan for Housing in Later Life' sets the direction for the provision of accommodation and housing services for older people, providing a "position statement" so that providers and partners are clear what the accommodation needs of older people are and how the Council would like to see those needs addressed.

The Council's vision is that "people in later life can live independently in their home of choice for as long as possible". In order that this vision can be realised, three strategic aims have been identified.

1. Make available person centred and preventative support to minimise the escalation of critical need.
2. Easily Accessible Information, Advice and Assistance.
3. To enable a range of good quality housing choices that promote independence, prolonged health and well-being.

Rhondda Cynon Taf is committed to providing support for prevention, a choice of provision, accessible information and a tailored, person centred approach to the housing needs of people in later life.

In order to achieve this the following actions are currently being progressed:

❖ to increase the number of extra care schemes in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

❖ to reduce the dependency on residential beds.

❖ to increase the opportunities for older people to be able to maintain their independence within their home and the community.

Housing Related Support

Support can help residents to gain the skills needed to live independently within local communities, this is not just having somewhere to live but being able to live there

safe and happily. It can support residents with current or new tenancies and offers supported accommodation. The type of support can include:

- ❖ Support to settle and maintain homes, including managing a tenancy.
- ❖ Support with budgeting, debts (e.g. rent arrears), benefits, managing money and maximising income.
- ❖ Support to develop practical living skills.
- ❖ Signposting and support to link with other agencies such as Drug/Alcohol Services, GP, Mental Health etc.
- ❖ Support looking for work, training, volunteering or finding activities in your local area.
- ❖ Advice on housing issues, arrears, eviction etc.
- ❖ Help filling in forms or reading forms (e.g. letter and bills).
- ❖ Support to move and look for alternative accommodation.

Independent living schemes including Sheltered Housing are available across RCT managed by a range of local registered social landlords including Cynon Taf Housing Association, Newydd Housing Association, Trivallis, Hafod and Rhondda Housing Association. Residents from many of these schemes have stated that they have a lovely friendly community feel about them where everyone is welcome to join in during coffee mornings, bingo sessions and other related activities held in the communal lounges, but that they also appreciate the flexibility offered where it is also an option to spend time alone in your own home on occasions where you don't feel like socialising.

Modernisation of residential care – Extra Care

A £60m capital investment in care accommodation modernisation was agreed by RCTCBC in February 2023, which is on top of the £50m extra care investment agreed in 2017 to increase the number of extra care beds in Rhondda Cynon Taf to 300. Building upon the previously agreed extra care proposals, this modernisation programme will retain five Council care homes and provide major funding for four state-of-the-art new care accommodation facilities in Treorchy, Ferndale, Mountain Ash and Church Village. To date, 100 extra care beds have since been created across new schemes in Aberaman (Maesyffynon) and Graig (Cwrt yr Orsaf), plus a new 60 bed extra care scheme in Porth is under construction and new care accommodation for people with a learning disability in Gelli received planning approval in April. Mountain Ash proposals for new development to support residential dementia care (15 beds) and extra care accommodation (25 apartments), with additional accessible later living housing – responding to the demographic needs of the area. This proposed flagship scheme, with combined care accommodation, would build upon the existing state-of-the-art extra care developments in Talbot Green, Aberaman and Graig – which are already established as popular, modern hubs at the heart of their communities. The development further demonstrates RCTCBC's commitment to modernise residential care for older people, to adapt to an ageing population and to respond to the changing expectations of the sector.

The Hospital to Home Service developed in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health board uses a Multi-Disciplinary Team approach with Care and

Repair staff based in hospital settings supporting hospital discharge by addressing housing needs to facilitate timely discharge from hospital and return home for patients who are well enough.

Interlink Wellbeing Coordinators link adults, including older people to sources of support in their local communities this could be to assist them with any social, emotional or practical needs. Support available includes housing, benefits and financial issues, loneliness and isolation, connecting to local groups and activities, volunteering opportunities and accessing specialist services.

Care and Repair provide a range of support to older people via their **dedicated case work team** – taking a person-centred approach to assess the home environment, considering home safety, falls risk, required repairs, adaptations and improvements, warmth, disability support and the specific needs of their clients who may be living with specific conditions including sensory loss, dementia or stroke recovery. Clients are also provided with help and support for benefits checks, advice, information and signposting and can access building advice and the handyperson service to support with simple maintenance and repairs to the home.

Reablement services are available to support people to return to self-care following intervention with a gradual step-down approach in support needed.

Disabled Facilities Grants are a non-repayable grant available to finance the cost of adaptations to properties to be able to aid vulnerable or disabled persons to live independently in their home. Examples, include provision of appropriate toilet and bathing facilities and alterations to improve access to and within the property, e.g. ramps, rails, stair lifts etc.

Care and Repair also provide minor repairs up to the value of £500 via their in-house Handyperson Service and deliver minor adaptions via the **"ENABLE"** programme. The type of work completed would cover:

- ❖ Undertaking minor home repairs which make them safe and comfortable.
- ❖ Preventing health problems caused by poor housing and heating.
- ❖ Preventing accidents, slips, trips and falls from hazardous housing.
- ❖ Undertaking adaptations to housing to minimise the necessity for residential care, hospital admission and facilitate speedier hospital discharge.

Better@Home this free service provided by Age Connects Morgannwg provides short-term support to people aged 50+ who have recently been discharged from hospital. With many of our older residents living alone or with an elderly partner or relative, the return home following a hospital stay and the period of transition can be challenging, with additional support sometimes required. Better@Home can support older residents with a range of services depending on individual need, including help to adjust to life at home, information and advice, and help to regain independence and confidence.

Heat and Save Team provide a range of advice and information services to local residents, including direct engagement with older people at local events and

information pop ups for community groups. The team are able to support residents with access to grants or loans for energy efficiency improvements in homes, impartial and free tariff switching advice, general energy efficiency advice to save energy at home, access to sign up to priority service registers, advice and support for utility debts, and signposting or referrals to key partner agencies for additional support this includes Welsh Government's NEST scheme, Citizen's Advice Bureaux and local foodbanks and food pantries.

Areas for further development

Through engagement with our local communities, residents have told us these things could be better and these are the things they would like to see developed under this domain:

- ❖ Challenge the stigma around Extra Care and other forms of housing for older people to increase understanding of the available types of housing for older people
- ❖ Increased availability of lifetime homes and bungalows
- ❖ Some older people report that they are unsure how to access housing advice

Section 10: Domain 5: OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

What is our Shared Age Friendly Vision within this domain?

- ❖ Continue to work with and support local communities to ensure access to a range of public buildings and open spaces that enable older people to remain connected, taking part in a range of activities and accessing the services they need to maintain their independence, health and wellbeing.

Overview

The outdoor environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of people as they age. In Rhondda Cynon Taf our residents benefit from access to a higher percentage of parks and green spaces when compared to other areas of Wales.

Having outdoor spaces for leisure purposes is important for both the physical and mental wellbeing of all people and research suggests that physical activity in older age can reduce dementia risk and increase life expectancy. Research indicates, for example, that walking helps to preserve cognitive functioning in those with dementia and that by maintaining the ability to get out and about older people retain confidence leading to increased wellbeing. Communities which are accessible with walking routes which are free of hazards will promote and encourage physical activity, which is also important for older people to maintain fitness, mobility, strength and balance and to prevent obesity and chronic disease. In addition, leisure activities and maintaining access to the local community encourages ad-hoc social contacts, which can help to prevent isolation. Age-friendly outdoor environments should

include green spaces, walkable streets, outdoor seating, and accessible buildings incorporating ramps, lifts and stairs with rails. Consideration should also be given to adequate public toilet facilities to ensure that older people can access facilities when needed.

What is working well in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Community-based examples

Rhondda Cynon Taf has a wealth of accessible outdoor spaces and buildings allowing older people to connect with their local communities. These include a range of parks and open spaces, leisure facilities including the National Lido of Wales, numerous Leisure Centres as well as community resilience hubs, libraries and local community centres each offering a range of opportunities for older people in respect of activities and services which support their independence, health and wellbeing.

The Local Development Plan 2022 – 2037

Rhondda Cynon Taf is preparing a new version of its Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP is a legal document for RCT, which sets out where new development will take place, what land is protected and planning policies to guide the details of future development through planning applications up to 2037. The process involves revising the LDP and preparing a Preferred Strategy which will soon go to public consultation, this document sets out objectives for the plan and very high level strategic policies, many of which will support:

- ❖ Access to services and facilities
- ❖ Facilitation and provision of transport and community infrastructure
- ❖ Creation of safe and accessible places
- ❖ Development proposals that support the needs of our ageing population whilst considering the needs of future generations also
- ❖ Accessibility of public buildings

Further to this a more detailed Deposit Plan will be produced, this will include detailed policies which are used to make decisions on planning applications. This plan will look in greater detail at the above requirements.

In line with Welsh Government guidance the LDP will seek to ensure that new development is in sustainable locations which reduce the need to travel and cater for the needs of all.

Community Asset Transfers - a process by which communities can own and/or manage facilities that may be surplus to Council need or may otherwise be closed down or disposed of if the Local Authority is unable to fund them any longer.

Community Asset Transfers can support local innovation, community action and resident led solutions and can enable groups to access funding that public bodies may not be able to. It can be a genuine route to empowering and enabling local communities to shape their local neighbourhoods delivering services and activities which are important to each community.

The aims of a Community Asset Transfer from Rhondda Cynon Taf Council are:

- ❖ To encourage local communities and groups (new or existing) to become empowered and active citizens by delivering services and managing local buildings in their communities.
- ❖ To develop capacity in communities and promote shared use of community buildings through a collaborative approach between public, private, voluntary and community sectors.
- ❖ To safeguard and protect valued local spaces, buildings and services for community use and benefit.
- ❖ To maximise social value i.e. the value of importance that people place on the positive changes they experience in their lives.

We have many examples in RCT where groups have transformed and revitalised former Council buildings and spaces and used these assets to deliver services which support people's health, wellbeing, learning and prosperity. Groups have worked with funders, public sector teams and voluntary sector support agencies to bring about positive change for local communities, including scores of older people.

One local example is at **Lee Gardens Pool** in Penrhiwceiber where the local pool is now in community ownership with the help and support of dedicated volunteers. These volunteers have developed a whole range of opportunities for the local community including a Knit and Natter group, gardening activities, training, art clubs, food support, a local history project, table top sales alongside opening up the pool to residents during the summer months. The success of the organisation has recently been recognised with the Kings Award for Voluntary Service.

A common concern regarding the outdoor environment raised by older people locally is regarding obstructed pavements due to parked vehicles. Welsh Government are currently reviewing existing legislation so that authorised officers can issue fixed penalty notices for vehicles obstructing the footway (**Welsh Pavement Parking Taskforce**). In addition Welsh Government have recently introduced legislation for a national **default speed limit of 20 mph** in residential areas, this promotes and supports safer walking routes enabling older people especially those with mobility issues to get around and to cross roads safely.

Rhondda Cynon Taf's **Community Resilience Hubs** aim to bring together a wide range of services, information and support to one location. Each of the hubs have a

range of facilities which may include Library Provision with associated meeting and education rooms, Gym, Resident Support, One4All, Public Access Computers, Employment Advice, Community Learning, Local Payment Point, Citizen's Advice, accessible public toilets and changing place facility.

In additional to these key Hubs, there are a number of smaller, informal often **community run hubs** across the local authority area. Many of these venues, including **Café 50** and **Bryncynon Strategy** support older people by hosting a range of activities, groups and classes as well as providing opportunities for a warm, safe space and time for socialisation and meeting with friends.

There are a range of **Community Gardens and Woodland Projects** available across RCT, these provide opportunities for outdoor activities like food growing and gardening, and are hosted at locations such as **Meadow Street, Grow Rhondda**, and the **Arts Factory**. **Welcome to our Woods** also offer a range of opportunities to stay active in the outdoors and socialise with other like minded people, these include: walking activities for a range of abilities, woodland therapy, Walking Rugby and Cold Water Therapy.

Our local **Leisure Centres** offer a range of physical activity opportunities which are suitable for older people, these include Low Intensity Circuits/Aerobics, Mobility and Balance, Chair Aerobic, SuperAgers Boxercise, SuperAgers Yoga, Aqua Aerobics, Swimming and access to the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS).

There are also a vast array of local community sports clubs and activities available including numerous Bowls Clubs, Walking Rugby, Walking Football, Petanque, Cricket, Golf, Walking Netball, Cycling Clubs, Walking Groups, Running Clubs, Tennis Clubs, Triathlon Clubs and Fishing Clubs.

Local Parks offer opportunities to stay active in beautiful surrounding, including at Park Runs in Aberdare and Pontypridd with opportunities to volunteer at these events also.

Work is underway to implement a revised **Local Toilets Strategy** in RCT. The strategy will seek to promote and enhance the range of existing provision available across the county borough ensuring local residents and visitors including older people are aware of locations where they can access toilet facilities and that those facilities are accessible to their needs.

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Areas for further development

Through engagement with our local communities, residents have told us these things could be better and these are the things they would like to see developed under this domain:

- ❖ Challenges with parked cars obstructing pavements making walking safely difficult especially for those with walking aides and mobility scooters and wheelchairs.
- ❖ The condition of pavements and drop kerbs are often challenging for those with mobility issues especially for those with walking aides and mobility scooters and wheelchairs
- ❖ Lack of public toilets, or awareness about where they are located
- ❖ Loss of high street banks, everything going "online"
- ❖ Loss of local shops in town centres – not everyone wants to shop online
- ❖ Dog mess
- ❖ Access to buildings and considering those with mobility issues
- ❖ More seating along walking routes
- ❖ Having a place to go where older people are made to feel welcome
- ❖ Parking close to venues, especially in built up areas is difficult.

Section 11: Domain 6: RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

What is our Shared Age Friendly Vision within this domain?

- ❖ Continue to champion and celebrate the contribution of older people in our communities, promoting a range of opportunities for them to be involved including activities and projects, especially those which allow for intergenerational participation.

Overview

In an age friendly community people of all backgrounds are enabled to actively participate and are respected regardless of their age, leading to greater inclusivity. Intergenerational activities can help to facilitate this where different generations come together to share experiences and skills and learn from one another. In many communities' older people are valued and respected. Unfortunately, however there remain some negative stereotypes and connotations around ageing with ageism being a factor faced by some older people. Changing perceptions of ageing and of older people with active, positive images can help to dispel these stereotypes and connotations. It is also important that older people remain actively involved in any decisions affecting them.

What is working well in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Community-based examples

Rhondda Cynon Taf has a range of opportunities for older people to ensure their ability to be included socially and centrally within communities upholding respect for them in society. Including many opportunities for intergenerational activity where the

generations are brought together benefiting both old and young to share experiences and learn from one another. Older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf also play an active and key role, contributing to policy and decision making via our well established 50+ Forums and Older Persons Advisory Group.

A number of local **Dementia Friendly Communities** have been established across Rhondda Cynon Taf, with recent local interest in developing additional communities to support those living with dementia. These include communities in Maerdy, Pontypridd, Tonypandy and the newly launched Dementia Friendly Treorchy where the local Rotary are working with town centre partners to increase awareness and understanding of dementia to better support those living with the condition. This community also work closely with a group based at St Matthew's Church who meet regularly providing a range of social opportunities for those affected by dementia, these include regular intergenerational activities with the local primary school who they have an established partnership with enabling meaningful and sustained intergenerational engagement which brings benefits for both old and young.

Intergenerational activities are also facilitated by a number of local community groups and organisations including the Arts Factory, Gilfach Goch Community Facility and Pontypridd Museum and Town Council, where recently they hosted the local 50+ Forum members and a local primary school for a show and tell providing an insightful and enjoyable session for all involved. Other activities include those which support digital inclusion and heritage sessions where older residents are able to share their knowledge with younger people locally. Many of these activities challenge ageism with people from different generations sharing a common interest and participants commenting that "age is just a number"!

Have your Say Day was recently held locally, facilitated by our local CVC Interlink RCT, where residents were encouraged and supported to come forward to provide feedback on their Care Treatment Plans.

HAVE YOUR SAY DAY!

Tell us about your care and treatment plan (CTP)

When: 26th October 2023   Time: 1pm to 5pm

Where: Pontypridd Museum, Bridge Street, Pontypridd, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF37 4PE

Contact: Shaun Parfitt (07511829985)
E-mail: sparfitt@interlinkrct.org.uk

Refreshments . Public transport expenses refunded.

Cannot make it on the day?
Scan the QR below to complete the survey and have your voice heard.

Council Care Home Residents are encouraged to provide comments and feedback through resident meetings and comments/suggestion boxes. This feedback has resulted in menu updates, changes to entertainment and activities offered and being involved in decision making regarding colour schemes and redecoration of facilities.

The introduction of **Magic Moments** in older people's day services has allowed for the capture of examples of service user experience in these settings. This ensures users have a feeling of a sense of value and purpose, and captures successes of working together to achieve personal goals and outcomes.

Magic Moments' at Cwmni Dda

Cwmni Dda has been supporting a man who had experienced life changing events. His wife had died and following this, he decided to move in with his daughter. The change in his living circumstances combined with a progression in his dementia meant a change to his social activities, which centred around going out to pubs and live music events which he enjoyed attending with his wife. The remaining family did not have the capacity to provide this level of support and he could not attend independently.

Initially when attending Cwmni Dda, he found it difficult to settle. Filling in his life history with the team, he told them that he was a musician and had travelled nationwide with a band that were very successful.

As a result, staff were able to access a guitar for the 'music corner'. The man picked it up but struggled to play at first, however, staff encouraged him to persevere and over a series of visits, he managed to tune the guitar and started to play recognisable tunes. Staff observed that he was starting to move to the rhythm and tapping his feet and it was evident that he was quite a showman! They have continued to encourage him, and he has now progressed to taking requests for specific tunes.

This has been a very positive outcome, enabling the man to pursue an activity that appears to have given him a new sense of purpose. It has also enabled him to settle in at Cwmni Dda. From a health perspective, encouraging him to use hands, has enabled him to retain dexterity and the ability to co-ordinate his movements. so encouraging activity can help to retain skills for longer.

Areas for further development

Through engagement with our local communities, residents have told us these things could be better and these are the things they would like to see developed under this domain:

- ❖ Increased opportunities for intergenerational activity across the RCT area, older people are keen to share their knowledge and experience but don't always have the opportunity to do this
- ❖ Growth in dementia friendly initiatives to increase awareness
- ❖ Available activities which are dementia inclusive
- ❖ Older people want to feel part of their communities
- ❖ Some older people report that they don't feel listened to
- ❖ Ageism feels like a barrier – not all venues feel welcoming for some older people

What is our Shared Age Friendly Vision within this domain?

- ❖ Continue to support opportunities for social participation for older people across our communities, via local groups, organisations and clubs and ensure older people can access these opportunities via suitable promotion. Support local organisations to access funding to sustain these activities for the ongoing benefit of older people.

Overview

Participating socially and having social support around you is important for good health and wellbeing at all stages of life. Being able to participate in leisure, social, cultural and worship activities in communities, and more closely with family, allows older people to maintain important relationships and support networks. Conversely an older person lacking in social connections can have poor health and wellbeing, becoming socially isolated and lonely. Social connections can also be important for older people to access the wider community with older people who may be facing mobility and access issues relying on family or friends for help. Being involved in community activities can increase connections and lead to feelings of belonging in a community, this is something that is strongly felt in close-knit valleys communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf and something that came through richly during our engagement work.

The Age UK Loneliness index confirms that there is a higher probability of loneliness for the over 65s in RCT (-3.6) than there is across other areas of Wales (-3.8).

What is working well in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Community-based examples

There are a vast range of opportunities for Social Participation available to older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf supporting them to remain connected to friends, family and the wider community which in turn maintains their health and wellbeing. Many of these opportunities are delivered on a local basis supported by a range of funding streams which sustain the local groups and organisations involved in delivery.

Funding opportunities including those via the RCT Together Community Development Team from Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC. Funding accessed by older people's groups and organisations includes the UKG Shared Prosperity Fund RCTCBC Community Grant, Neighbourhood Network Fund, SPF Community Micro Grant, Food Support Funding, Community Dementia Prevention Programme Funding, Community Facilities Grant and the Winter Hardship Fund. Many of these funds support a range of age friendly activity but most importantly provide a host of opportunities for older people to socialise close to home among friends and loved ones, these groups have often been established by dedicated older people who volunteer and deliver for their fellow older people in communities. These social opportunities provide support to individuals which combat feelings of isolation and loneliness.

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Bryncynon Strategy's Listening Project was established initially as a befriending project to support isolated lonely people who were unable to leave their homes during the pandemic, the project has since grown and developed to provide a wealth of support and opportunities to local residents including a hot meal service to 120 recipients delivered to resident's homes accompanied by a call to take orders which is discreetly also a friendly check-in to assess individual's wellbeing and any need for support or intervention. In additional regular activities are held at the venue for local residents to take part in. These include social opportunities, information events from partner organisations, including Pension Credit advice from Citizen's Advice Bureau, games like bingo and tombola, tea parties, musical and exercise-based activities alongside food support for those in need via the established Food Pantry. Recent developments now include healthy cookery sessions, chair yoga, kurling and a lunch club which now has over 30 members including many older men who enjoy a hot meal and some male company. Local residents talk of the benefits of attending and recent feedback includes:

"The food pantry is really good value and helps with the cost of living. It's also a social thing. I never went anywhere as it was too expensive to go out. Now I have met new people, I'm not stuck in the house and I come to everything here".

There are a range of opportunities for **Singing and Choir Groups**, including Singing for the Brain sessions, and Song Therapy at the Jolly Good Group at Café 50, Pontyclun. These sessions provide opportunities to participate in community music and movement making and are led by a trained song therapist. The workshops involve an array of musical activities and low movement dance or gentle exercise, including rhythm games, lyric writing, exploration of melodies, and appreciation of traditional Welsh and English classics and good old fashioned music-hall singalong around a piano. Sessions support cognitive retention, social engagement and inclusion, encourage speech retention and boost mental health and wellbeing.

There are a number of local **Men's Sheds** in the area, including at Pontyclun, Porth, Tynewydd, Ynysybwl, Hirwaun and Pontypridd. The **Pontypridd Men's Shed** was established to provide social activities for men in the local area. The group provides an opportunity to meet new friends, enjoy new hobbies, learn skills and share experiences. The aim of the group is to prevent loneliness, reduce social isolation and improve mental wellbeing of those attending providing a space for men to talk and share together. The group meet twice a week at their base in Treforest and again for a third time each week in Pontypridd itself.

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Local Churches in the area also host a range of groups and activities for older people including **St. Fagans Church** in Aberdare who host Tea and Toast weekly and Caffi Cinio, which is a weekly two course lunch followed by range of activities like quizzes, bingo and singing for just £4.00. **Providence Church** in Ystrad also host weekly sessions to bring older isolated residents together for social opportunities with a wide range of different activities to suit all interests. **Acts Community Church** in Tylorstown host Café Croeso, and Memory Lane Dementia Café, together with a regular Walking Group, Warm Hub, Choir, and opportunities for worship. **Salem Chapel** hosts their Shalom Café weekly offering a safe space where local people can meet to enjoy the company of others over a hot drink. They host informative guest speakers, music, cookery and craft sessions alongside light-hearted quizzes. Many other local churches across the county support the local authority with Winter Welcome Centres providing a warm space, with hot drinks and snacks and a chance for social participation with other local residents.

There are scores of **Community Groups** for older people in communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The groups vary in size and format but they all provide invaluable support to local residents, affording older people a host of opportunities to be in the company of others to help reduce isolation and loneliness. Once example are **Fernhill and Glenboi over 60s** who meet weekly at their venue in Abercwmboi where they enjoy regular afternoon tea and entertainment, Tai Chi, guest speakers and trips to the theatre.

Areas for further development

Through engagement with our local communities, residents have told us these things could be better and these are the things they would like to see developed under this domain:

- ❖ Older people want access to social opportunities in their local community
- ❖ Improved promotion of opportunities so older people understand what is available to them
- ❖ Older people talked about missing traditional community events like tea dances, going to chapel and snooker halls
- ❖ Sustained funding to support activities when something is working well and providing social opportunities for older people
- ❖ Some groups feel too large and overwhelming, making it difficult to connect with individuals and make friends
- ❖ Groups talk about the frequent difficulty in engaging older men in their social activities
- ❖ Some older people need support to access social opportunities, befriending etc

Section 13: Domain 8: TRANSPORT

What is our Shared Age Friendly Vision within this domain?

❖ Continue to work with partners to promote the services that are available, whilst also raising the issues older people face when transport services fall short of their needs, working with these same partners to explore opportunities for improvement where possible.

Overview

Transport, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor for older people. Having the ability to get and about to access shopping, medical appointments, visit friends and family, or for social activities is crucial to ensure older people can participate and access services they need to maintain their health and wellbeing. Rhondda Cynon Taf like other similar communities in South Wales faces significant challenges given the geography and topography of the county making access via high sided valley streets to local bus and rail services running along the valley floors challenging for older people especially those with mobility issues. An age-friendly transport system should provide accessible, appropriate and reliable transport services which encourage people to maintain their mobility and independence, and allowing older people to maintain their social connections as they age. Such a system would need to include accessible and reliable public transport, demand responsive from the door services, and passenger support for those who need it.

In Rhondda Cynon Taf we have 23600 pensioner households and 10480 of these households do not have access to their own car. This presents significant challenges for older people getting out and about to access services, shopping and social activities.

What is working well in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Community-based examples

In Rhondda Cynon Taf there are a range of local transport services available these can provide a much needed lifeline to older people to ensure they are able to access services, retail, health and social opportunities. Alongside services older people often share that they receive kind help from friends, family and neighbours who provide them with lifts so they can get out and about.

Community Transport is provided by a number of local partners including **Accessible Caring Transport** operate services in the Cynon area including the demand responsive Range Rider Dial-A-Ride service, the Route 68 service covering the area between Abercynon and Aberdare which can be accessed free of charge using the concessionary travel pass and the PCH Hospital Visiting Service to support those with family or friends at Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil so they can attend during visiting hours in the evenings Monday- Saturday.

Visitor Transport

Monday to Saturday pick up at **5:30pm** and returning from **Prince Charles** at **8pm**.

This scheme is available to residents living in the Cynon Valley area wishing to visit friends and family at **Prince Charles Hospital** during the evenings between **6pm – 8pm**.

Monday – Saturday between 5:30pm – 8pm

To book your journey please call **01443 478013** between **8:00am** and **3:00pm** on the day before travelling. **Answering machine bookings will be accepted during out of office hours.**

There is a charge of £3 per passenger, however children under 11 years and concessionary bus holders can travel free.

Book early to avoid disapointment!

For more information on this service, or our other services call **01443 478013** or visit us online www.accessibletransport.co.uk

Registered Office: 4 Knight Street, Mountain Ash, RCT, CF45 3EY
Charity No: 1072933 | Company No: 2730904 | VAT No: 615790430

Other local providers include **Travol** who are primarily based in the Taf area providing demand responsive services in and around Pontypridd and Talbot Green. **Village and Valleys** services cover areas of the Rhondda supporting sheltered housing tenants in Maerdy and Ferndale to access the local area, with transport for Care Home residents for organised trips, and a twice weekly service in the Treorchy and surrounding area picking up older people allowing them to access services, shopping and social opportunities in the town centre.

The **Concessionary Travel Pass** which is available to all residents over the age of 60 in Wales, before the national retirement age of 67, and provides good access to local towns but often those with mobility challenges or those who live away from the main bus routes struggle to access services.

The **Fflecsi Bus** service operates locally in Hendreforgan, Tonyrefail & Dinas, Porth and Wattstown. This partnership service with Transport for Wales, Stagecoach and the local authority provides a different way to travel by bus, customers can book on the fflecsi app or call when they need to travel, they choose their pick up and drop off points and are met at their chosen pick up point and dropped off at their requested

location. The service runs a daytime zone service from 08:00 - 12:15 and then from 13:00 until 17:15 in the afternoon, the evening zone service runs from 19:00 - 23:30. Both zones run between Monday and Saturday and can be booked up to 7 days in advance.

The **South Wales Metro** developments continue to progress, the ambitious project will create improved access to an integrated network of travel benefiting local communities and residents.

Areas for further development

Through engagement with our local communities, residents have told us these things could be better and these are the things they would like to see developed under this domain:

- ❖ Older people want access to services and social opportunities locally in their own communities to reduce the need for transport
- ❖ Transport is something that is a challenge for many in our local communities but potentially older people feel particularly impacted by when they may not have alternative means of getting around due to mobility issues or having given up their driving license and access to a car.
- ❖ Significant decline in frequency and reliability of bus services post pandemic leaving older people unable to access services, retail and social opportunities
- ❖ Lack of services in the evenings - "it's like we are not allowed a life after dark"
- ❖ Lack of knowledge around availability of community transport provision
- ❖ The loss of street buses has impacted older people's ability to get out and about with many older people unable to access the main bus routes.
- ❖ Could volunteer drivers support with a community car scheme like in neighbouring areas – is this something that could be developed.
- ❖ Improved transport is needed to support independence and older people's ability to access health, social activities, shopping and services
- ❖ There is a lack of bus drivers to run services
- ❖ Fflexsi bus is reported as not being flexible enough and not well promoted.
- ❖ Withdrawal of bus services leaving entire communities and their residents isolated and unable to access anything outside of the immediate area
- ❖ Challenges for older people to access main road bus services due to steep side streets combined with mobility issues

It is hoped that this plan demonstrates our ongoing commitment to older people across Rhondda Cynon Taf, in support of our application to join the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. Together we continue to commit with our partners to:

- ❖ Listen to the voices of a diverse range of older people and consider these in developing priorities to take forward the Age Friendly Communities agenda across the county borough.
- ❖ Enable older people to secure and uphold their rights at times when they may be vulnerable.
- ❖ Recognise, value and respect the contribution older people make in their communities in terms of their knowledge, skills and experience and allow them opportunities to share this with others.
- ❖ Support the creation and development of resilient communities, community networks, community facilities, buildings and outdoor spaces which allow for support of older people.
- ❖ Deliver services on a local basis, working with community partners, wherever possible.
- ❖ Support those living with dementia and their loved ones, including via local dementia friendly communities to ensure individuals and families feel included and connected to their communities and have access to information, advice and guidance they need.
- ❖ Support older people to participate, contribute to and access a range of opportunities as active citizens, including volunteering and continued learning which maintain and enhance their wellbeing and can be accessed in their local community.
- ❖ Ensure older people including carers are in receipt of advice and information needed to maintain their wellbeing and independence via a range of means, this may include support to access digital information or working with groups and organisations who support individuals. Organisations may require funding support to sustain themselves for the benefit of their members, ensure they are signposted and supported to access funding opportunities.
- ❖ Support and promote the range of local community transport options available to older people and encourage older peoples voices to be heard in terms of the challenges faced so that service improvements can be considered where possible.
- ❖ Support and promote a range of opportunities for social participation for the benefit of older people to reduce loneliness and isolation.
- ❖ Support older people to remain safely in their communities with their established network of support around them as they age by providing suitable housing options, including extra care, modernised residential care, lifetime homes or by supporting them to remain in their own home, living independently for as long as possible.

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Section 15: Contributors

Rhondda Cynon Taf would like to thank and acknowledge the contributions of all partners in this work, notably as follows:

- ❖ Older people living in RCT
- ❖ Older Persons Advisory Group
- ❖ RCT 50+ Forums
- ❖ Older Peoples voluntary community groups
- ❖ Various internal Services and teams from across RCTCBC
- ❖ Age Connects Morgannwg
- ❖ Cwm Taf Care & Repair
- ❖ The Ageing Well Team at the Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- ❖ Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- ❖ Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board
- ❖ Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board
- ❖ South Wales Police
- ❖ South Wales Fire & Rescue
- ❖ Interlink RCT
- ❖ Transport for Wales
- ❖ British Red Cross
- ❖ Accessible Caring Transport
- ❖ Travol
- ❖ Village and Valleys Transport
- ❖ RCT Citizen's Advice Bureau
- ❖ Local Registered Social Landlords including Newydd Housing, Trivallis, Cynon Taf Housing, Rhondda Housing Association, Hafod and Linc Cymru
- ❖ Department of Work and Pensions

World Health Organisation: Application for membership of the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities

Process to be recognised as an age-friendly community

Section 1: City / Community Details

Name of city / community

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Region or state

Wales

Country

United Kingdom

City / community's population size

237, 658 (2021 Census Day)

%age of residents over the age of 60

24.4% (2021 Census Day)

Are you applying via membership of one of the Network's affiliated programmes?

Yes, via Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Section 2: Commitment towards becoming an age-friendly city / community

Letter of commitment from the mayor

Attached

Mayor's name and title

Councillor Andrew Morgan,
Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Email of the Mayor's office

Andrew.Morgan2@rctcbc.gov.uk

Address of the Mayor's office

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
2 Llys Cadwyn
Taff Street

Pontypridd

Section 3: Designation of contact person for the Global Network

Title

Mrs

First name

Hannah

Last name

Watson

Position

Older Persons Coordinator

Role in city / community's age-friendly initiatives

Local Authority Lead Officer for Age-Friendly Communities

E-mail address

Hannah.L.Watson@rctcbc.gov.uk

Telephone number
07799 132179

Section 4: Description of your age-friendly activities to date

Please provide a brief summary (250-300 words) of your city/community's policies, programmes and services targeted at older people and how you are planning to make it more age-friendly. The summary must be in English.

In Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) the Local Authority is proud to support and value Older People, working in close partnership with other agencies and organisations since 2004. Following the development of The Strategy for Older People in Wales, the appointment of an elected member as Older Persons Champion, a dedicated Older Persons Coordinator was appointed to develop this area of work, funded by the Local Authority continuously reaffirming the commitment for improvement. Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's signed the Dublin Declaration in 2015, which was the first and significant formal step to committing to developing Age Friendly communities. This was further complemented with the support of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG) which overarches five local 50+ Forums which were developed from 2004 and continue to thrive today acting as a key voice of older people in our local communities and feeding directly into our engagement work in support of an Age Friendly Rhondda Cynon Taf.

This work continues to be a priority for the Council and its partners, supporting Welsh Government's vision to create an age friendly Wales. A range of partners from public, voluntary and third sectors are engaged via the established Community Support Steering Group where together they can consider the needs of older people and work in partnership to identify and address issues of concern, developing age friendly solutions which support community resilience across RCT.

In 2021, the role of the Older Persons Coordinator was refocussed onto ensuring integration was assured for older people in terms of the RCTCBC Community Resilience Hub, Neighbourhood Network and Community Grant model.

At the current time there are seven Community Resilience Hubs that each reflect a recognisable community in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Community Resilience Hubs and Neighbourhood Networks work with communities to deliver improved public services that are joined up, efficient, coordinated and located close to the point of need, in line with the legislative requirements of the Welsh Government's Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

The integration of Age Friendly Communities has seen increased membership of Older People's groups, such as 50+ forums, within Neighbourhood Networks. Neighbourhood Networks have a fair, proportionate representation of Older People's groups within these forums which ensures Older People's voices are heard, considered, and acted upon.

Members of the Neighbourhood Networks have access to a suite of grant funding that is set aside for not-for-profit community groups. These grants support local activity and encourage participation and innovation. Community Grants, both large and small, are available throughout the year. Older People's groups are supported to apply, manage, and report on community grants

in a way that is bespoke to individual circumstances. This is especially important where group leaders are digitally excluded.

Working together these arrangements have increased local capacity, including within the voluntary and third sectors, via a combination of additional staff, community facility improvements, activities and services to meet identified need and mitigate against gaps in provision. This has reduced demand on health and social care provision, by encouraging greater personal independence of residents and building capacity and resilience within communities.

Please provide a picture (skyline or logo) to illustrate your age-friendly activities

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If you have a dedicated web page on your age-friendly activities, please include it here. If not, indicate your city or community website.

https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/RCTTogether/RCTTogether.aspx

(specific link from the RCT Together page is to be developed – this will showcase up-to-date Age-Friendly services/initiatives/activities)

If you have already conducted an age-friendly baseline assessment of your city/community, please upload it.

Attached:

- **Appendix A - Baseline Assessment Links**

If you have already developed a strategy of action plan to make your city/community more age-friendly, please upload it.

Please refer to:

- **Appendix B - "Working Towards an Age Friendly Rhondda Cynon Taf"** this details an assessment of existing provision, engagement information and forward vision including Rhondda, Cynon Taf's Commitment to Older People

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Section 5: Engagement of older people

How are you engaging and involving older people in the process of becoming a more age-friendly city/community

Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG)
Older People are engaged via the OPAG and five local 50+ Forums representing different areas across RCT. This provides a platform to provide details on the range of provision, identify good practice, gaps and opportunities for improvement which will help to inform our action plan. These forums which have in excess of 300 members are also linked with other groups such as the Neighbourhood Networks.

Neighbourhood Networks
Neighbourhood Networks have been established geographically across Rhondda Cynon Taf. Neighbourhood Network membership include community stakeholders including community groups and service providers. Neighbourhood Networks meet monthly to have conversations, share good practice and resources and identify and plan actions against locally identified need. OPAG and the 50+ Forums have been encouraged and supported to join Neighbourhood Networks, which has ensured that Older Peoples voices are being championed and heard when local delivery plans are being made.
Neighbourhood Networks have attracted new membership particularly from older people's groups as a result of the suite of available grant funding opportunities, which includes: Neighbourhood Network Fund, Winter Hardship Fund and the UKG Shared Prosperity Fund

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RCTCBC Community Grant. Many of these groups were successful in securing funding enabling them to run projects for the benefit of older people in their local community, including a range of Winter Welcome Centres in communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Underrepresented groups

Some underrepresented groups of older people, for example those living in residential care often feel that their voices are lesser heard when compared to the wider community. In the hope of including these often-lesser heard voices in our engagement activities work is underway to develop links with key partners to overcome this.

These partners include staff from our Accommodation Services, Extra Care facilities and partners in the Housing sector including Care and Repair and Registered Social Landlords with sheltered / independent living schemes for older people. Opportunities have been explored to build on existing engagement activity to capture relevant information and utilise it for the purposes of Age Friendly Communities to better understand the needs of the older people who form part of these underrepresented groups.

Public Events and Day to Day work of Community Development Team

Engagement with Older People is led by the Older Persons Coordinator with support from the Council's wider Community Development Team. The team works closely and supports a range of local community groups for older people.

The team utilise engagement opportunities at public events including those organised for International Day for Older Persons, and events which supported national Dementia Action week. Specific consultation materials have been developed for Age Friendly Rhondda Cynon Taf to engage with older people and facilitate conversations about Age Friendly Communities.

This includes focussing on the eight domains which are essential in the development of age friendly communities, allowing community members the opportunity to talk about the things in their local area that help and support them to age well, and also about the things that need to improve to make the lives of older people better in their communities.

Section 6: Cross-sectoral collaboration

What mechanisms have you / are you planning to put in place to facilitate collaborative planning and implementation between different departments of the local administration and across sectors?

Community Support Steering Group (CSSG)

The CSSG is a partnership of key stakeholders and partners involved in providing services to local communities across RCT. This includes Council departments such as Adult Services, Children's Services, Community Services, South Wales Police, Registered Social Landlords, University Health Board, Citizens Advice, Interlink RCT, Third Sector, DWP. This group provides a key mechanism for engagement with partners for collaborative planning and implementation sharing in the vision of an Age Friendly RCT.

Neighbourhood Networks

Neighbourhood Networks are established geographically across RCT. Neighbourhood Networks are made up of local community groups and service providers from that particular area. This allows for Age Friendly discussions to be had on a locality basis both in terms of understanding existing provision and also in developing actions to overcome identified gaps and opportunities for improvement.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Dementia Care Pathway of Standards Workstream 1

The workstream group for this Dementia Standard focuses on community engagement to better understand what dementia care and intervention looks like in our region. The listening campaign undertaken in two local communities has provided a wealth of information which has been utilised to improve experiences for those living with and affected by dementia locally. The group is made up of representatives from across the health board region, including colleagues in health, local authorities and the third sector, this provides opportunities for regional collaboration and sharing of best practice.

Section 7: Participation in the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities

What motivated your city/community to become a member of the Global Network?

We wish to celebrate our older population in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Rhondda Cynon Taf is an excellent place to live well and age well. Global Network status would recognise this.
We are committed to ensuring that older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are able to enjoy the opportunities this success brings.
By being equipped to meet the challenges faced with ageing and ensuring that older people, particularly those who are most vulnerable, can access the support and services they need to thrive and to remain active and healthy.
We also hope that being part of this network will help us to continue to strengthen increased partnership working between key public bodies and third sector agencies with a shared view to enable older people to remain valued and active participants within local communities.
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council want to encourage our older population to live full and healthy lives and be able to participate and contribute to their communities. We believe that Age-Friendly communities create the conditions within which people can age well, adding life to years – not just years to life.

How do you hope to contribute to the Global Network?

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council hope that by joining the Global Network this will allow us an opportunity to shine a light on the existing good practice in place in our county to support older people, and that other communities in the network can benefit from this shared learning, whilst also allowing us an opportunity to learn from them.

Joining the network will allow us to fulfil the commitment made when signing the Dublin Declaration (in 2015) to support the development and growth of age-friendly communities.

Being part of the network will also allow for opportunities to work with similar communities across the world to develop innovative and practical approaches to age-friendly community development, to welcome and promote innovation, inspire action, and to empower older people. Ensuring they understand their legal rights and how they can exercise them to make their voices heard and challenge poor practice.

Rhondda Cynon Taf hope that by becoming members of the network we will contribute to inspiring change across the global network, ensuring older people across the globe remain valued and active participants in community life.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH MARCH 2023

A REPORT ON THE COUNCIL'S LOCAL HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT 2023 - 2028

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

AUTHOR: CLAIRE HUTCHEON – HEAD OF HOUSING STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT

Appendices: Local Housing Market Assessment:
Rhondda Cynon Taf 2023 – 2028   Appendix A

1. <u>PURPOSE OF THE REPORT</u>

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Members the findings of the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 seeking approval before submitting to WG and then and then publicise the document.

2. <u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>

It is recommended that:

2.1 Members approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 as a key source of evidence to support the delivery of housing policies in the Council's Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan and Housing Delivery Plan.

2.2 Members approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 as a tool to negotiate affordable housing provision on planning applications and to identify how housing need translates to different sizes and types of affordable housing (e.g. social rent and low cost home ownership).

2.3 Members approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2022 – 2037 for use to inform funding bids (including Social Housing Grant) and to influence residential development in the County Borough.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 All local authorities have a requirement to consider the housing accommodation needs of their localities under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985. This requirement is vital for Councils to have a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of their local housing market(s) and to provide a robust evidence base for effective strategic housing and planning services.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 Within Wales, local authorities have a requirement to consider the housing accommodation needs of their localities under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985. In order to fulfil this requirement, Welsh Local Authorities must formulate Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs). LHMAs should consider the state of the whole housing market, including assessment of the need for affordable homes of different tenures.

4.2 The Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 has been completed in order to understand and investigate the nature and make-up of current and future housing needs across the area, providing robust evidence to support future planning. This document updates the findings of the last Local Housing Market Assessment completed in 2017/18. It has been produced in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance.

4.3 The Welsh Government's methodology has been used to assess the housing market within Rhondda Cynon Taf in order to complete the Assessment. A range of socio-economic, demographic and property market data was used to inform the Assessment to provide a detailed insight into the mechanisms of the local residential markets.

4.4 The Assessment serves a number of purposes, including informing:

- The development and review of local development plans and local housing strategies
- Decision-making in terms of negotiating the level, type and mix of affordable housing and other tenures
- The provision of affordable homes of different tenures
- Housing issues that are relevant to the authority's duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

5 LOCAL HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT SUMMARY FINDINGS

5.1 The Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 identifies the total housing need is **745 additional affordable housing units per annum**, comprising of 286 intermediate units (of which 229 need to be Low Cost Home Ownership) and 459 social rented units.

5.2 The Assessment indicates that for both market and affordable housing, overall, the need for 1 bedroom properties is higher than that of all other size properties with 409 units required per annum.

5.3 The Assessment also shows that South West Taf has the highest net need for affordable housing with 115 units needed per annum.

5.4 Furthermore, the Assessment revealed clear differences in the housing market across the County Borough; with demand in Taf being relatively higher than across the rest of the locality. Price to income ratios are far greater across Taf, meaning affordability is more of a significant issue in many parts of this area. Whilst other areas of the County Borough have a lower demand, there is evidence of housing market 'hotspots' in these other areas of the County Borough.

5.5 It is important to emphasise that this headline data should not be considered an annual delivery target or even the solution to the affordability issues within the County Borough. It instead indicates the level of housing need within RCT, which the Council will seek to address through a range of market interventions as far as practically possible. The housing need identified within the Assessment is best viewed at Housing Market Areas to ensure the needs of different types of housing in different markets are fully understood.

5.6 Furthermore, this figure (745) is based on the Council meeting all unmet need and forecasted additional need over a 5-year period as set out by Welsh Government. The term unmet need relates to people currently on the Common Housing Register waiting list and people who are registered on our Homestep mailing list. As such, this figure of 745 affordable housing units per annum differs from the Council's Local Development Plan annual figure as the data is calculated equally over a 15-year period.

6 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/ SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

6.1 In summary, there are many positive impacts to groups that are covered in the equality impact assessment. As the LHMA is an assessment of all housing need across RCT it naturally takes in to account all cohorts and it will inform future projects/strategies/policies

on key data points relating to current and future demand across the County Borough.

7   CONSULTATION/INVOLEMENT

7.1   The Assessment has been produced in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance, which has already been subject to consultation. A draft of the Assessment forms part of the Local Development Plan consultation process.

8   WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1   In summary there are many positive impacts to groups that are covered in the equality impact assessment. As the LHMA is an assessment of all housing need across RCT it naturally takes in to account all cohorts and will be published in Welsh and English. This will not only allow speakers and learners access to the assessment data but also allow future strategies/projects/policies to be created in the Welsh Language.

9.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(s)

9.1   There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

10   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1   The Assessment has been produced in accordance with the Welsh Government 'Local Housing Market Assessment Guide'. Publication will fulfil the Local Authority's requirements to assess housing need under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985.

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

11.1   The findings of this Assessment can be used to support the delivery of all three of the Corporate Plan priorities; people, places and prosperity. Investment in housing provides ongoing stimulus to the local economy by supporting the construction industry and local supply chains. New housing development often provides apprenticeships and employment opportunities for the local area, whilst improving outcomes for local residents. New provision helps support a huge range of households in society that may not otherwise be able to meet their needs in the market, thereby promoting independence and positive lives for all.

11.2   Schemes delivered by Registered Social Landlords are constructed to Welsh Development Quality Standards, which result in quality homes designed to meet the needs of residents both now and in the future (based on Lifetime Homes principles). In addition, units are secured through the planning system are clustered throughout private housing schemes, to help create integrated, sustainable neighbourhoods.

11.3   The Assessment will also continue to assist the Council to contribute to three of the seven wellbeing goals that 'The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

1. A healthier Wales
2. A prosperous Wales
3. A Wales of cohesive communities

12   CONCLUSION

12.1   This report has provided Members with a summary of the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028.

12.2   The Assessment has enabled the Local Authority to better understand the local housing markets in Rhondda Cynon Taf, building on past assessments. The findings will help ensure that the information underpinning the Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan and Housing Delivery Plan continues to be robust, comprehensive and up to date. The Assessment also sets out the nature and level of housing need in the County Borough in order to plan for effective housing services and deliver the right mix of housing to help develop sustainable communities.

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Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2022/2023-2027/2028

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Contents

1

Preface

This report document provides an overview of the Local Housing Market for Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). The data used in this report has been suggested by Welsh Government to provide a consistent report in respect to style and content, across all local authority areas in Wales.

This report will be used to inform areas of investment for social, intermediate and market housing, as well as the Council's Local Development Plan. The report will also highlight areas where there is a lack of data, which will allow local authorities and Welsh Government to investigate these data gaps.

This report has been produced by Rhondda Cynon Taf's Housing Strategy Team, in conjunction with Welsh Government and other key stakeholders.

Local authorities are required to undertake a LHMA every five years and rewrite and refresh their LHMA once during that five-year period. Whilst the LHMA is a five year assessment the data used to produce the outputs are based on 15 year projections. Local authorities can refresh their LHMAs more frequently if required but these would not be reviewed nor signed off by Welsh Government.

The refresh of this report will be carried out in the financial year 2025/2026 and will require a re-write in the financial year 2027/2028.

Some figures in this assessment have been rounded to the nearest whole figure, therefore these figures may not sum exactly due to the rounding.

1.Executive Summary

This Local Housing Market Assessment has utilised the Welsh Government methodology to assess the housing market within Rhondda Cynon Taf over the 5 years from 2022/2023-2027/2028, thus fulfilling the Council's statutory duties. A range of socio-economic, demographic and property market data was used to inform the Assessment to provide a detailed insight into the mechanics of the local residential markets. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence have been used in the creation of this Assessment to ensure a balanced and well evidenced outcome.

The Assessment shows the following:

- There is a need for 745 additional affordable housing units per annum, comprising 286 intermediate units (of which 229 need to be Low Cost Home Ownership) and 459 social rented units.
- South West Taf has the highest net need for affordable housing with 115 units needed per annum.
- One-bedroom units are the most sought-after size of dwelling in the social rented sector with, 409 units needed per annum.
- There is a wide range of differences in the private housing market across the County Borough; with property prices in Taf being relatively higher than across the rest of the locality.

It is important to emphasise that this headline need should not be considered an annual delivery target, it instead indicates the scale of need and demand in the housing market within RCT, which the Council will seek to at least, in part address through a range of market interventions.

The housing need identified within this Assessment is best viewed at Housing Market Area (HMA) level to ensure the needs for different types of housing in different markets are fully understood.

Whilst more affordable housing was delivered in RCT in the last LHMA period than in any other LHMA period, the assessment shows that the overall affordable housing need has still increased, albeit slightly.

The data outputs from this LHMA will be used to inform the WG prospectus, and will be used to inform the development of affordable housing.

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Rhondda Cynon Taf LHMA Report
2022/2023-2027/2028

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2. Introduction

2.1 National Policy Background

- **Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985** - Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985[i] places a statutory duty on local authorities to periodically assess the level of housing need in their area. It is vital that authorities have a comprehensive understanding of their local housing market(s) and provide a robust evidence base for effective strategic housing and planning services. Production of a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) falls under this duty, building upon the requirement to review housing needs through a more holistic review of the whole housing market. Local authorities are expected to rewrite LHMAs every five years and refresh that LHMA once during that five-year period (between years two and three) utilising section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003.

- **Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply** - The importance of LHMAs and using the best possible data on housing need and demand to inform housing policy and decisions regarding affordable housing supply, was underlined in the 2019 Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply. The Review placed significant emphasis on understanding exactly how many homes are needed, in which geographical areas and in what tenures. A robust LHMA is the key means of identifying this evidence at the local level.

- **Planning Policy Wales** - Planning Policy Wales also stresses that LHMAs form a fundamental part of the evidence base for development plans.

- **Housing (Wales) Act 2014** - In addition, local authorities must develop a homelessness strategy every four years under sections 50, 51 and 52 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The LHMA plays a fundamental role in informing this strategy which must include a review of the resources available to the local authority and other bodies associated with supporting people who are or may become homeless.

- **Equality Act 2010** - It is essential also for local authorities to consider their equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duties.

2.3 Local Policy Background

RCT's Corporate Plan was published in 2020 "Making a Difference". The Council's vision is to make RCT the "the best place in Wales to live, work, and play, where people and business are independent, healthy and prosperous" The plan has three main priorities: **People, Places and Prosperity,** all in support of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Housing is the foundation of all three of the main priorities. Having a sustainable place to call home does not only put a roof over a person's head but it can also promote community engagement, better health, better engagement with education and support the local economy.

The Council's draft local housing strategy *"PROSPEROUS HOMES, PROSPEROUS LIVES 2024 – 2029 - A Housing Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf"* contributes to the priorities of the Corporate Plan*.* The Strategy sets out four key objectives:

1.To enable a functional housing market that meets the needs of our communities

2.To promote sustainable communities and create homes that are safe, warm and healthy by improving housing conditions and investing in community regeneration

3.To enable access to all types of suitable and affordable housing that meets the needs of residents

4.To create prosperous communities by ensuring residents have access to housing advice and support that meets their needs

A robust LHMA can be the starting point of implementing the above four objectives, providing a snapshot of the condition of the market currently and how its needs will develop.

The LHMA also provides evidence for the Local Development Plan (LDP) providing the need data for housing that will be required to be supported by a level of infrastructure to cope with the demands of growth in our communities. The LDP will provide the evidence base for determining planning applications

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and sets the framework for the development of affordable housing for RCT over the next 15 years.

It is therefore important that Housing and Planning Policy teams work together in the creation of both documents so that no need is left unidentified.

2.3 Governance and Consultation

A collaborative approach has been used to carry out the LHMA. The Council's Housing Strategy team has engaged with numerous stakeholders in the development of this document, both internally and externally.

Focus groups with RCT's Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners have taken place in person and via Microsoft teams. Those involved have been Officers from development teams to housing managers to cover all aspects of each organisation.

There have been internal, in person and MS Teams meetings held with the Council's planning policy officers, as well as email communication to determine data points, as elements of the LHMA data will inform the LDP.

There has also been engagement with the University of South Wales Student's Union, Students, Tenants, Landlords, Letting agents and Local Residents in the Private Rental Sector (PRS), through forums and surveys.

3. Overview of Assessment and Methodology

3.2   Methodology, inputs and assumptions

The additional housing needs estimates are determined using the LHMA Tool. This Tool uses a formulaic approach to allocate the additional housing need, formed from the existing unmet need and the newly arising need (change in the household projections over the LHMA period), to the different housing tenures. All existing unmet need is allocated to affordable housing and assumed to be covered during the five years of the LHMA period. The newly arising need is allocated between market and affordable housing using a formulaic approach.

By housing market area (HMA), the LHMA Tool provides default data inputs for rent, house price paid and household projections (used to generate the newly arising need) with local authorities providing the income percentile distributions, existing unmet need and the planned supply and turnover of existing stock. The latter two data inputs are considered over the first five years only of the LHMA period and are fully allocated to affordable housing. This is because it becomes less accurate to predict supply beyond the five years of the LHMA period. A local authority can have up to 20 Housing Market Areas which are defined using wards, middle-layer super output areas (MSOAs) or lower-layer super output areas (LSOAs). Each HMA can have up to 40 wards, MSOAs or LSOAs.

The input data together with several assumptions is used to generate an income level above which households would be considered able to meet their needs in the market and a lower income level below which households are in need of social rent. The intermediate households are those not allocated to market housing or social rent. The LHMA Tool also forecasts how the data inputs may change over the five years of the LHMA period.

The output tables from the LHMA Tool are used as the starting point for development plans to provide the range of LHMA additional housing need estimates.

3.2   Housing Market Areas (HMAs)

The Housing Market Areas have been defined geographically based on longstanding local knowledge and research into the natural, functional areas where people currently live and would be willing to move home. The Housing Market Areas have been identified by the Council. They are essentially based on clusters of wards in recognition of the fact that housing markets are not constrained by administrative boundaries. Several key factors have been considered when defining these areas, including the broad price of housing (to

consider 'transferability' within the market) and major transport links by road or rail (to take account of commuting patterns).

Rhondda Cynon Taf is made up of 13 Housing Market Area, 4 are in the Rhondda Valley, 3 are in the Cynon Valley and 6 are in Taf Ely area as depicted in the image below:

Figure 1: HMAs of RCT
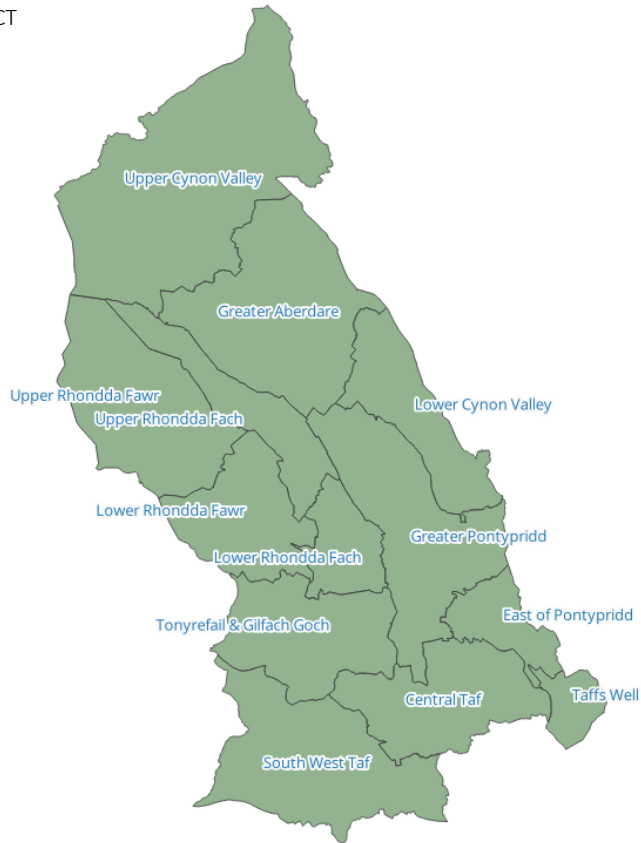
RCT's higher value rents and property purchase price Housing Market Area are in the South of the borough, mainly in the Taf Ely area. This is because of the access to main highways through South Wales and geographically near Cardiff.

Each Housing Market Area contains several different wards, that are represented by elected councillors. The below table shows which wards are in

HMA	Wards							
Upper Cynon Valley	Hirwaun	Penywaun	Rhigos					
Greater Aberdare	Aberaman	Aberdare East	Aberdare	Llwydcoed	Cwmbach			
Lower Cynon Valley	Abercynon	Mountain Ash	Penrhiwceiber					
Greater Pontypridd	Hopkinstown	Cilfynydd	Glyncoch	Graig	Pontypridd	Rhondda	Trallwn	Ynysybwl
Lower Rhondda Fach	Cymmer	Porth	Trehafod	Ynyshir				
Upper Rhondda Fach	Ferndale	Maerdy	Tylorstown					
Upper Rhondda Fawr	Pentre	Treherbert	Treorchy					
Lower Rhondda Fawr	Clydach Vale	Llwynypia	Penygraig	Tonypandy	Trealaw	Ystrad		
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	Gilfach Goch	Tonyrefail West	Tonyrefail East	Tonyrefail				
South West Taf	Brynna	Llanharan	Llanharry	Pontyclun	Talbot Green			
Central Taf	Beddau	Church Village	Llantrisant	Llantwit Fardre	Tonteg	Tynant		
East of Pontypridd	Hawthorn	Rhydyfelin	Treforest					
Taffs Well	Taffs Well							

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each Housing Market Area.

4. Overview of Housing Market and Socio-economic and Demographic Trends

4.3 Housing Market Analysis by Tenure

RCT covers an area of the South Wales Valleys that is as far North as the Brecon Beacons and as far south as the outskirts of Cardiff. It comprises a mix of urban, semi-suburban and rural communities situated in the mountains and lowland farmland.

RCT covers an area of 424 square Km with a population of 237,700, that has increased by 1.4% since 2011.

At the time of the most recent Census in 2021, the median age for the county borough was 41 years but the largest age group is 50-64 years, with 20.2% of the population making up this cohort.

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The Census 2021, reveals that 12% of the population in RCT identifies as being disabled. In its summary of the Census 2021 data, the Office for National Statistics explain that the Census 2021 data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and "this may have influenced how people perceived their health status and activity limitations, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond".

The highest percentage of people residing in RCT identify as Welsh only at 69.8% and British only being the second largest at 11.5%. 96.7% of people in RCT identify their ethnic group within the "White" category, whilst 1.5% identify their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category.

The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" category decreased from 0.6% in 2011 to 0.4% in 2021.

As of 2020 there were a total of 106,316 households in RCT and the Census 2021 data shows the breakdown in tenure as the following:
- 68.3% own outright or with a mortgage (including Low Cost Home Ownership)
- 0.2% Shared ownership
- 13.7% Social rented
- 17.6% Private rented
- 0.1% Lives rent free

The number of private rented households has increased by 4% from 2011 to 2021, the percentage of owner occupiers has decreased by 2.7%, while the percentage of those social renting has remained the same. The average cost of a property in RCT has increased by so much, that now even more people are unable to own their own home on the open market, therefore, there has been more of a reliance on the Private Rental Sector (PRS).

The median price for a property in RCT is £123,604 (April 2022) which represents a 29.2% increase from 2019 but a 1.1% decrease from 2021. As has been the case all over Wales in recent years, house prices have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased inflation figures, causing the market to swell in 2019 but to narrowly reduce in more recent years as the market has slowed.

The highest median price in RCT is in Southwest Taff at £217,543 (Land Registry, 2022), and the lowest in Upper Rhondda Fach at £95,917.

In 2022 there were a total of 3,991 properties sold in RCT with the greatest number of sales being made in Greater Aberdare Housing Market Area at 580. The lowest in the county borough was Taffs Well Housing Market Area at 54.

The highest proportion of dwellings in RCT is terraced housing making up 47.35% percent of the 103,339, a legacy left after the industrialisation of the

South Wales Valleys. Semi-detached and detached housing make up 27.79% and 16.46% respectively, with flats maisonette or apartment at 8.31% and at less than 1%, a caravan or other mobile or temporary structure.

Figure 3: Dwelling by type.

Dwelling By Building Type

- 17% Whole house or bungalow: Detached
- 28% Whole house or bungalow: Semi-detached
- 47% Whole house or bungalow: Terraced
- 8% Flat, maisonette or apartment
- A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure
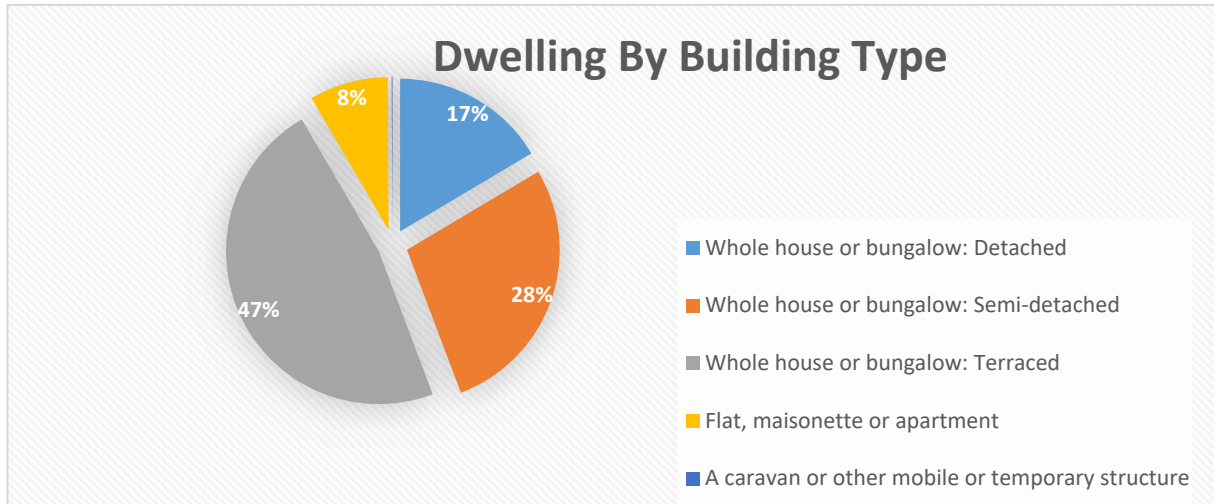
The Private Rented Sector has had a growing presence in the RCT's local housing market, along with an increase in rental prices. Since 2016 the average median monthly rent in RCT has risen by 22%, in 2022 average median rent being £521.

Figure 3 shows the Median annual rent values per Housing Market Area (April

Figure 4: Median Annual Rent per HMA

HMA	Median* Annual Rent
Upper Cynon Valley	£ 5,268.00
Greater Aberdare	£ 6,207.34
Lower Cynon Valley	£ 6,202.33
Greater Pontypridd	£ 7,582.44
Lower Rhondda Fach	£ 6,304.00
Upper Rhondda Fach	£ 5,262.83
Upper Rhondda Fawr	£ 5,521.98
Lower Rondda Fawr	£ 6,140.68
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	£ 6,557.08
South West Taf	£ 9,258.95
Central Taf	£ 8,417.92
East of Pontypridd	£ 7,800.00
Taffs Well	£ 9,940.00

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2022). The highest median annual rent is Taffs Well and the lowest is Upper Rhondda Fach.

As of April 2022, 2.5% of RCT's private housing stock was empty which equates to 2,676 empty homes.

Figure 5 shows the number of empty homes per Housing Market Area (April 2022). The highest number of empty homes is in Upper Rhondda Fawr and the lowest in Taffs Well.

Figure 5: Empty Properties per HMA
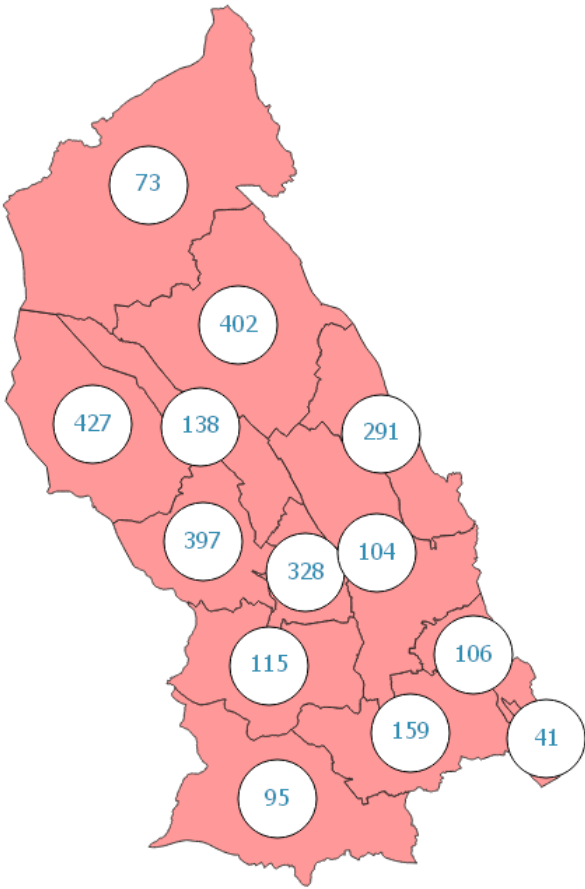
Although on the surface, empty properties within the local authority area present an opportunity to develop more social rent, this is a challenge. As the nature of the empty property stock presents difficulties bringing them to Welsh Government's Housing Quality Standards. This issue combined with much of the stock being pre-1970s terraced housing, presents challenges in terms of value for money.

4.3   Socio-Economic and Demographic Trends

According to the Census 2021 data, 58.74% of households in RCT are

economically active, with the most being Owner Occupiers. The pie charts below show the percentage split of economically active households by tenure.

Figure 6 shows that residents who are economically active primarily reside in the owner occupier tenure at 72%, followed by the PRS at 20% and lastly, social rented at 8%.

Figure 6: Economically Active by Tenure

ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE BY TENURE

- ◪ Owned
- ◪ Rented: Private rented or lives rent free
- ◪ Rented: Social rented

8%
20%
72%
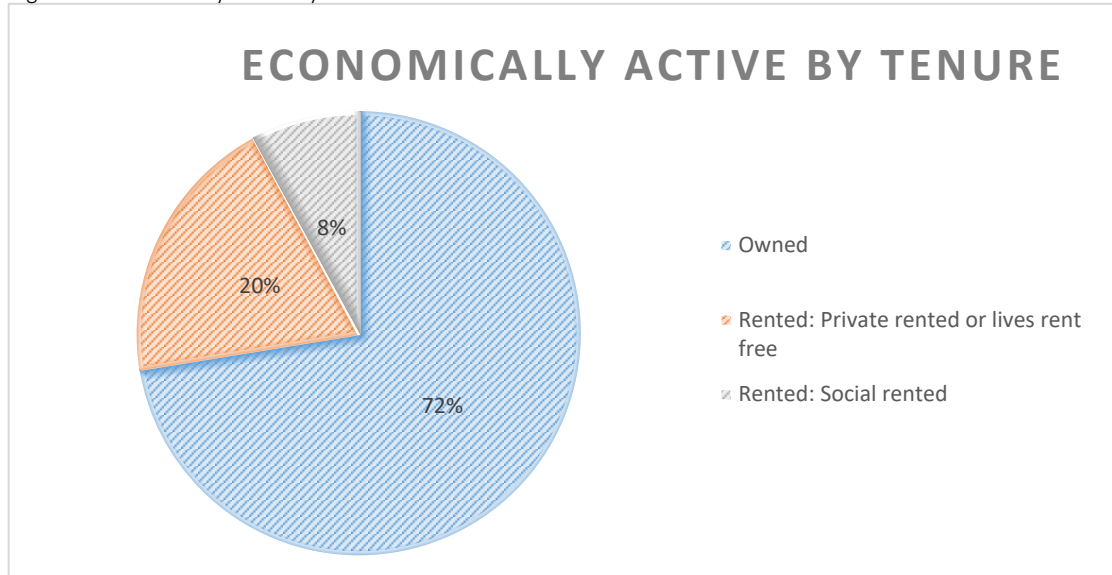
Figure 7 below shows that residents who are economically inactive primarily reside in the owner occupier tenure at 63%, followed by the social rent at 22% and lastly, PRS at 15%.

Figure 7: Economically Inactive by Tenure

ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE BY TENURE

- ◪ Owned
- ◪ Rented: Private rented or lives rent free
- ◪ Rented: Social rented

22%
15%
63%

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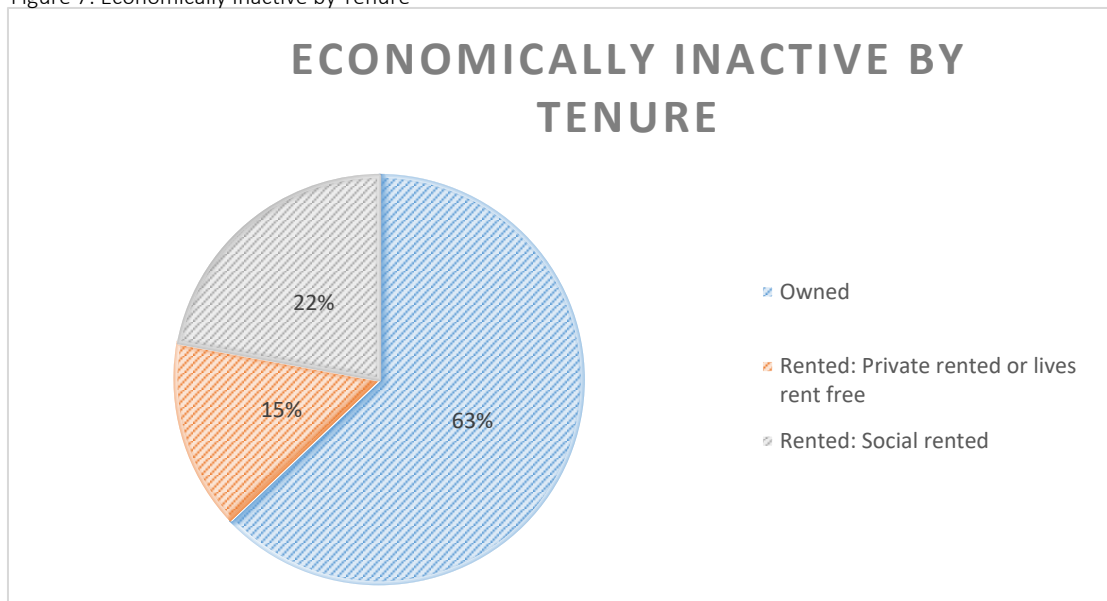
In 2022 the affordability ratio for a median income to purchase a property in RCT was 4.57, with the median house price being £136,000.00. This means a purchaser would require a household's income to be £29,727.00 to obtain and own their own home.

In the PRS the average annual median rent is £6,958.73, this represents a 23% portion of the average median household income in RCT.

Figure 8 below shows that the majority of RCT's total households comprise of single-family households making up 63.98% of the total households in RCT.

Figure 8: Household Composition

Tudalen 687
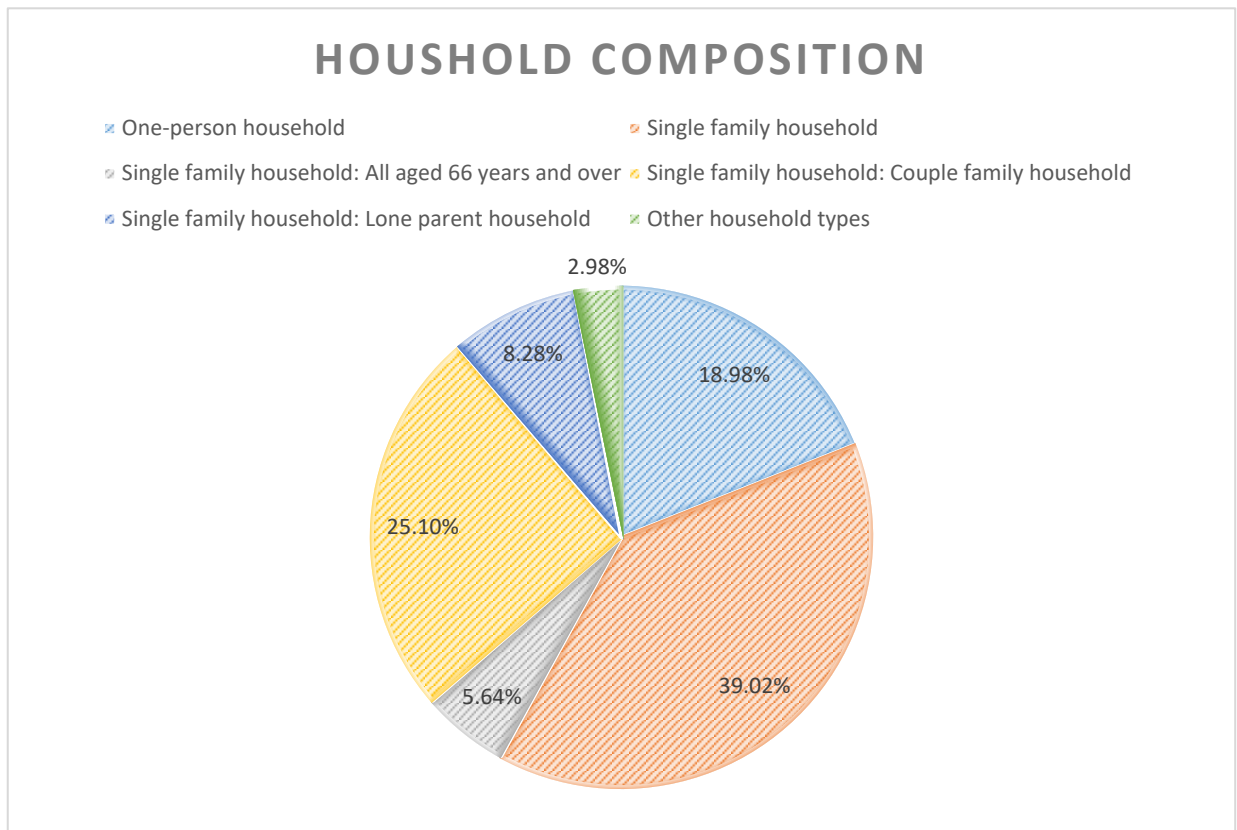
The majority of households in RCT are under-occupying their homes (these are households that have more bedrooms than they require e.g. single person living in a 3 bed property), with 43,822 households under-occupying by 2 bedrooms or more. Figure 8 below shows that the HMA with the most people under-occupying their homes is Greater Aberdare.

Figure 9: Over & Under Occupancy
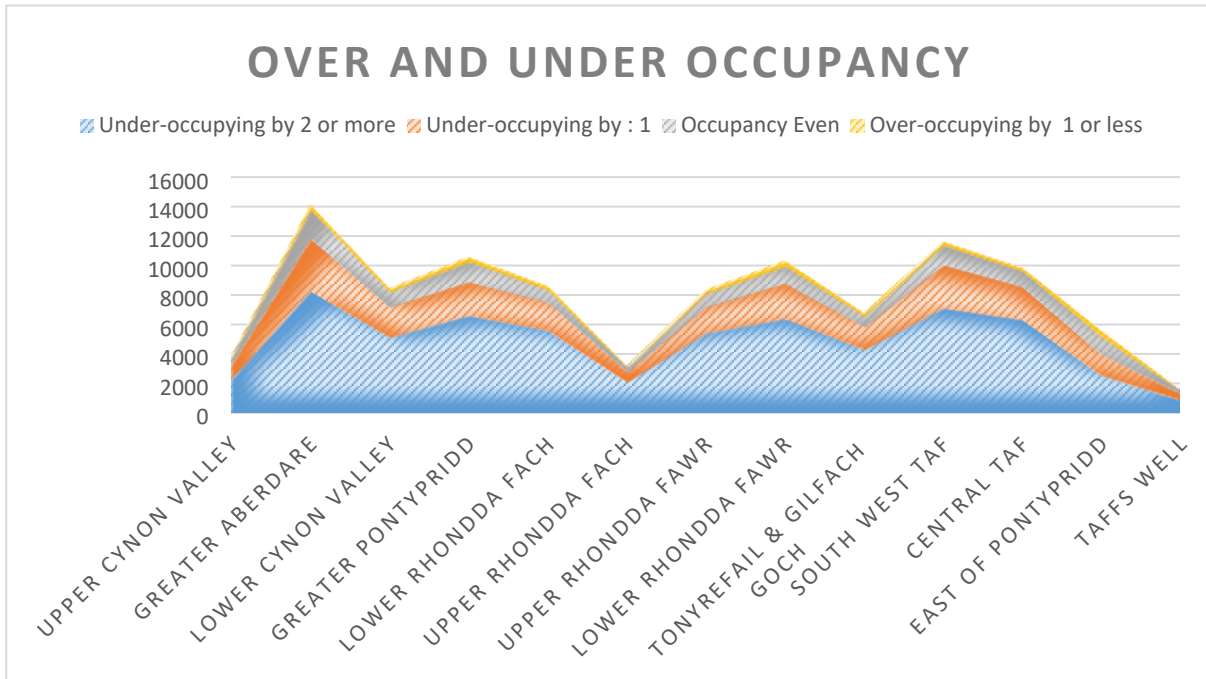
Figure 10 below shows that 32,785 (32%) households in RCT have one person living with a disability and 10,103 (9%) with two or more.

Figure 10: Households with Disabilities

Tudalen 688
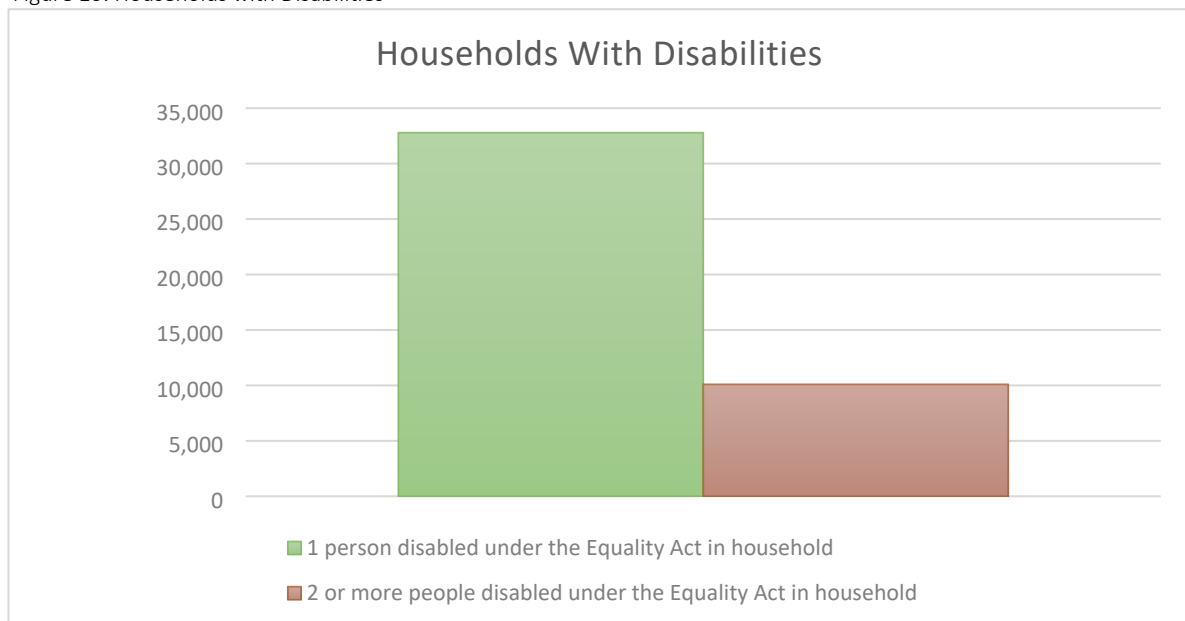
Figure 11 below shows that the majority of people working in RCT travel less than 10km to their place of work with most people not in employment being aged 50+.

Figure 11: Commuting Distance

COMMUTING DISTANCE

Legend: Aged 65 years and over, Aged 50 to 64 years, Aged 35 to 49 years, Aged 25 to 34 years, Aged 16 to 24 years

Categories: Not in employment or works mainly offshore, in no fixed place or outside the UK; Works mainly from home; 30km and over; 10km to less than 30km; Less than 10km; Number of Residents

Tudalen 689
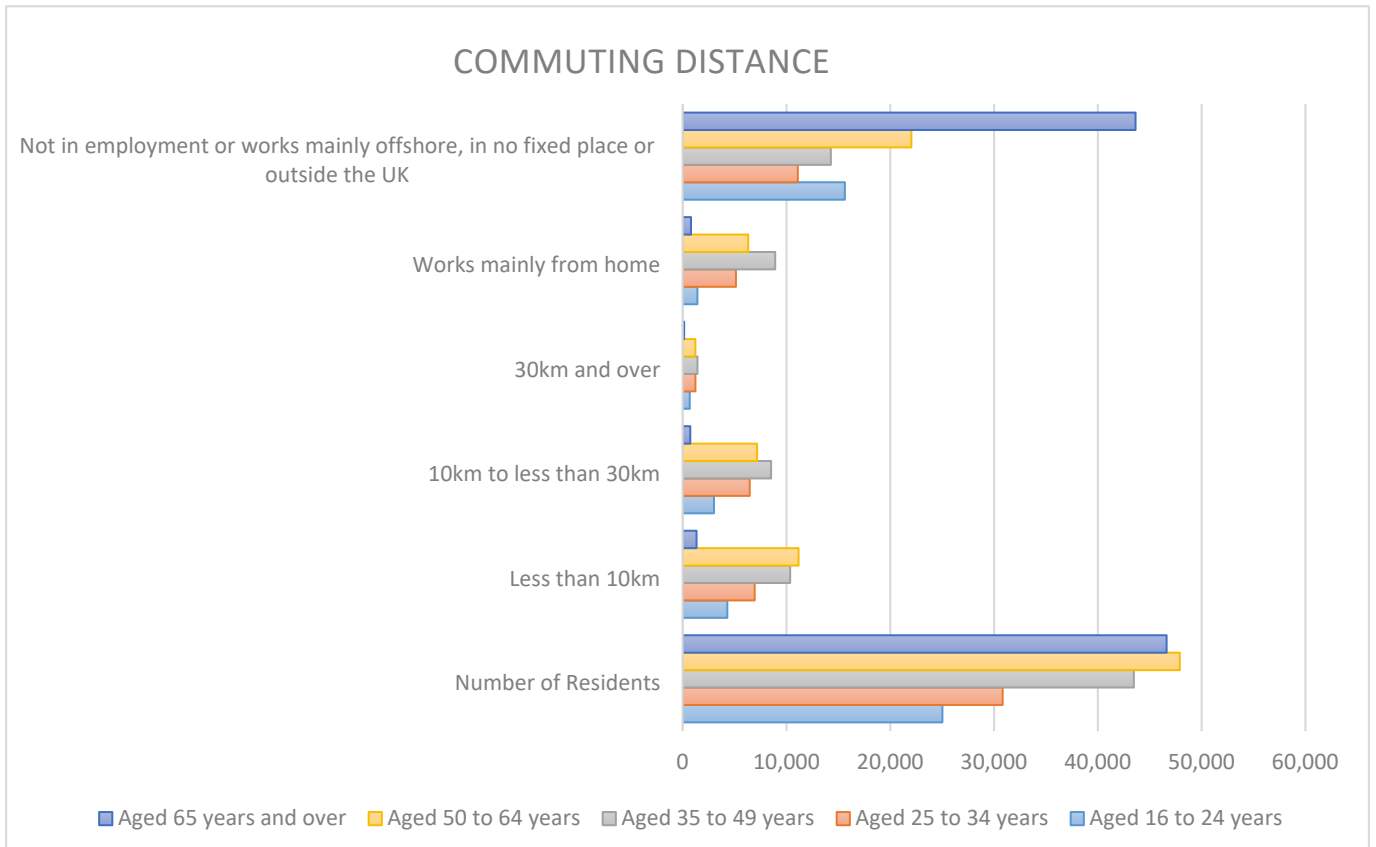
4.3 Specific Housing Needs Requirements

Apart from the general housing market there are specific housing needs for individuals that require exceptional provision. This section will outline the strategies and policies that are in place, by different Council service areas, to deal with the demand of accommodation that is upon them.

Where gaps in data are identified, this presents an opportunity to review and consider if there is a need to enhance a strategic focus in these areas.

a)	Accessible and adapted housing provision
Local policies/ strategies	Draft Allocation Policy 2024
Property needs (key section)	Accessible properties for people who require level access facilities ranging from shower rooms and wet rooms to rise and fall kitchens
Suitable for	People with limited mobility where general needs properties would cause day to day life limitations.
Evidence including data sources (key section)	Evidence has been collected from the Authority's Draft Allocation Scheme review where key stakeholders were consulted on how properties are allocated and what the barriers are in terms of supply.
External stakeholder consultation and engagement	Waiting list applicants, RSL lettings officers, housing register officers, housing officers and housing strategy officers.
Key Issues identified	Applicants found that there wasn't enough detail to understand what level 2 adaptations had been installed at each property, and OT assessments are often not useful when determining need as they are often out of date. Housing professionals have said that there is not enough stock and evidence that is provided by applicants is not robust enough to determine actual need. There is also a lack of information held by RSLs to determine what stock is currently in commission to determine need.

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b) Multi-generational and/or larger families requiring larger properties	
Local policies/ strategies	Allocations Policy 2018
Property needs (key section)	Currently larger property needs are only calculated on a bedroom need basis and cultural needs are not considered.
Suitable for	Large families and multi- generational households.
Evidence including data sources (key section)	Common housing waiting lists and families that are housed in temporary accommodation.
External stakeholder consultation and engagement	Waiting list applicants, RSL lettings officers, housing register officers, housing officers and housing strategy officers.
Key Issues identified	Lack of the appropriate size stock in the county borough results in larger families often accepting smaller homes to ensure they are housed.

c) Non-permanent housing	
Local policies/ strategies	Housing Support Grant (HSG) Needs Assessment, HSG Strategy, Rapid Rehousing Action Plan.
Property needs (key section)	524 individuals, families and groups have been placed in temporary accommodation in 2020/2021 (as of the end of March). 40% of the 524 were placed in temporary accommodation multiple times, leading to a total of 852 placements in 2020/2021 (as of the end of March). 852 placements represent an increase of nearly 257 placements year-on-year, from 595 in 2019/20.
Suitable for	Nearly half of all cases were identified as having no apparent priority need (priority need categories include; pregnant women, people with dependent children, homeless as a result of fire, flood or other disaster, young people aged 16 or 17, people aged 18 – 20 who are at particular risk, victims of domestic abuse, armed forces personnel, prison leaver, care leavers aged 18 – 20, vulnerable as a result of some special reason, and people who are street homeless). Households containing a vulnerable member due to 'mental illness/learning disability' represent the second largest group and physical disability represent the third largest group.
Evidence including data sources (key section)	1) One bedroom accommodation is the highest need of housing across all bands of RCT's social housing waiting list 'Homefinder', however across all sectors there is a significant lack of single person and one bedroom permanent accommodation.

	2) Current Temporary Accommodation is at capacity but the Council is working at identifying a site to cater for more units, the majority of which are 1 bedroom. 3) All data has been collected from the Council's HSG needs assessment 2023 and has provided a mix of qualitative and quantitative data.
External stakeholder consultation and engagement	Stakeholders such as the NHS and third sector organisations such as Crisis were engaged in the HSG needs assessment.
Key Issues identified	Homelessness data is a data set that varies with the current social economic status of any Local Authority. Numbers have increased in recent times, mainly due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the increasing cost of living that is affecting the most vulnerable in our society in the most part.

d) Housing, care and support needs	
Local policies/ strategies	Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Regional Partnership Board, 10-Year Strategic Capital Plan 31 July 2023.
Property needs (key section)	Extra care contemporary sheltered housing, supported living for people with a learning disability and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder , temporary supported housing & Respite.
Suitable for	Children and young people Older people and people with dementia People with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments People with learning disabilities and autism People with mental health problems Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV)
Evidence including data sources (key section)	**Children & Young People** *Identified service development priorities:* • Additional residential, and/or strengthening access to existing, provision • Accommodation for young people with learning disabilities transitioning from children's services • Appropriate accommodation for people with learning disabilities and for young people leaving care • Lack of suitable step-down from homelessness or supported housing • Demand for short breaks is increasing *Current demand profile:* • 90% of RTC's children looked after in residential care are placed out of county • RCT believes it has sufficient capacity if no other local authorities used

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beds in the county. In September 2021 RCT was only able to avail of 7
out of 50 beds
• As of July 2023, RCT report 60 children and young people placed in
residential accommodation, of which 39 were out of region and 4 were
out of Wales
• Responding to the emerging accommodation needs of the estimated
annual allocation of 48-50 UASC, some of whom will require supported
accommodation
• It is predicted 58 young people aged 18+ will leave care in 2023

Sources:
• The Looked After Children: Residential Care Transformation Strategy 2022-2027
• Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) 2017 – 2022,
• Quarterly External Residential Review Report, April 2023
• Bespoke HICO data gathering tool

Older People and People with Dementia
Current no of units of designated accommodation for older people – 1547 (2020)
Current no of units of extra care housing for older people – 60 (2020)

Age designated rent including suitable Sheltered Housing needed by 2025: 414 by 2035: 780
Retirement for sale needed by 2025: 46 and by 2035: 87.
Extra Care Rent: by needed 2025 and by 2035: 214
Extra Care for sale by needed 2025: 7 and by 2035: 24
Step Up/Step Down by needed 2025: 2 and by 2035: 6
Nursing Care Beds needed by 2025: 226 and by 2035: 406

Mental Health

Challenges
The Housing Support Strategy includes plans to review the supported accommodation market to respond to the increasing level of complex presentations:

• The RCT Prospectus 2022-23 reports a year-on-year increase of 11% in mental health referrals, however, it projects this will rise significantly in the aftermath of COVID-19.
• 105 individuals with mental health issues who require different forms of accommodation in RCT, with 88 of these requiring stepdown provision.
• As of June 2023, there are 7 individuals placed out of county in specialist mental health nursing placement for younger adults as there is no such provision in RCT.

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	Planned future accommodation for adults with mental health challenges – 105 units.

Physical Disability and Sensory Need (PD&SN)

In RCT there are currently 26 individuals with physical disabilities in specialist placements that should be considered for new accommodation that can better meet their needs and bring them closer to home. The net annual need for accessible social housing accommodation is currently 13 units in RCT.
1337 households require adaptations to make them accessible for disabled people and a further 1318 households need to move to a more suitable home in RCT. However, it is presumed these figures relate in the main to the needs of older adults with emerging frailty issues.

Learning Disability & Autism

The Council reports that as of 2022/3 there are:
47 people with LD living in residential care - 31 are out of county
45 adults with LD on a waiting list for accommodation

In RCT over the next 5-year period, 97 young people will transition to adulthood with a learning disability and potentially require accommodation.
Commissioning and uptake of shared lives placements will have an impact on demand for future capital investment.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

The RPB has not previously considered the capital requirements of supporting survivors of VAWDASV. A focus on creating detailed capacity and demand assessments is required across each council area and the region as a whole in relation to accommodation for people experiencing VAWDASV. This should include:
• Capacity and demand assessment for single female survivors
• Demand assessment for single male survivors
• Capacity and demand assessment for survivors with children
• Capacity and demand assessment for survivors with complex mental health and substance misuse challenges
• Capacity and demand assessment for survivors from black and ethnic minoritycommunities
• Demand assessment for perpetrators |
| **External stakeholder consultation and engagement** | Engagement with CTMRPB key partners and other stakeholders was carried out via formal, structured meetings and workshops (a combination of face-to-face and virtual). Engagement events were used to gather the data and information required to develop the SCP, as well as to brief stakeholders on the development process and provide key progress updates. Stakeholders provided their |

| | professional opinion on the needs of client groups as well as additional data on need not necessarily previously in the public domain.

The RPB has undertaken extensive engagement with people with lived experience in the process of developing its Area Plan. This has been reflected in the analysis of needs and a framework for future co-production as part of the Five Case Business Case process has been developed. |
|---|---|
| **Key Issues identified** | There is currently a significant lack of stock across all areas of care and support accommodation and as part of the strategy RCT will work with it's RPB partners in order to deliver the accommodation that is needed for their residents. |

e) Locational needs for student accommodation Private Rented Sector	
Local policies/ strategies	Private Rented Sector Strategy.
Land needs (key section)	The University of South Wales Treforest Campus and surrounding area.
Evidence including data sources (key section)	1) There is a total of 549 (3.02%) Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in RCT. Historically HMOs in RCT have been the domain of students and this associated demand has seen the highest concentrations developed in the areas adjacent to the University of South Wales, predominantly in the Treforest ward or Greater Pontypridd HMA. 2) There has been a reduction in the number of students living in Treforest, which could be the result of the merger with Newport and Merthyr, one of the faculties being based in Cardiff The LHMA 2017/18 – 2022/23 states that "local feedback from landlords suggests that there is less of a guaranteed student market in Treforest than there once was".
External stakeholder consultation and engagement	In creating the PRS strategy the University of South Wales, Local Authority Housing Strategy officers, landlords and local residents were all consulted.
Key Issues identified	The spread of geographical location

f) Locational needs for people with physical or cultural needs	
Local policies/ strategies	Allocation Policy 2018 - Reasonable Preference category s167 (2) (e) – People who need to move to a particular locality within the

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	local authority's district where failure to meet need would cause hardship to themselves or to others.
	
	Reasonable Preference Categories s167 (2) (a), (b), (c) and (d) Applicants who need to move to be nearer to:
	  a. A child's school (where the need to move to a school has been recommended by the Director of Education)
	  b. b. A place of worship as there is no suitable place of worship where the applicant currently resides.

Property needs (key section)	Close proximity to places of worship and services.
Suitable for	People with Physical and Cultural needs
Evidence including data sources (key section)	Common housing register waiting list currently has 2 applications that meet the need identified.
External stakeholder consultation and engagement	Applicants to the common housing register waiting list and waiting list staff.
Key Issues identified	Due to the low demand of applicants on the register, the lack of demand means that it would not be cost effective to develop any interventions, however general allocations through the common housing register could be offered

5.Range of additional housing need estimates

This section of the report presents the findings of the affordability analysis that has been produced using the Welsh Government LHMA tool. All data relating to the last 10 years of the LHMA are listed in Appendix A.

Market Housing Need.

Welsh Government approved sources have been put through the LHMA tool to create the data output tables below. The figures are based on WG's principal household projections.

Chart 3 shows that the greatest need for market housing in the 5 years of the LHMA period is Greater Aberdare, with the largest proportion being in the owner occupier sector. This mirrors the situation borough wide, as is shown on the first bar of the chart.

Chart 3: Annual additional market housing need estimates split by tenure over the first 5 years of the LHMA period.

Siart 3: Amcangyfrifon blynyddol o'r angen am dai ychwanegol ar y farchnad agored yn ôl deiliadaeth dros 5 mlynedd gyntaf cyfnod yr LHMA

Chart 3: Annual additional market housing need estimates split by tenure over the first 5 years of the LHMA period
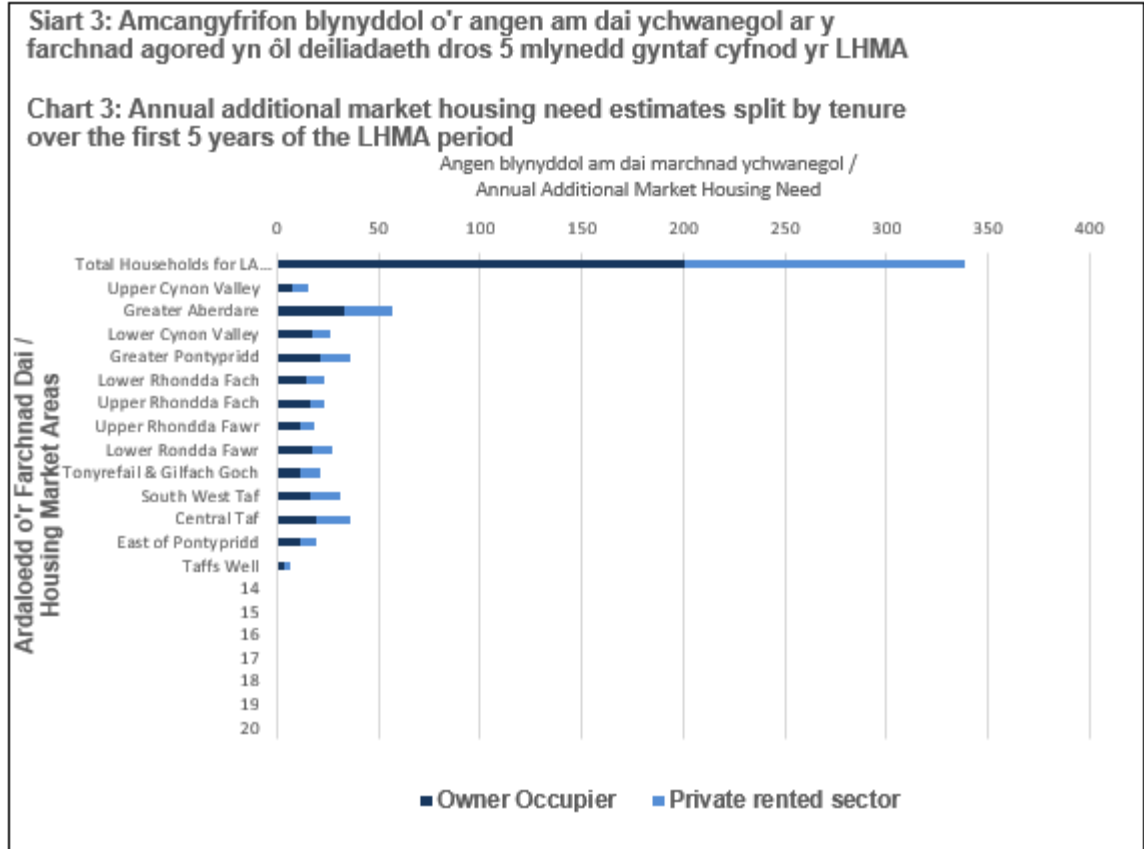
Figure 12 provides specific numbers for chart 3, it shows a summary of annual additional market housing need estimates (owner occupier and the private rented sector) over 2026/2027 – 2036/2037. The highest demand area for market housing in the first 5 years of the LHMA period is Greater Aberdare, followed by Central Taf, with the least need located in Taffs Well.

Figure 12: First 5 Years Annual Need Across All Tenures

HMA	Owner Occupier	Private rented sector	Annual additional market housing need over the first 5 years of the LHMA period
Total Households for LA :Rhondda Cynon Taf	200	138	338
Upper Cynon Valley	7	8	15
Greater Aberdare	33	23	57
Lower Cynon Valley	18	8	26
Greater Pontypridd	21	14	36
Lower Rhondda Fach	15	8	23
Upper Rhondda Fach	16	8	24
Upper Rhondda Fawr	11	7	18
Lower Rondda Fawr	17	10	27
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	11	10	21
South West Taf	16	15	31
Central Taf	19	17	36
East of Pontypridd	12	8	20
Taffs Well	4	3	6

Data Sources and Key assumptions

The tables below (Figures 14, 15 and 16) provide information on the data sources and key assumptions that have informed the above outputs for additional housing need estimates. These figures are also shown in Appendix B for ease of reference.

It is important that we evidence where the key data sources come from and what data is assumed. Figure 13 below shows what the data or key assumption is, where the source of that data comes from, and the year in which the data relates to.

Figure 14: Data Items/Key Assumptions

Data items / Key assumptions	Data Sources	Basis of the data
Income data by HMA	Paycheck	2022
House price paid data by HMA	Land Registry Data	Calendar year
		increase
Assumed house price increases 2020-2023	WG House Price Index data	29.2%
Assumed house price increases 2021-2023	WG House Price Index data	9.5%
Assumed house price increases 2022-2023	WG House Price Index data	-1.1%
Rent prices	Rent Officers Wales	Calendar year
Household projection basis	Principal	
	Default or user	**Selected %**
Market housing affordability criteria	Default	30.00%
Social rent affordability criteria	Default	35.00%
Existing unmet need is spread equally over the first 5 years		
Percentage of households considered for owner occupier tenure that go on to buy		60.00%

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To determine affordability in the housing market, it is a requirement to forecast income growth and how that compares to the cost of housing. Figure 15 illustrates how the labour and housing market is forecast to change from 2022/2023 – 2027/2028.

Figure 15: Income, House Price, Rent Price & Income Distribution Growth.

	Default or user	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Change in income growth	Default	2.33%	2.76%	2.84%	2.77%	3.58%
Change in house prices	Default	-1.12%	-5.67%	1.14%	3.43%	3.59%
Change in private rent prices	Default	5.04%	1.77%	1.67%	1.86%	2.49%
Change in income distribution growth	No change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Figure 16 shows that the cheapest Housing Market Area to purchase a home for the first time is the Lower Cynon Valley at £79,107 and the most expensive is South West Taf at £168,101. This assessment has used the loan to value ratio of 4.1, that has been provided by WG.

Figure 16: FTB Price, Ratio with Max and Min Income for Intermediate Rent

HMA	FTB property price	FTB property value to income ratio	Min. income for intermediate rent	Max. income for intermediate rent
Upper Cynon Valley	£ 109,068	4.1	£ 13,339	£ 18,445
Greater Aberdare	£ 96,906	4.1	£ 16,400	£ 21,733
Lower Cynon Valley	£ 79,107	4.1	£ 17,133	£ 21,716
Greater Pontypridd	£ 115,693	4.1	£ 20,659	£ 26,548
Lower Rhondda Fach	£ 85,040	4.1	£ 16,343	£ 22,072
Upper Rhondda Fach	£ 66,252	4.1	£ 13,829	£ 18,426
Upper Rhondda Fawr	£ 82,073	4.1	£ 15,028	£ 19,334
Lower Rondda Fawr	£ 84,051	4.1	£ 15,615	£ 21,500
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	£ 115,599	4.1	£ 16,067	£ 22,958
South West Taf	£ 168,101	4.1	£ 25,919	£ 32,418
Central Taf	£ 154,876	4.1	£ 23,350	£ 29,473
East of Pontypridd	£ 115,693	4.1	£ 21,794	£ 27,310
Taffs Well	£ 158,213	4.1	£ 27,019	£ 34,802

Affordable Housing Need Estimates

Charts 5 and 6 show the annual average additional affordable housing estimates over the first 5 years of the LHMA, the remaining 10 are located in Appendix A.

As per the situation for open market housing, South West Taf, Central Taf, Greater Aberdare and East of Pontypridd are among the highest areas of need for affordable housing for the last 10 years of the LHMA period but Southwest and Central Taf are now the lead areas over the first 5 years. Chart 5 below illustrates that the highest affordable housing need for the first 5 years of the LHMA, is for social rent across the borough with 4 HMAs needing over 100 or more units a year delivered to keep up with the need.

Chart 5: Annual additional affordable housing need split by tenure for the first 5 years.
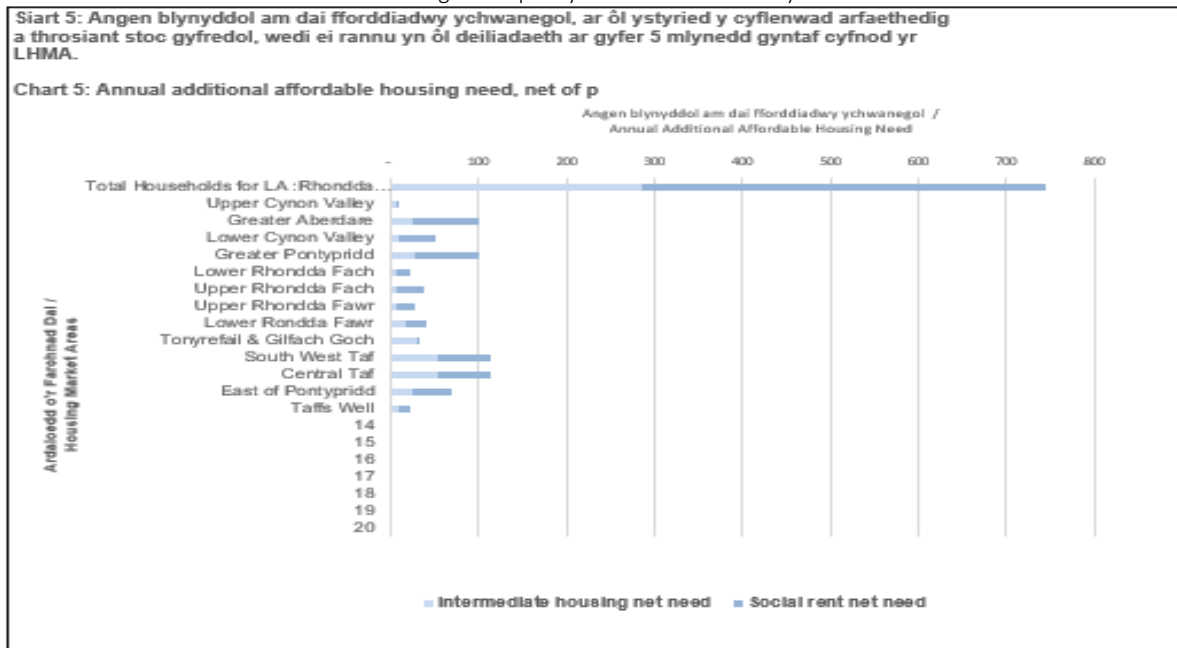
Figure 17 is a summary of additional annual (gross and net) affordable housing need estimates over the first 5 years of the LHMA 2022/23 – 2027/28. Gross need represents the number of new units needed, discounting the planned supply and turnover of existing stock. Net is the number of new units needed including the planned supply and turnover of existing stock.

Figure 17: Summary of additional annual (gross and net) affordable housing need estimates over the first 5 years of the LHMA 2022/23 – 2026/27.

HMAs	Intermediate rent — Existing unmet need	Intermediate rent — Newly arising need	LCHO — Existing unmet need	LCHO — Newly arising need	Social rent (existing unmet need) — one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	Social rent (newly arising need) — one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	Annual additional affordable housing need — Affordable housing need	...intermediate rent element	...LCHO element	...social rent element	Social Rents by Bedrooms — one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	Intermediate rents — Stock and supply	Net need	LCHO — Stock and supply	Net need	Social rent - one bedroom — Stock and supply	Net need	Social rent - two bedrooms — Stock and supply	Net need	Social rent - three bedrooms — Stock and supply	Net need	Social rent - four+ bedrooms — Stock and supply	Net need	Intermediate housing net need	Social rent net need	Affordable housing net need
Total Households for Rhondda Cynon Taf	-	73	229	-12	325	218	118	83	34	11	6	1,119	73	217	829	409	252	129	39	-	73	3	213	169	239	146	120	70	67	8	32	286	459	745
Upper Cynon Valley	-	3	3	-	9	10	6	2	1	0	0	36	3	3	30	11	11	6	2	-	3	-	3	10	1	11	-	6	-	1	1	6	2	8
Greater Aberdare	-	11	18	-2	56	32	20	12	5	2	1	159	11	16	132	68	37	22	6	-	11	1	15	17	50	28	9	9	12	1	5	26	76	102
Lower Cynon Valley	-	6	6	-1	25	19	11	7	3	1	1	80	6	5	69	32	22	12	3	-	6	-	5	11	22	11	11	7	5	-	2	11	40	51
Greater Pontypridd	-	8	22	-1	40	23	10	10	4	1	1	122	8	21	93	50	27	11	5	-	8	-	21	13	37	6	21	1	10	1	4	29	72	101
Lower Rhondda Fach	-	6	3	-1	21	15	9	6	2	1	0	65	6	2	57	27	18	10	2	-	6	-	2	21	6	15	3	6	4	1	1	8	14	23
Upper Rhondda Fach	-	6	1	-1	17	16	8	6	2	1	0	57	6	0	52	23	18	9	2	-	6	-	-	6	16	8	10	4	5	-	2	6	33	38
Upper Rhondda Fawr	-	3	4	-1	17	10	5	4	1	0	0	46	3	4	40	20	12	5	2	-	3	-	4	11	9	4	8	3	2	-	2	7	21	28
Lower Rhondda Fawr	-	7	13	-1	26	16	9	6	3	1	0	81	7	12	63	32	18	10	3	-	7	-	12	26	6	11	7	4	6	-	3	19	22	41
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	-	5	26	-1	19	13	9	4	2	1	0	79	5	25	49	23	15	9	2	-	5	-	25	22	1	28	-	11	-	3	-	30	1	32
South West Taf	-	5	53	-1	29	22	10	8	3	1	1	133	5	52	76	37	25	11	4	-	5	2	49	8	29	5	20	3	7	-	3	55	60	115
Central Taf	-	6	48	-1	32	22	11	8	3	1	1	134	6	47	81	40	25	12	4	-	6	-	47	10	30	6	18	3	9	-	4	53	61	114
East of Pontypridd	-	5	22	-1	25	18	8	8	3	1	1	95	5	21	69	33	21	10	5	-	5	-	21	11	22	9	12	2	8	3	2	26	44	70
Taffs Well	-	2	9	-	9	4	3	2	1	0	0	31	2	9	20	11	5	3	1	-	2	-	9	5	7	3	2	1	2	-	1	11	12	23

The table represents the complete picture of housing need across RCT for affordable housing for the first 5 years of the LHMA period. It shows the need for the first 5 years for Intermediate rent, low-cost home ownership (LCHO) and social rent.

Key points taken from the table include:

- Total affordable housing needed per annum is 745 (net) units comprising 286 intermediate units (of which 229 need to be Low-Cost Home Ownership) and 459 social rented units.
- South West Taf has the highest net need for affordable housing with 115 (net) units a year needing to be delivered to keep up with demand.
- One-bedroom units are the most sought-after size of dwelling in the social rented sector with, 239 (net) units needed per annum and Greater Aberdare needing 50 (21%) of the one-bedroom units.
- Discounted market housing (LCHO) need currently sits at 229 (gross) with a planned supply of 3.

Housing Need by Housing Market Area

Each Housing Market Area has been separated to illustrate the need within that area. This will inform documents such as the Welsh Government prospectus, that in turn, influences where Social Housing Grant (SHG) is allocated across the county borough.

Upper Cynon Valley has more need for social rent than any other tenure, and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom and two-bedroom buildings units.

Figure 19: Upper Cynon Valley Need Estimates

Upper Cynon Valley		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
	Total	21	30	51	21
	Owner occupier	7		7	7
	Private rented sector	8		8	8
5-way tenure	Intermediate rents	2	-	2	2
	LCHO	-	3	3	-
					4

Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27					
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	2	1	0	0	4
Existing unmet need	9	10	6	2	26
Total	11	11	6	2	30
Percentage share of the total	37%	36%	20%	7%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years
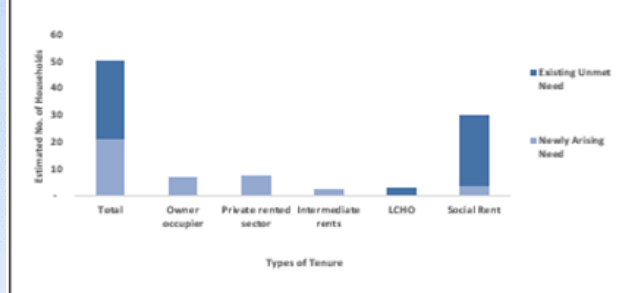
Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms

Greater Aberdare has more need for social rent than any other tenure, and? requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 20: Greater Aberdare Need Estimates

Greater Aberdare		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
	Total	85	131	216	85
	Owner occupier	33		33	33
	Private rented sector	23		23	23
5-way tenure	Intermediate rents	10	-	10	10
	LCHO	- 0	18	18	-
	Social Rent	19	113	132	19

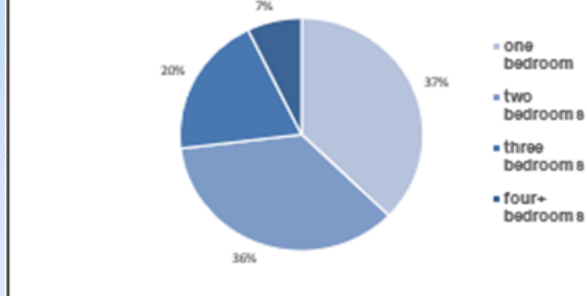|	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	12	5	2	1	19
Existing unmet need	56	32	20	5	113
Total	68	37	22	6	132
Percentage share of the total	51%	28%	17%	4%	100%

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

Lower Cynon Valley has more need for social rent than any other tenure and? requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 21: Lower Cynon Valley Need Estimates

Lower Cynon Valley		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
5-way tenure	Total	43	63	106	43
	Owner occupier	18		18	18
	Private rented sector	8		8	8
	Intermediate rents	5	-	5	5
	LCHO	- 0	6	6	-
	Social Rent	12	57	69	12

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	7	3	1	1	12
Existing unmet need	25	19	11	2	57
Total	32	22	12	3	69
Percentage share of the total	47%	32%	17%	4%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms
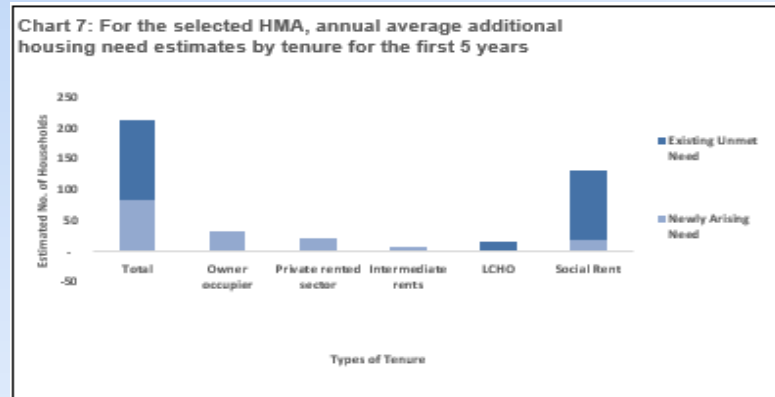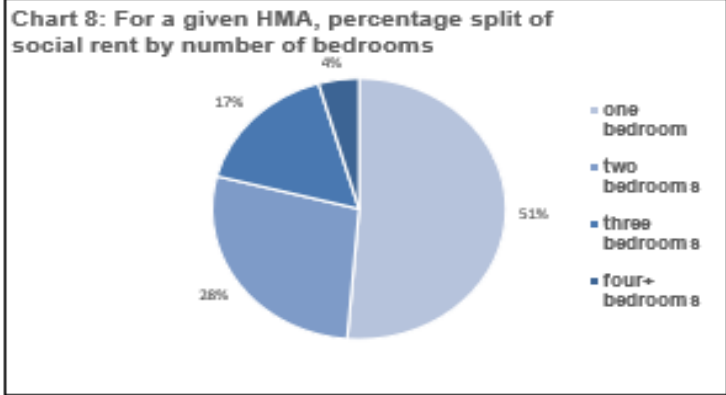
32

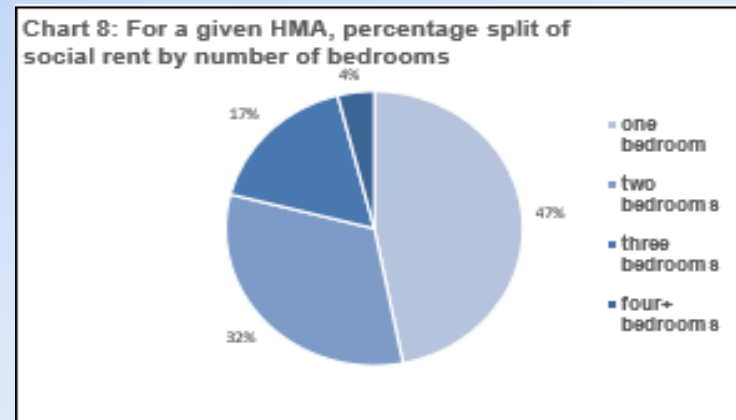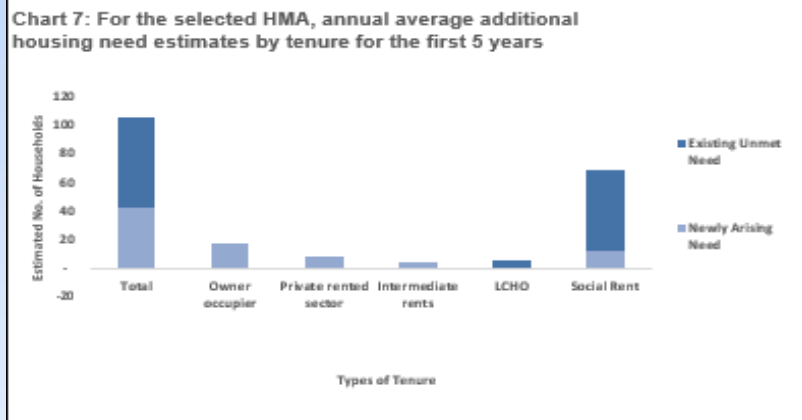**Greater Pontypridd** has more need for social rent than any other tenure and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 22: Greater Pontypridd Need Estimates

Greater Pontypridd		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
5-way tenure	**Total**	59	99	157	59
	Owner occupier	21		21	21
	Private rented sector	14		14	14
	Intermediate rents	7	-	7	7
	LCHO	-	22	22	-
	Social Rent	16	76	93	16

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	10	4	1	1	16
Existing unmet need	40	23	10	4	76
Total	50	27	11	5	93
Percentage share of the total	54%	29%	12%	5%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms

33
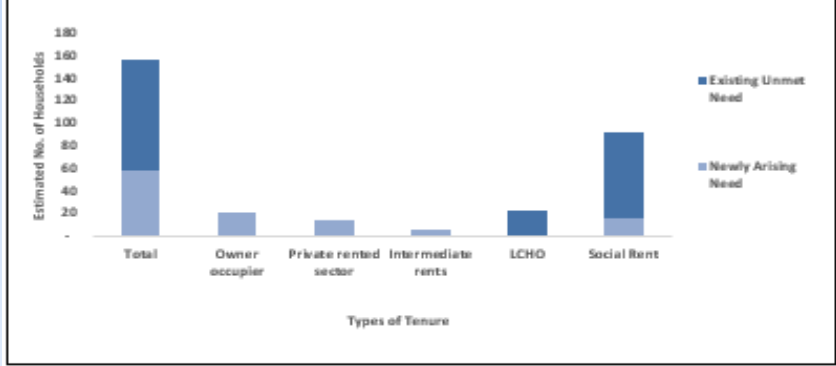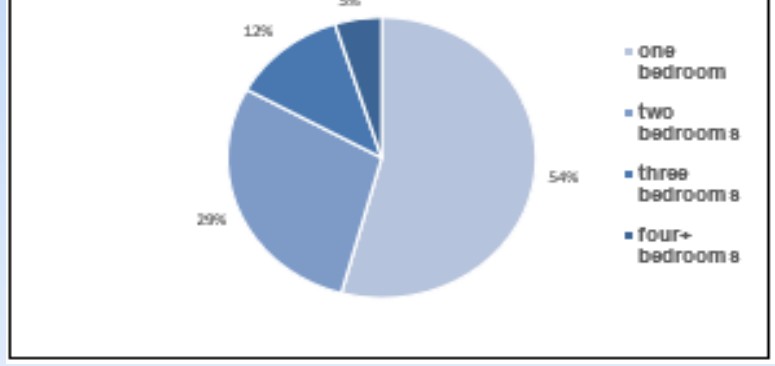
Lower Rhondda Fach has more need for social rent than any other tenure, requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 23: Lower Rhondda Fach Need Estimates

Lower Rhondda Fach		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
	Total	37	50	88	37
	Owner occupier	15		15	15
	Private rented sector	8		8	8
5-way tenure	Intermediate rents	5	-	5	5
	LCHO	-	3	3	-
	Social Rent	10	47	57	10

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	6	2	1	0	10
Existing unmet need	21	15	9	1	47
Total	27	18	10	2	57
Percentage share of the total	48%	31%	18%	3%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms
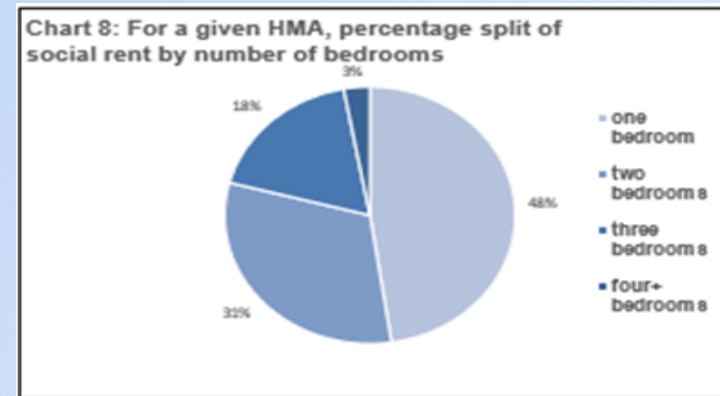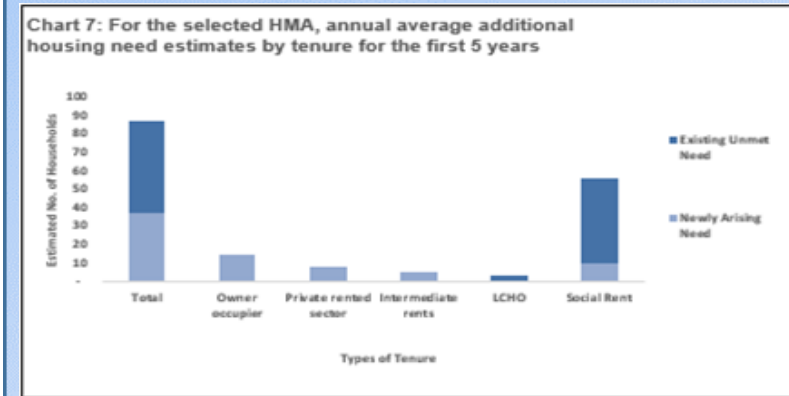
Upper Rhondda Fach has more need for social rent than any other tenure, requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 24: Upper Rhondda Fach Need Estimates

Upper Rhondda Fach		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
5-way tenure	Total	37	44	81	37
	Owner occupier	16		16	16
	Private rented sector	8		8	8
	Intermediate rents	5	-	5	5
	LCHO	- 0	1	1	-
	Social Rent	9	43	52	9

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	6	2	1	0	9
Existing unmet need	17	16	8	2	43
Total	23	18	9	2	52
Percentage share of the total	44%	35%	17%	4%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms
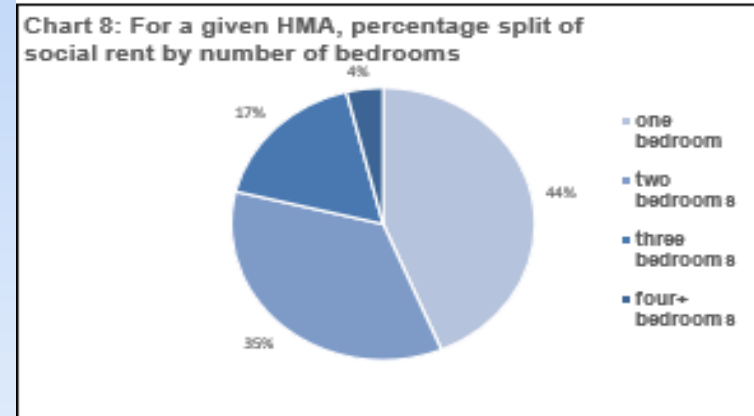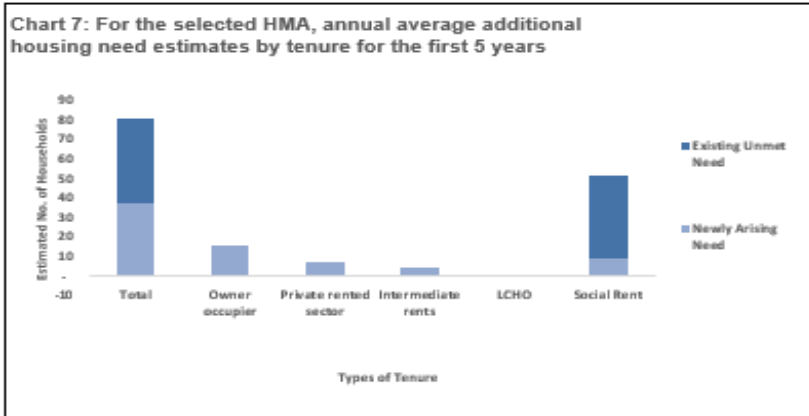
Upper Rhondda Fawr has more need for social rent than any other tenure, and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 25: Upper Rhondda Fawr Need Estimates

Upper Rhondda Fawr		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
	Total	27	38	64	27
5-way tenure	Owner occupier	11		11	11
	Private rented sector	7		7	7
	Intermediate rents	3	-	3	3
	LCHO	-	4	4	-
	Social Rent	6	34	40	6

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	4	1	0	0	6
Existing unmet need	17	10	5	2	34
Total	20	12	5	2	40
Percentage share of the total	52%	30%	13%	5%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

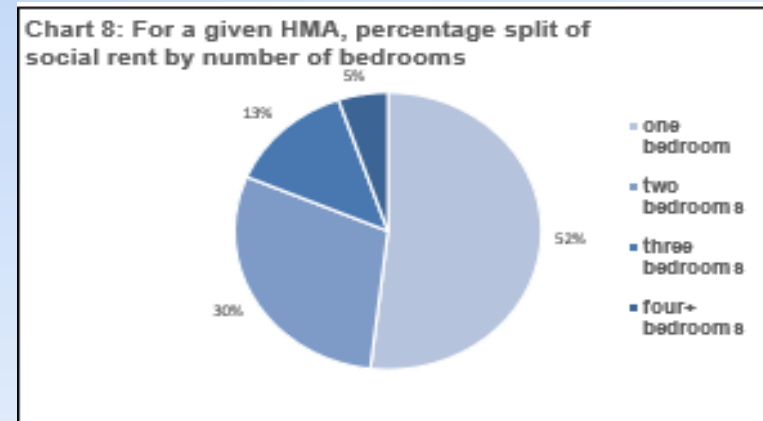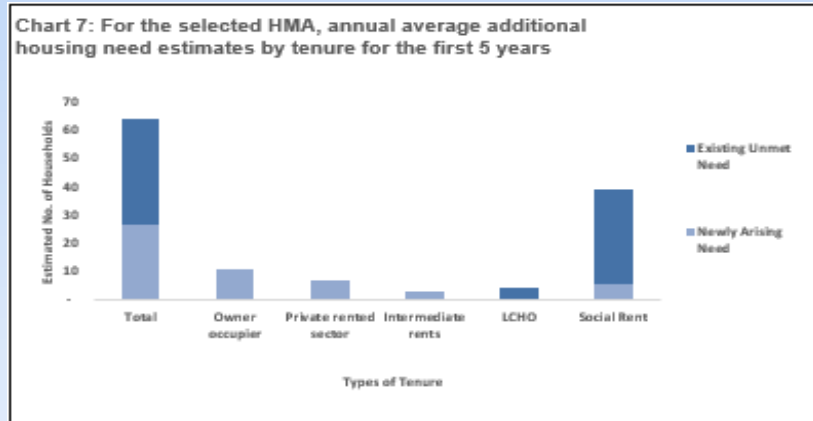Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms
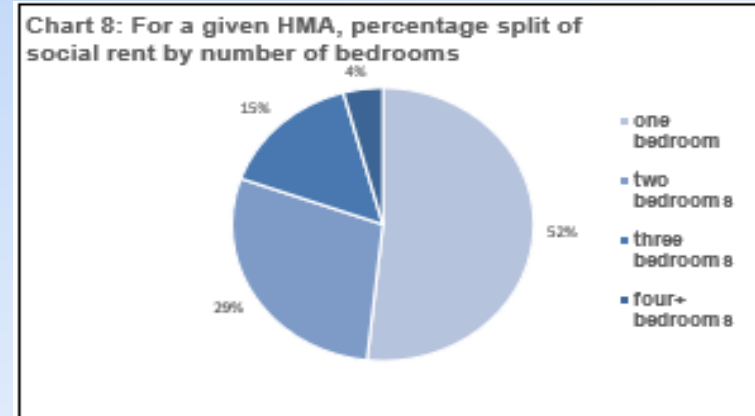
Lower Rhondda Fawr has more need for social rent than any other tenure, and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 26: Lower Rhondda Fawr Need Estimates

Lower Rondda Fawr		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
	Total	43	66	108	43
	Owner occupier	17		17	17
	Private rented sector	10		10	10
5-way tenure	Intermediate rents	6	-	6	6
	LCHO	-	13	13	-
	Social Rent	10	53	63	10

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	6	3	1	0	10
Existing unmet need	26	16	9	2	53
Total	32	18	10	3	63
Percentage share of the total	52%	29%	15%	4%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms

37

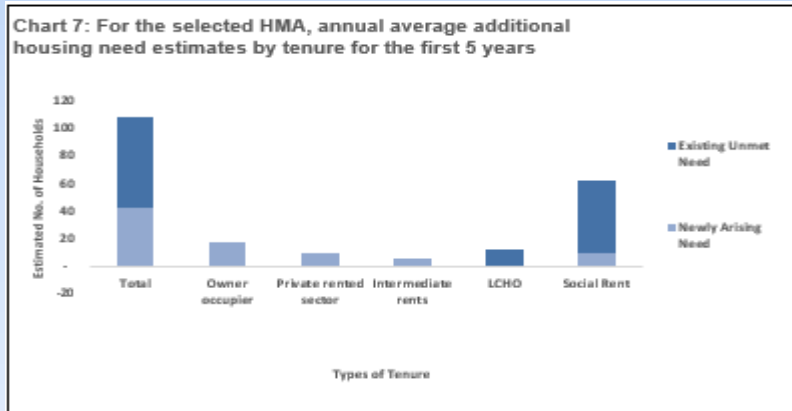**Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch** has more need for social rent than any other tenure, and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 27: Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch Need Estimates

Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
5-way tenure	**Total**	32	68	100	32
	Owner occupier	11		11	11
	Private rented sector	10		10	10
	Intermediate rents	4	-	4	4
	LCHO	-	26	26	-
	Social Rent	7	42	49	7

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	4	2	1	0	7
Existing unmet need	19	13	9	2	42
Total	23	15	9	2	49
Percentage share of the total	47%	30%	19%	4%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms

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South West Taf has more need for social rent than any other tenure,and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 28: South West Taf Need Estimates

South West Taf		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
5-way tenure	Total	48	116	164	48
	Owner occupier	16		16	16
	Private rented sector	15		15	15
	Intermediate rents	4	-	4	4
	LCHO	-	53	53	-
	Social Rent	13	63	76	13

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	8	3	1	1	13
Existing unmet need	29	22	10	3	63
Total	37	25	11	4	76
Percentage share of the total	49%	32%	14%	5%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years
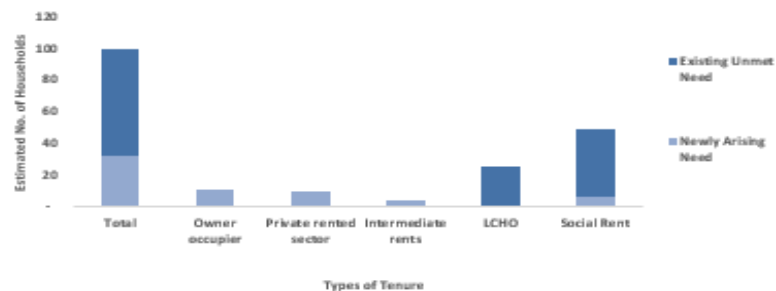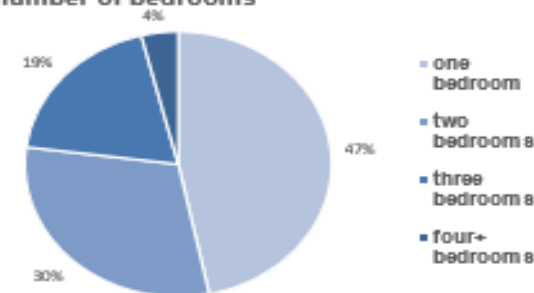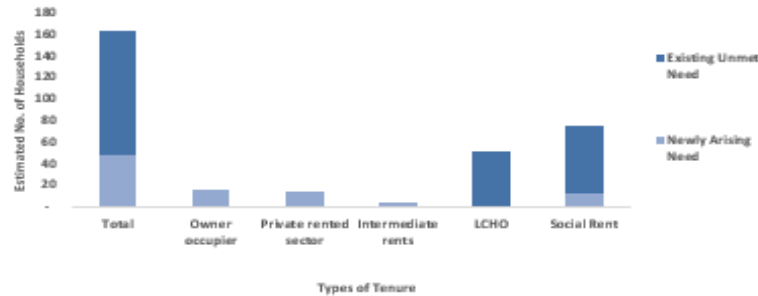

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms
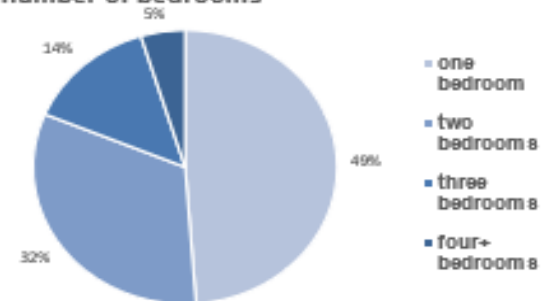
Central Taf has more need for social rent than any other tenure,and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 29: Central Taf Need Estimates

Central Taf		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
5-way tenure	**Total**	53	117	170	53
	Owner occupier	19		19	19
	Private rented sector	17		17	17
	Intermediate rents	5	-	5	5
	LCHO	-	48	48	-
	Social Rent	12	69	81	12

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	8	3	1	1	12
Existing unmet need	32	22	11	3	69
Total	40	25	12	4	81
Percentage share of the total	49%	31%	15%	5%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years
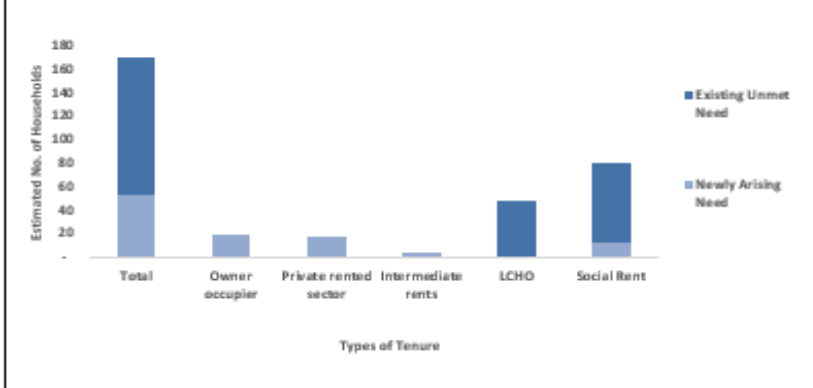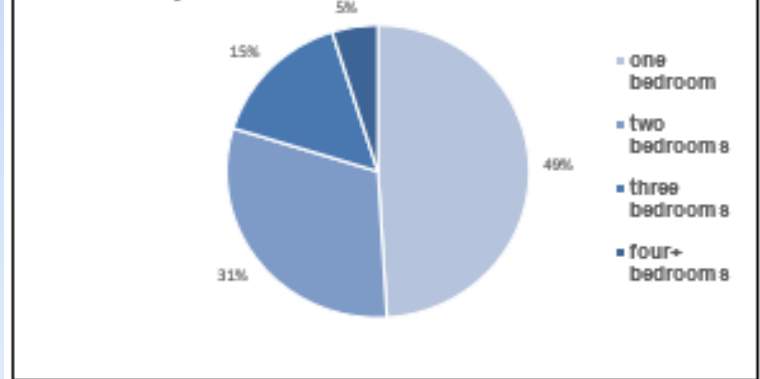

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms

East of Pontypridd has more need for social rent than any other tenure,and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 30: East of Pontypridd Need Estimates

East of Pontypridd		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
	Total	37	77	115	37
5-way tenure	Owner occupier	12		12	12
	Private rented sector	8		8	8
	Intermediate rents	4	-	4	4
	LCHO	-	22	22	-
	Social Rent	14	55	69	14

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	8	3	1	1	14
Existing unmet need	25	18	8	4	55
Total	33	21	10	5	69
Percentage share of the total	49%	30%	14%	7%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years
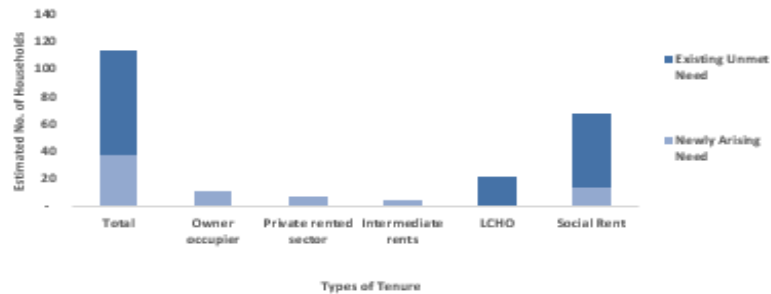

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms
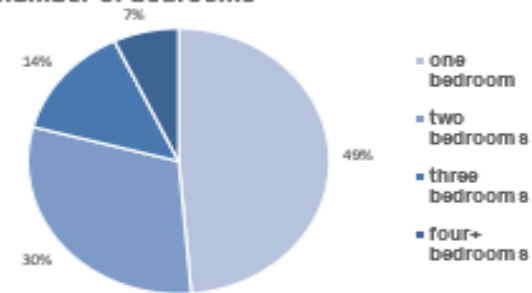
Taffs Well has more need for social rent than any other tenure, and requiring developments that are weighted towards one-bedroom units.

Figure 31: Taffs Well Need Estimates

Taffs Well		Average annual housing need estimates: 2022/23 to 2026/27			Average annual housing need estimates: 2026/27 to 2037/38
		Newly Arising Need	Existing Unmet Need	Total	Newly Arising Need only
	Total	11	26	37	11
	Owner occupier	4		4	4
	Private rented sector	3		3	3
5-way tenure	Intermediate rents	1	-	1	1
	LCHO	-	9	9	-
	Social Rent	3	17	20	3

	Average annual social rent need estimates split by number of bedrooms : 2022/23 to 2026/27				
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	all bedrooms
Newly arising need	2	1	0	0	3
Existing unmet need	9	4	3	1	17
Total	11	5	3	1	20
Percentage share of the total	56%	24%	14%	6%	100%

Chart 7: For the selected HMA, annual average additional housing need estimates by tenure for the first 5 years

Chart 8: For a given HMA, percentage split of social rent by number of bedrooms
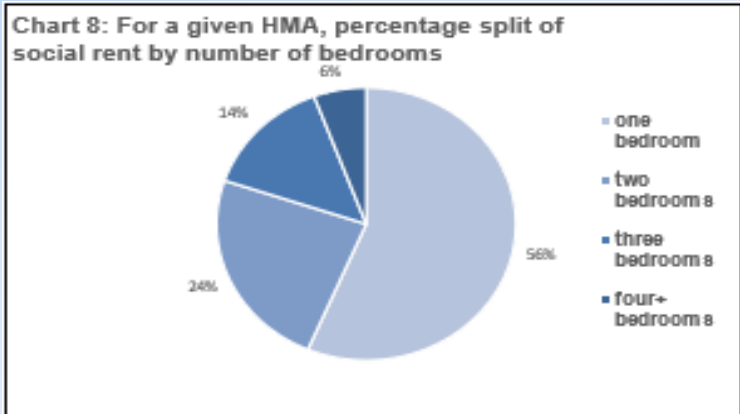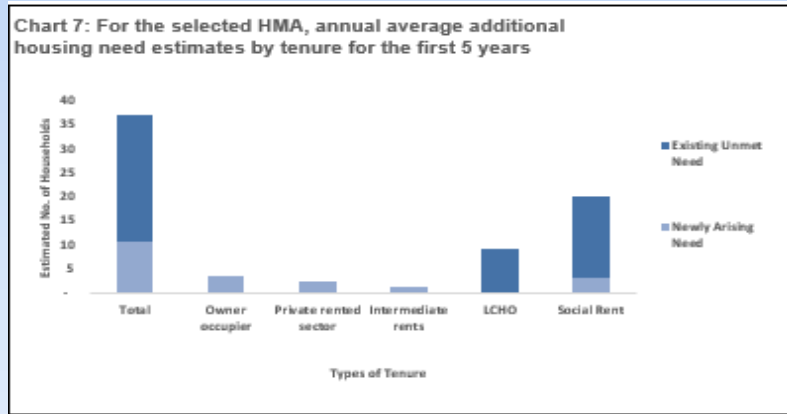
Summary of Outputs

The following section will provide a summary of the above data outputs using Welsh Government's principal household projections, the higher variant, and the lower variant. All projections for the last 10 years and total 15 years of the LHMA are contained in Appendix A. There are also Key Assumptions used in the calculation of housing need and these key assumptions are set out in Appendix B.

Principal Projections

The average additional housing need estimate diagram below (figure 30) provides a summary of need, per annum for open market housing and affordable housing, using WG Principal Projections. As has been consistent throughout the assessment, there is a greater need for affordable housing than any other tenure.

Over the first 5 years of the LHMA period, there is an evidenced need of 1,475 per annum homes across all tenures, of which 459 are social rent, 286 Low Cost Home Ownership and 338 market housing.

Figure 32: Average annual additional housing need estimates using Principal Household Projections

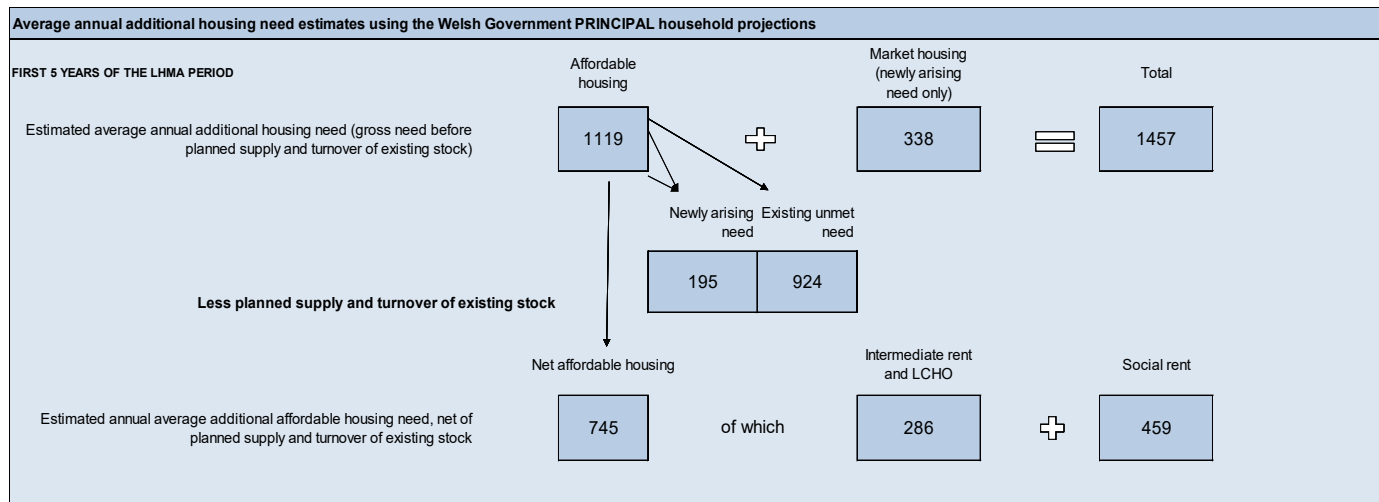| Average annual additional housing need estimates using the Welsh Government PRINCIPAL household projections			
	Affordable housing	Market housing (newly arising need only)	Total
FIRST 5 YEARS OF THE LHMA PERIOD			
Estimated average annual additional housing need (gross need before planned supply and turnover of existing stock)	1119 ✛	338	1457
	Newly arising need / Existing unmet need		
	195 / 924		
Less planned supply and turnover of existing stock			
	Net affordable housing	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Social rent
Estimated annual average additional affordable housing need, net of planned supply and turnover of existing stock	745 of which	286 ✛	459

43

Figure 33 below provides a breakdown of net need for all tenures of housing and splits the social housing need into bedrooms per Housing Market Area, on an annual basis for the first 5 years of the LHMA period. One-bedroom being the greatest need across all Housing Market Areas, requiring 239 units per annum in the social rented sector.

Figure 33: Estimated annual additional affordable housing need by HMA and tenure (net need, net of turnover of existing stock and planned supply) using the Principal Projections.

Basis of the household projections — Principal

Detailed breakdown of the additional housing need estimates over the first 5 years of the LHMA period

LHMA Report Table 1: Estimated annual additional affordable housing need by HMA and tenure (net need, net of turnover of existing stock and planned supply)

The first table provides the additional affordable housing need estimates on the following basis:
*at HMA level
*by tenure (LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent)
*annual estimate for the first 5 years of the LHMA period
*the estimates have been reduced to allow for turnover of existing affordable stock and planned supply.

HMA	(a) one bedroom	(b) two bedrooms	(c) three bedrooms	(d) four+ bedrooms	(e) Social rent (a) + (b) + (c)+ (d) = (e)	(f) Intermediate rent	(g) LCHO	(h) Affordable Housing (h) = (e) + (f) + (g)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**239**	**120**	**67**	**32**	**459**	**61**	**225**	**745**
Upper Cynon Valley	1	-	-	1	2	2	3	8
Greater Aberdare	50	7	12	5	76	10	17	102
Lower Cynon Valley	22	11	5	2	40	5	6	51
Greater Pontypridd	37	21	8	4	72	7	22	101
Lower Rhondda Fach	6	3	4	1	14	5	3	23
Upper Rhondda Fach	16	10	5	2	33	5	1	38
Upper Rhondda Fawr	9	8	2	2	21	3	4	28
Lower Rondda Fawr	6	7	6	2	22	6	13	41
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	1	-	-	-	1	4	26	32
South West Taf	29	20	7	3	60	4	50	115
Central Taf	30	18	9	4	61	5	48	114
East of Pontypridd	22	12	5	5	44	4	22	70
Taffs Well	7	2	3	1	12	1	9	23

Higher Variant

The average additional housing need estimate table below provides a summary of need, per annum for open market housing and affordable housing, using the **Higher Variant** of the WG Principal Projections and shows that a total of 1,607 units per annum would need to be delivered, with 434 being the total open market, 303 intermediate housing and 495 social housing.

Figure 37 provides a breakdown of net need for all tenures of housing but splits the social housing need into bedrooms per HMA, on an annual basis for the first 5 years of the LHMA period. One-bedroom being the greatest need across all HMA s, requiring 263 units per annum in the social rented sector.

Figure 37: Estimated annual additional affordable housing need by HMA and tenure (net need, net turnover of existing stock and planned supply) using the Higher Variant Projections.

Average annual additional housing need estimates using the Welsh Government HIGHER VARIANT household projections

	Affordable housing		Market housing (newly arising need only)		Total

FIRST 5 YEARS OF THE LHMA PERIOD

Estimated average annual additional housing need (gross need before planned supply and turnover of existing stock): 1174 + 434 = 1607

Newly arising need: 250 | Existing unmet need: 924

Less planned supply and turnover of existing stock

Net affordable housing: 798 of which — Intermediate rent and LCHO: 303 + Social rent: 495

Estimated annual average additional affordable housing need, net of planned supply and turnover of existing stock
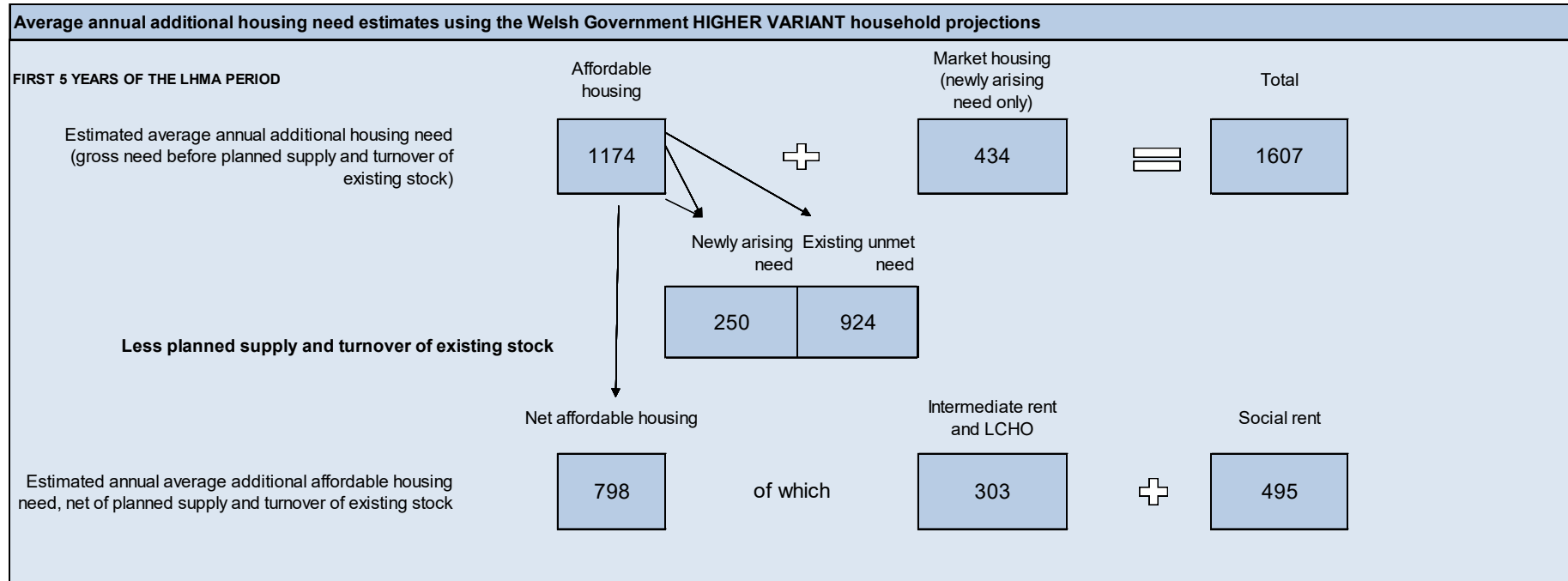
Figure 38 provides a breakdown of net need for all tenures of housing but splits the social housing need into bedrooms per Housing Market Area, on an annual basis for the first 5 years of the LHMA period. One-bedroom being the greatest need across all Housing Market Areas, requiring 263 units per annum in the social rented sector.
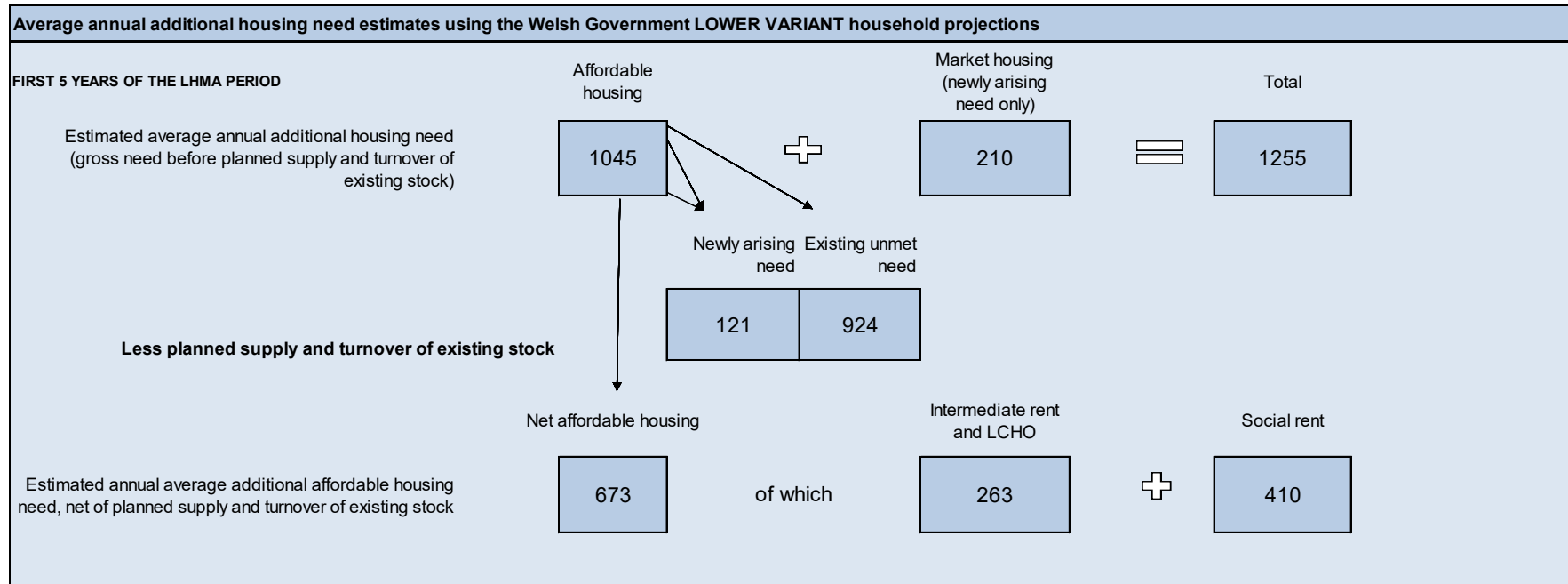
Figure 38: Average annual additional housing need using the Higher variant household projections.

Basis of the household projections	Higher Variant

Detailed breakdown of the additional housing need estimates over the first 5 years of the LHMA period

LHMA Report Table 1: Estimated annual additional affordable housing need by HMA and tenure (net need, net of turnover of existing stock and planned supply)

The first table provides the additional affordable housing need estimates on the following basis:
*at HMA level
*by tenure (LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent)
*annual estimate for the first 5 years of the LHMA period
*the estimates have been reduced to allow for turnover of existing affordable stock and planned supply.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
HMA	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	Social rent	Intermediate rent	LCHO	Affordable Housing
					(a) + (b) + (c)+ (d) = (e)			(h) = (e) + (f) + (g)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**263**	**129**	**70**	**34**	**495**	**78**	**225**	**798**
Upper Cynon Valley	2	-	-	1	3	3	3	9
Greater Aberdare	54	9	13	6	81	12	17	110
Lower Cynon Valley	24	12	5	3	44	6	6	55
Greater Pontypridd	40	23	9	5	76	8	22	107
Lower Rhondda Fach	8	3	4	1	17	6	3	27
Upper Rhondda Fach	18	10	5	2	35	6	1	42
Upper Rhondda Fawr	10	8	3	2	23	3	4	31
Lower Rondda Fawr	8	8	6	2	25	7	13	45
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	3	-	-	-	3	6	26	34
South West Taf	32	20	8	4	63	6	50	120
Central Taf	32	19	9	4	65	6	48	119
East of Pontypridd	25	13	6	5	48	5	22	75
Taffs Well	7	2	3	1	13	2	9	24

Lower Variant

The average additional housing need estimate table below provides a summary of need, per annum for open market housing and affordable housing, using the **Lower Variant** of the WG Principal Projections and shows that a total of 1,255 units per annum would need to be delivered, with 210 being the total open market, 263 intermediate housing and 410 social housing.

Figure 42: Average annual additional housing need estimates using the Lower Variant Projections.

Figure 43 provides a breakdown of net need for all tenures of housing but splits the social housing need into bedrooms per Housing Market Area, on an annual basis for the first 5 years of the LHMA period. One-bedroom being the greatest need across all Housing Market Areas, requiring 208 units per annum in the social rented sector.

Figure 43: Estimated annual additional total housing need estimates by HMA and Tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply) using the Lower Variant Projections.

Basis of the household projections	Lower Variant						

Detailed breakdown of the additional housing need estimates over the first 5 years of the LHMA period

LHMA Report Table 1: Estimated annual additional affordable housing need by HMA and tenure (net need, net of turnover of existing stock and planned supply)

The first table provides the additional affordable housing need estimates on the following basis:
*at HMA level
*by tenure (LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent)
*annual estimate for the first 5 years of the LHMA period
*the estimates have been reduced to allow for turnover of existing affordable stock and planned supply.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
HMA	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	Social rent	Intermediate rent	LCHO	Affordable Housing
					(a) + (b) + (c)+ (d) = (e)			(h) = (e) + (f) + (g)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**208**	**108**	**64**	**30**	**410**	**38**	**225**	**673**
Upper Cynon Valley	0	-	-	1	1	2	3	6
Greater Aberdare	46	6	12	5	68	6	17	91
Lower Cynon Valley	19	10	4	2	36	3	6	44
Greater Pontypridd	34	20	8	4	65	4	22	92
Lower Rhondda Fach	4	2	4	1	11	3	3	17
Upper Rhondda Fach	14	9	4	2	29	3	1	33
Upper Rhondda Fawr	8	7	2	2	19	2	4	25
Lower Rondda Fawr	4	6	6	2	18	4	13	35
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	-	-	-	-	-	3	26	29
South West Taf	26	18	7	3	55	3	50	108
Central Taf	27	17	9	3	57	3	48	108
East of Pontypridd	19	11	5	4	39	3	22	64
Taffs Well	6	2	2	1	11	1	9	21

Figure 44 provides an annual gross housing need, across all tenures of the first 5 years of the LHMA period. The table shows with no turnover or supply, the overall additional housing need figure would need to be 1,255 units per year.

Figure 44: Estimated annual additional total housing need estimates by HMA and Tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply) using the Higher Variant Projections.

LHMA Report Table 2: Estimated annual additional total housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply)

The second table provides the additional total housing need estimates on the following basis:
*includes market and affordable housing
*at HMA level
*by tenure (owner occupier, private rented sector(PRS), LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent)
*annual estimate for the first 5 years of the LHMA period

HMA	(a) Social rent	(b) Intermediate rent and LCHO	(c) Affordable Housing (c)= (a) + (b)	(d) Owner occupier	(e) Private rented sector	(f) Market Housing (f) = (d) + (e)	(g) Additional housing need (g) = (c)+ (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	779	266	1,045	125	86	210	1,255
Upper Cynon Valley	29	5	34	4	5	9	43
Greater Aberdare	125	24	149	21	15	35	184
Lower Cynon Valley	65	9	73	11	5	16	90
Greater Pontypridd	86	27	113	13	9	22	135
Lower Rhondda Fach	53	6	59	9	5	14	73
Upper Rhondda Fach	48	4	52	10	5	15	67
Upper Rhondda Fawr	37	6	43	7	4	11	54
Lower Rondda Fawr	59	16	75	11	6	17	92
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	47	29	75	7	6	13	88
South West Taf	71	55	127	10	9	19	146
Central Taf	76	51	127	12	11	22	150
East of Pontypridd	64	25	88	7	5	12	100
Taffs Well	19	10	29	2	2	4	33

6.LHMA additional housing need estimates

RCT will adopt the principal household projection variant when deciding need for the local authority area as this will also mirror the Preferred Strategy of the Revised Local Development Plan.

To note, there are elements of the new LHMA methodology and outputs that did not exist as part of the LHMA 2017 - 2023. Where this is the case, the table below will read "Unavailable".

Figure 47: Comparisons of data outputs for additional housing need estimates per annum for the current and previous LHMA.

Annual additional housing need estimates	Column index	Current LHMA	Previous LHMA
		Per annum	
Total housing need estimate	(a)	1457	Unavailable
Market housing	(b)	338	Unavailable
Affordable housing	(c)	745	738
Percentage split of additional housing need by market and affordable housing	(b)/(a): (c)/(a)	24% 76%	Unavailable
Annual planned supply and turnover of existing stock for affordable housing	(e)	394	Unavailable
Affordable housing need – net of planned supply and turnover of existing stock	(f) =(c)-(e)	360	Unavailable
Annual additional housing need estimate split by tenure:			
Owner occupier	(g)	200	Unavailable
Private rented sector	(h)	138	Unavailable
LCHO – net basis	(i)	225	IR and LCHO combined
Intermediate rent – net basis	(j)	61	270
Social rent – net basis	(k)	459	468
One bedroom social rent	(l)	239	400
Two bedrooms social rent	(m)	120	38
Three bedrooms social rent	(n)	67	12
Four+ bedrooms social rent	(o)	32	10

Market housing percentage split:			
Owner occupier estimate	(g)/(b)	59%	Unavailable
Private rented sector estimate	(h)/(b)	41%	Unavailable

Affordable housing need percentage split:			
LCHO	(i)/(f)	30%	36% (LCHO & IR)
Intermediate rent (IR)	(j)/(f)	8%	
Social rent	(k)/(f)	62%	64%

Social housing need percentage split by number of bedrooms:			
1 bed	(l)/(k)	52%	85%
2 beds	(m)/(k)	26%	9%
3 beds	(n)/(k)	15%	3%
4+ beds	(o)/(k)	7%	2%

The comparison of data inputs and key assumptions, shows the different data sets used in each of the last 2 LHMAs, to calculate housing need.

Figure 48: Comparisons of data input and key assumptions for the current and previous LHMA.

Data Input and Key assumptions	Current LHMA	Previous LHMA
	Per annum	
Number of HMAs and basis of defining HMAs (ward, MSOA, LSOA)	13	13
Selected household projection basis	WG Principle 2023	WG Principle 2017
Annual newly arising need:		
Rent data – state default or source used	Default	Stats Wales 2016
House price paid data – state default or source used	Default	HM Land Registry 2017.
Income data – state source used	CACI Paycheck	Family Resources Survey, ONS 2016 & Census 2011.
Annual existing unmet housing need		
Market housing affordability criteria	30%	30%
Social rent affordability criteria	35%	
Percentage of those considered appropriate for owner occupier that go onto buy	60%	Unavailable
Average FTB property price for the LA	£110,052.00	Unavailable
FTB property value to income ratio for the LA	4.09	Unavailable

Five-year financial forecast – OBR or alternative source	OBR	Unavailable
Split of intermediate housing need – method 1, 2 or 3*	N/A	N/A

*RCT has no current intermediate housing in the local authority area, therefore there is no data held to reflect need.

As this is the first iteration of the new LHMA methodology that RCT have conducted, there are naturally data gaps identified in the LHMA 2017/2018 - 2022/2023 However, the outline figures are worth commenting on.

Whilst RCT has delivered more affordable housing than in any other LHMA period, the overall affordable housing need has still increased, albeit slightly when compared to the previous LHMA's.

LHMAs that are produced in the future will be easier to compare data outputs, as the data inputs and assumptions will be the same as well as the recorded outputs. This will allow the Council to get a better indication of the successes of interventions and affordable housing delivery between each LHMA period.

7.Quality assurance statement

All data used in this assessment has been taken from WG approved resources, and where the data has come from internal Council systems, such as the Common Housing Register, there are robust operational practices in place, to ensure the data is up to date and accurate.

This LHMA has been approved by the Council's Housing Strategy Team Manager, Head of Housing Strategy and Investment, and the Director of Prosperity and development.

As this assessment will also be used to inform the Revised Local Development Plan, the Council's Planning policy team have also approved the data outputs, in line with their preferred strategy.

Appendix A: Tables for housing need for the last 10 years of the LHMA Projections.

Chart 4 shows that the greatest need for market housing in the last 10 years of the period projected by the LHMA evidence baseis Greater Aberdare, with the largest proportion being in the owner occupier sector. This mirrors the situation borough wide, as is shown on the first bar of the chart,

Chart 4: Annual additional market need estimates split by tenure over the last 10 years of the LHMA period.

Siart 4: Amcangyfrifon o'r angen am dai ychwanegol ar y farchnad agored dros 10 mlynedd ddiwethaf cyfnod yr LHMA

Chart 4: Annual additional market housing need estimates split by tenure over the last 10 years of the LHMA period
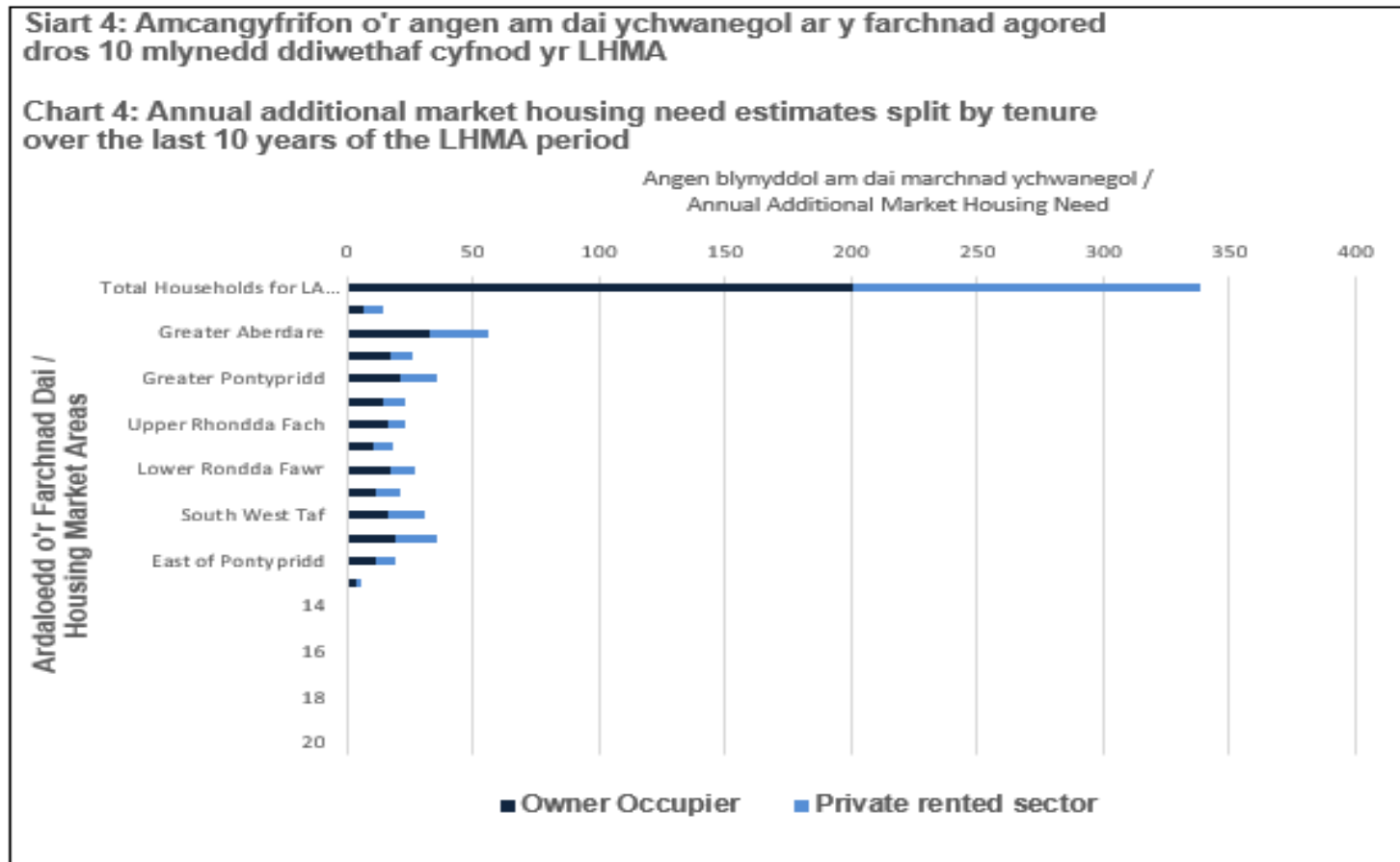
Figure 13 provides the specific numbers for chart 4, and shows a summary of annual additional market housing need estimates (owner occupier and the private rented sector) over 2026/2027 – 2036/2037. The highest demand area for market housing in the first 5 years of the LHMA period is Greater Aberdare, with the least need located in Taffs Well.

Figure 13: Last 10 Years Annual Need Across All Market Housing

HMA	Owner Occupier	Private rented sector	Annual additional market housing need over the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period
Total Households for LA :Rhondda Cynon Taf	200	138	338
Upper Cynon Valley	7	8	15
Greater Aberdare	33	23	57
Lower Cynon Valley	18	8	26
Greater Pontypridd	21	14	36
Lower Rhondda Fach	15	8	23
Upper Rhondda Fach	16	8	24
Upper Rhondda Fawr	11	7	18
Lower Rondda Fawr	17	10	27
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	11	10	21
South West Taf	16	15	31
Central Taf	19	17	36
East of Pontypridd	12	8	20
Taffs Well	4	3	6

Chart 6 illustrates that the highest affordable housing need for the last 10 years of the LHMA period is for social rent across the borough with Greater Aberdare and Greater Pontypridd requiring the most affordable housing.

Chart 6: Annual additional housing need split by tenure for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period.

Siart 6: Angen blynyddol am dai fforddiadwy ychwanegol wedi ei rannu yn ôl deiliadaeth ar gyfer 10 mlynedd ddiwethaf cyfnod yr LHMA

Chart 6: Annual additional affordable housing need split by tenure for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period

Angen blynyddol am dai fforddiadwy ychwanegol /
Annual Additional Affordable Housing Need
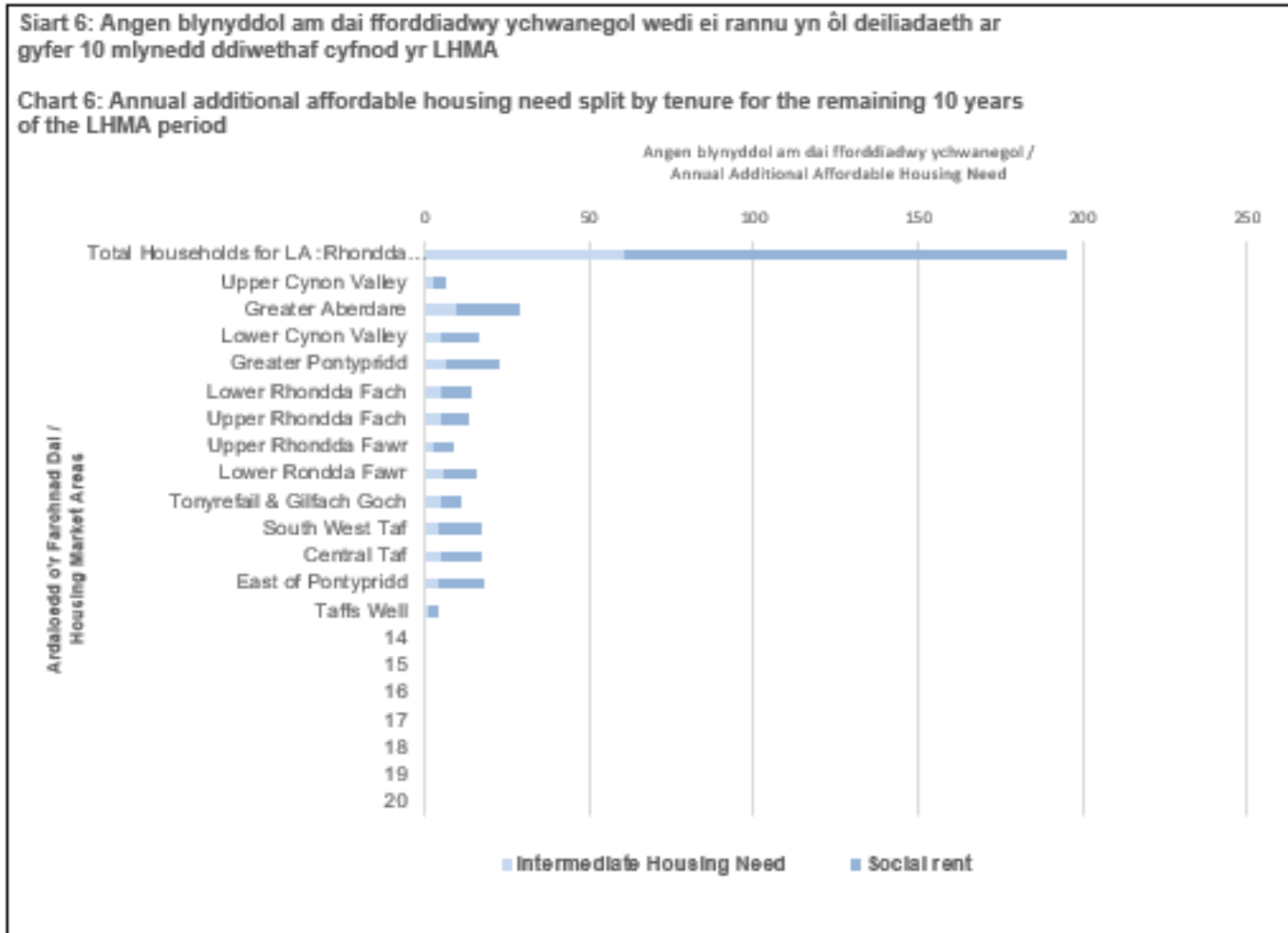
Figure 18 below provides a summary of additional gross annual affordable housing need estimates over the remaining 10 years. It shows that the highest demand is for one- bedroom units in social rent and intermediate housing, with Greater Aberdare having the highest demand, this is consistent with the outputs previously shown in the assessment.

Figure 18: Summary of additional gross annual affordable housing need estimates over the remaining 10 years.

HMAs	Intermediate Housing Need	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	All Bedrooms	Annual additional affordable housing need
Total Households for LA :Rhondda Cynon Taf	61	83	34	11	6	134	195
Upper Cynon Valley	2	2	1	0	0	4	6
Greater Aberdare	10	12	5	2	1	19	29
Lower Cynon Valley	5	7	3	1	1	12	17
Greater Pontypridd	7	10	4	1	1	16	23
Lower Rhondda Fach	5	6	2	1	0	10	15
Upper Rhondda Fach	5	6	2	1	0	9	14
Upper Rhondda Fawr	3	4	1	0	0	6	9
Lower Rondda Fawr	6	6	3	1	0	10	16
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	4	4	2	1	0	7	11
South West Taf	4	8	3	1	1	13	17
Central Taf	5	8	3	1	1	12	17
East of Pontypridd	4	8	3	1	1	14	18
Taffs Well	1	2	1	0	0	3	4

Figure 34 below provides an annual gross housing need, across all tenures of the final 10 years of the LHMA period. The table shows with no turnover or supply, the overall additional affordable housing need figure would need to be 1,119 units per year.

Figure 34: Estimated annual additional total housing need estimates by HMA and Tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply) using Principal Projections.

LHMA Report Table 2: Estimated annual additional total housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply)

The second table provides the additional total housing need estimates on the following basis:
*includes market and affordable housing
*at HMA level
*by tenure (owner occupier, private rented sector(PRS), LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent)
*annual estimate for the first 5 years of the LHMA period

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing (c)= (a) + (b)	Owner occupier	Private rented sector	Market Housing (f) = (d) + (e)	Additional housing need (g) = (c)+ (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**829**	**289**	**1,119**	**200**	**138**	**338**	**1,457**
Upper Cynon Valley	30	6	36	7	8	15	51
Greater Aberdare	132	28	159	33	23	57	216
Lower Cynon Valley	69	10	80	18	8	26	106
Greater Pontypridd	93	29	122	21	14	36	157
Lower Rhondda Fach	57	8	65	15	8	23	88
Upper Rhondda Fach	52	6	57	16	8	24	81
Upper Rhondda Fawr	40	7	46	11	7	18	64
Lower Rondda Fawr	63	19	81	17	10	27	108
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	49	30	79	11	10	21	100
South West Taf	76	57	133	16	15	31	164
Central Taf	81	53	134	19	17	36	170
East of Pontypridd	69	26	95	12	8	20	115
Taffs Well	20	11	31	4	3	6	37

Figure 35 below provides the annual housing need, across all tenures of the final 10 years of the LHMA period and shows that there would need to be a further 533 dwellings, across all tenures per annum, with market housing being the highest need of 338 units. However, this would require a huge amount of affordable housing to be delivered in the first 5 years of the LHMA period.

Figure 35: Estimated annual additional total housing need estimates by HMA and Tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply) using Principal Projections for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period.

Detailed breakdown of the additional total housing need estimates over the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period							
LHMA Report Table 3: Estimated annual additional housing need estimates by HMA and tenure for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period							
The third table provides the additional housing need estimates on the following basis: *at HMA level *by tenure (owner occupier, private rented sector(PRS), LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent) *annual estimate for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period *the estimates are based solely on newly arising need (it is assumed any existing unmet need is met during the first 5 years) *the affordable housing need estimates in should be combined with the affordable housing need in Table 1 to produce a 15-year estimate of affordable housing. No further allowance has been made for supply at this point as it becomes less accurate to predict committed supply and turnover beyond year 5.							
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Owner occupier	Private rented sector	Market Housing	Additional housing need
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(f) = (d) + (e)	(g) = (c)+ (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	134	61	195	200	138	338	533
Upper Cynon Valley	4	2	6	7	8	15	21
Greater Aberdare	19	10	29	33	23	57	85
Lower Cynon Valley	12	5	17	18	8	26	43
Greater Pontypridd	16	7	23	21	14	36	59
Lower Rhondda Fach	10	5	15	15	8	23	37
Upper Rhondda Fach	9	5	14	16	8	24	37
Upper Rhondda Fawr	6	3	9	11	7	18	27
Lower Rondda Fawr	10	6	16	17	10	27	43
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	7	4	11	11	10	21	32
South West Taf	13	4	17	16	15	31	48
Central Taf	12	5	17	19	17	36	53
East of Pontypridd	14	4	18	12	8	20	37
Taffs Well	3	1	4	4	3	6	11

Figure 36 below illustrates the average annual need estimates by all tenures and compares them with the total 15-year estimates across the assessment period and shows that over the 15-year period, a total of 5,672 units would need to be delivered across all affordable housing tenures. The majority of 3,635 being social rent and 2,037 intermediate housing.

Figure 36: Estimated annual overall additional affordable housing need by HMA and Tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA.

Headline 15-year Affordable Housing Need Estimate

Table 4: Estimated annual overall additional affordable housing need by HMA and tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA

Table 4 provides the additional affordable housing need estimates on the following basis:
*at HMA level
*by tenure (intermediate housing and social rent)
*annual estimate for the 15 years of the LHMA period
*the affordable housing need estimates are a combination of the additional estimates from table 1 (net estimates) and table 3.
(no further allowance has been made for supply and turnover of existing stock as it becomes less accurate to predict beyond year 5)

	Average annual estimates			15-year estimates		
	(a)	(b)	(c)			
HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(c) = (a) + (b)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**242**	**136**	**378**	**3,635**	**2,037**	**5,672**
Upper Cynon Valley	3	4	7	48	54	102
Greater Aberdare	38	15	53	570	228	798
Lower Cynon Valley	21	7	28	320	98	418
Greater Pontypridd	35	14	49	521	211	732
Lower Rhondda Fach	11	6	17	167	90	258
Upper Rhondda Fach	17	5	22	254	75	329
Upper Rhondda Fawr	11	4	15	166	62	228
Lower Rondda Fawr	14	10	24	209	152	361
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	5	13	18	72	196	268
South West Taf	28	21	50	427	318	745
Central Taf	29	21	49	429	314	742
East of Pontypridd	24	12	35	357	173	530
Taffs Well	6	4	11	95	66	160

Tudalen 733

Figure 40 provides an annual gross housing need, across all tenures of the final 10 years of the LHMA period. The table shows with no turnover or supply, the overall additional affordable housing need figure would need to be 1,607 units per year.

Figure 40: Estimated annual additional total housing need estimates by HMA and Tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply) using Higher Variant Projections.

LHMA Report Table 2: Estimated annual additional total housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply)

The second table provides the additional total housing need estimates on the following basis:
*includes market and affordable housing
*at HMA level
*by tenure (owner occupier, private rented sector(PRS), LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent)
*annual estimate for the first 5 years of the LHMA period

HMA	(a) Social rent	(b) Intermediate rent and LCHO	(c) Affordable Housing (c)= (a) + (b)	(d) Owner occupier	(e) Private rented sector	(f) Market Housing (f) = (d) + (e)	(g) Additional housing need (g) = (c)+ (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**867**	**306**	**1,174**	**257**	**177**	**434**	**1,607**
Upper Cynon Valley	31	7	38	9	10	19	57
Greater Aberdare	137	30	168	43	30	72	240
Lower Cynon Valley	73	12	84	23	11	33	118
Greater Pontypridd	97	31	128	27	18	46	174
Lower Rhondda Fach	59	10	69	19	10	29	98
Upper Rhondda Fach	54	7	61	21	10	30	92
Upper Rhondda Fawr	41	8	49	14	9	23	72
Lower Rondda Fawr	66	20	86	22	12	34	120
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	51	32	82	14	13	27	109
South West Taf	80	58	138	21	19	39	177
Central Taf	84	54	139	24	22	46	185
East of Pontypridd	73	27	100	15	10	25	125
Taffs Well	21	11	32	5	3	8	40

Figure 41 provides the annual housing need, across all tenures of the final 10 years of the LHMA period and shows that there would need to be a further 683 dwellings, across all tenures per annum, with market housing being the highest need of 434 units.

Figure 41: Estimated annual additional housing need estimates by HMA for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period using the Higher Variant projections.

LHMA Report Table 3: Estimated annual additional housing need estimates by HMA and tenure for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period

The third table provides the additional housing need estimates on the following basis:
*at HMA level
*by tenure (owner occupier, private rented sector(PRS), LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent)
*annual estimate for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period
*the estimates are based solely on newly arising need (it is assumed any existing unmet need is met during the first 5 years)
*the affordable housing need estimates in should be combined with the affordable housing need in Table 1 to produce a 15-year estimate of affordable housing.
No further allowance has been made for supply at this point as it becomes less accurate to predict committed supply and turnover beyond year 5.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Owner occupier	Private rented sector	Market Housing	Additional housing need
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(f) = (d) + (e)	(g) = (c)+ (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**172**	**78**	**250**	**257**	**177**	**434**	**683**
Upper Cynon Valley	5	3	8	9	10	19	27
Greater Aberdare	25	12	37	43	30	72	109
Lower Cynon Valley	15	6	21	23	11	33	55
Greater Pontypridd	21	8	29	27	18	46	75
Lower Rhondda Fach	12	6	19	19	10	29	48
Upper Rhondda Fach	12	6	18	21	10	30	48
Upper Rhondda Fawr	8	3	11	14	9	23	34
Lower Rondda Fawr	13	7	20	22	12	34	55
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	8	6	14	14	13	27	41
South West Taf	16	6	22	21	19	39	62
Central Taf	16	6	22	24	22	46	68
East of Pontypridd	17	5	23	15	10	25	48
Taffs Well	4	2	6	5	3	8	14

Tudalen 735

Figure 42 illustrates the average annual need estimates by all tenures and compares them with the total 15-year estimates across the assessment period and shows that over the 15-year period, a total of 6,490 units would need to be delivered across all affordable housing tenures. The majority of being 4,196 social rent and 2,294 intermediate housing.

Figure 42: Estimated annual overall additional affordable housing need by HMA and Tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA using the Higher Variant Projections

Headline 15-year Affordable Housing Need Estimate

Table 4: Estimated annual overall additional affordable housing need by HMA and tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA

Table 4 provides the additional affordable housing need estimates on the following basis:
*at HMA level
*by tenure (intermediate housing and social rent)
*annual estimate for the 15 years of the LHMA period
*the affordable housing need estimates are a combination of the additional estimates from table 1 (net estimates) and table 3.
(no further allowance has been made for supply and turnover of existing stock as it becomes less accurate to predict beyond year 5)

	Average annual estimates			15-year estimates		
	(a)	(b)	(c)			
HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(c) = (a) + (b)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**280**	**153**	**433**	**4,196**	**2,294**	**6,490**
Upper Cynon Valley	4	4	8	62	65	127
Greater Aberdare	43	18	61	651	269	920
Lower Cynon Valley	25	8	33	371	117	488
Greater Pontypridd	39	16	55	590	239	829
Lower Rhondda Fach	14	7	21	207	111	319
Upper Rhondda Fach	19	6	26	292	94	387
Upper Rhondda Fawr	13	5	18	191	73	264
Lower Rondda Fawr	17	12	29	251	176	428
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	6	14	21	96	215	311
South West Taf	32	22	55	481	337	818
Central Taf	32	22	54	481	334	815
East of Pontypridd	28	13	40	414	191	605
Taffs Well	7	5	12	108	71	179

Figure 45 provides the annual housing need, across all tenures of the final 10 years of the LHMA period and shows that there would need to be a further 332 dwellings, across all tenures per annum, with market housing being the highest need of 210 units. However, this would require a huge amount of affordable housing to be delivered in the first 5 years of the LHMA period.

Figure 45: Estimated annual additional housing need estimates by HMA for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period using the Lower Variant Projections.

LHMA Report Table 3: Estimated annual additional housing need estimates by HMA and tenure for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period

The third table provides the additional housing need estimates on the following basis:
*at HMA level
*by tenure (owner occupier, private rented sector(PRS), LCHO, intermediate rent and social rent)
*annual estimate for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period
*the estimates are based solely on newly arising need (it is assumed any existing unmet need is met during the first 5 years)
*the affordable housing need estimates in should be combined with the affordable housing need in Table 1 to produce a 15-year estimate of affordable housing.
No further allowance has been made for supply at this point as it becomes less accurate to predict committed supply and turnover beyond year 5.

HMA	(a) Social rent	(b) Intermediate rent and LCHO	(c) Affordable Housing (c) = (a) + (b)	(d) Owner occupier	(e) Private rented sector	(f) Market Housing (f) = (d) + (e)	(g) Additional housing need (g) = (c)+ (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	83	38	121	125	86	210	332
Upper Cynon Valley	2	2	4	4	5	9	13
Greater Aberdare	12	6	18	21	15	35	53
Lower Cynon Valley	7	3	10	11	5	16	27
Greater Pontypridd	10	4	14	13	9	22	36
Lower Rhondda Fach	6	3	9	9	5	14	23
Upper Rhondda Fach	6	3	9	10	5	15	23
Upper Rhondda Fawr	4	2	5	7	4	11	17
Lower Rondda Fawr	6	4	10	11	6	17	27
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	4	3	7	7	6	13	20
South West Taf	8	3	11	10	9	19	30
Central Taf	8	3	11	12	11	22	33
East of Pontypridd	8	3	11	7	5	12	23
Taffs Well	2	1	3	2	2	4	7

Figure 46 illustrates the average annual need estimates by all tenures and compares them with the total 15-year estimates across the assessment period and shows that over the 15-year period, a total of 4,575 units would need to be delivered across all affordable housing tenures. The majority of 2,882 being social rent and 1,693 intermediate housing.

Figure 46: Estimated annual overall additional housing need by HMA and tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA using the Lower Variant Projections.

Headline 15-year Affordable Housing Need Estimate

Table 4: Estimated annual overall additional affordable housing need by HMA and tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA

Table 4 provides the additional affordable housing need estimates on the following basis:
*at HMA level
*by tenure (intermediate housing and social rent)
*annual estimate for the 15 years of the LHMA period
*the affordable housing need estimates are a combination of the additional estimates from table 1 (net estimates) and table 3.
(no further allowance has been made for supply and turnover of existing stock as it becomes less accurate to predict beyond year 5)

HMA	Average annual estimates			15-year estimates		
	(a)	(b)	(c)			
	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(c) = (a) + (b)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	**192**	**113**	**305**	**2,882**	**1,693**	**4,575**
Upper Cynon Valley	2	3	5	28	40	69
Greater Aberdare	31	12	42	462	174	635
Lower Cynon Valley	17	5	22	253	72	324
Greater Pontypridd	29	12	40	429	174	602
Lower Rhondda Fach	8	4	12	113	62	175
Upper Rhondda Fach	13	3	17	202	48	251
Upper Rhondda Fawr	9	3	12	133	46	179
Lower Rondda Fawr	10	8	18	153	119	271
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	3	11	14	41	171	211
South West Taf	24	20	43	355	293	648
Central Taf	24	19	43	359	286	645
East of Pontypridd	19	10	29	280	149	429
Taffs Well	5	4	9	76	59	135

Appendix B: Key Assumptions

Figure 49 provides information on the data sources and key assumptions that have informed the above outputs for additional housing need estimates.

It is important that we evidence where the key data sources come and what data is assumed. The table below shows what the data or key assumption is, where the source of that data comes from, and the year in which the data relates to.

Figure 49: Data Sources and Key Assumptions

Data items / Key assumptions

	Basis	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Change in income growth	Default	2.33%	2.76%	2.84%	2.77%	3.58%
Change in house prices	Default	-1.12%	-5.67%	1.14%	3.43%	3.59%
Change in private rent prices	Default	5.04%	1.77%	1.67%	1.86%	2.49%
Change in income distribution growth	No change	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Number of years to clear existing unmet need	5 years
Market housing affordability criteria	30%
Social rent affordability criteria	35%

Data item	Data Sources	Basis of the data
Income data by HMA	Paycheck	2022
House price paid data by HMA	Land Registry Data	Calendar year
Rent prices	Rent Officers Wales	Calendar year
Household projection basis	Principal	
Percentage of households considered for owner occupier tenure that go on to buy	60%	

HMA assumptions

HMA	FTB property price	FTB property value to income ratio	Min. income for intermediate rent	Max. income for intermediate rent
Upper Cynon Valley	£ 109,068	4.1	£ 13,339	£ 19,373
Greater Aberdare	£ 96,906	4.1	£ 16,400	£ 22,828
Lower Cynon Valley	£ 79,107	4.1	£ 17,133	£ 22,809
Greater Pontypridd	£ 115,693	4.1	£ 20,659	£ 27,884
Lower Rhondda Fach	£ 85,040	4.1	£ 16,343	£ 23,183
Upper Rhondda Fach	£ 66,252	4.1	£ 13,829	£ 19,353
Upper Rhondda Fawr	£ 82,073	4.1	£ 15,028	£ 20,307
Lower Rondda Fawr	£ 84,051	4.1	£ 15,615	£ 22,583
Tonyrefail & Gilfach Goch	£ 115,599	4.1	£ 16,067	£ 24,113
South West Taf	£ 168,101	4.1	£ 25,919	£ 34,051
Central Taf	£ 154,876	4.1	£ 23,350	£ 30,958
East of Pontypridd	£ 115,693	4.1	£ 21,794	£ 28,685
Taffs Well	£ 158,213	4.1	£ 27,019	£ 36,555

Appendix C: Table of Figures

Appendix D: Table of Charts

Bibliography

Equality Act 2010 - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Making A Difference - https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/Councilperformance/Related Documents/CorporatePlan2020/CorporatePlan2020ENGFINAL.pdf

1985 Housing Act - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/68/section/8

2003 Local Government Act - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/26/part/7

Independent Review of Affordable Housing Supply - https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/independent-review-of-affordable-housing-supply-report_0.pdf

Planning Policy Wales -https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf

Housing (Wales) Act 2014 - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/7/contents/enactedEquality Act 2010 - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

Making A Difference - https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/Performancebudgetsandspending/Councilperformance/Related Documents/CorporatePlan2020/CorporatePlan2020ENGFINAL.pdf

ONS Data - https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/W06000016/

Nomis - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics (nomisweb.co.uk)

Welsh Government - https://www.gov.wales/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-neet-july-2022-june-2023-html

tudalen wag

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when competing 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: Claire Hutcheon

Service Director: Derek James

Service Area: Prosperity and Development

Date:

1.a)   What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

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

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Housing Market Assessment: Rhondda Cynon Taf Report of Findings July 2022

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

In Wales local authorities have a requirement to consider the housing accommodation needs if their localities under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985. In order to fulfill this requirement, Welsh Local Authorities must produce a LHMA (Local Housing Market Assessment). This assessment will consider the current state of the housing market, including the need for affordable homes of different tenures.

The LHMA provides understanding of the nature of the makeup of the current and future needs across RCT, providing robust evidence to support future plan making for the period of 15 years, 2022 – 2037.

The information produced by the assessment will be used by a range of internal and external stake holders such has RCT's Housing Strategy Team and Housing Developers. It will also play a huge part in the allocation of Social Housing Grant as it identifies the areas of RCT that are in the most need of affordable housing.

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

As mentioned above the requirement for each local authority in Wales is set out in the Housing Act 1985 and are crucial for forming part of an evidence base that will feed in to the Local Development Plans and Local Housing Strategies. RCT CBC have an important role to play in community leadership and strategic housing. Under the Housing Act 1985 RCT CBC are also responsible for completing a review of housing need periodically. RCT CBC are required to rewrite the LHMA every 5 years and refresh the data that is held in the LHMA every 2 – 3 years, utilizing section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Other relevant legislation:
- Housing (Wales) Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

1.e)   Please outline who this proposal affects:

- o Service users   ☒
- o Employees   ☒
- o 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.

Protected Characteristics	**Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts**	**Provide detail of the impact**	**What evidence has been used to support this view?**
Age *(Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people)*	Positive	Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Regional Partnership Board, 10-Year Strategic Capital Plan 31 July 2023 was used to assess the needs for older people in RCT. It was identified that there would be Age designated rent including suitable Sheltered Housing needed by 2025: 414 by 2035: 780 Retirement for sale needed by 2025: 46 and by 2035: 87. Extra Care Rent: by needed 2025 and by 2035: 214 Extra Care for sale by needed 2025: 7 and by 2035: 24 Step Up/Step Down by needed 2025: 2	Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Regional Partnership Board, 10-Year Strategic Capital Plan 31 July 2023

		and by 2035: 6 Nursing Care Beds needed by 2025: 226 and by 2035: 406 Using these figures, the council is able to direct funding from Social Housing Grant and Housing Care Fund to the development of the needed units above. Young people over the age of 16 with no additional disabilities fall in to the general needs category of housing. It is identified that 7,285 market and affordable housing will be need to be constructed over the period 2022-37 to meet the need. Again with a healthy SHG development programme and an up to date Local Development plan we are able to suitable properties are build to meet this need.	Welsh Government LHMA toolkit (Source: https://www.gov.wales/local-housing-market-assessment-lhma-guidance-local-authorities)
Disability *(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)*	Positive:	Paragraph 4.2.11 of the Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (edition 10, Dec 2018) identifies that authorities should plan for households with specific needs. It is with this in mind that it is appropriate for new homes to meet the Lifetime Home Standards that are incorporated in to the Welsh Government Design Quality	Paragraph 4.2.11 PPW 10: "*Planning authorities should also identify where interventions may be required to deliver the housing supply, including for specific sites. There must be sufficient sites suitable for the full range of housing types to address the identified needs of communities, including the needs of older people and people with*

		Requirements which is now a mandatory standard for any homes classed as affordable or aided in development by Welsh Government grant.	*disabilities. In this respect, planning authorities should promote sustainable residential mixed tenure communities with 'barrier free' housing, for example built to Lifetime Homes standards to enable people to live independently and safely in their own homes for longer."* The Lifetime Homes concept is based on five overarching principles: Inclusivity. Accessibility. Adaptability. Sustainability. Good value.
		It has also been identified in this assessment that Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are the main resource by where existing stock can be adapted to meet the needs of its current/future occupants. RCT CBC provides these grants to carry out a range of work ranging from major building work to minor adaptations.	Wales Audit Office, 2018 Crisis Paper.
		This assessment has projected census data supported by information from the department of work and pensions to ascertain that there are currently 42,888 households in RCT that have long-term illness or a disability. It is therefore evermore important that RCT	LHMA 2022/27 Households with disabilities (Source, Census 2021, DWP.)

		CBC keep developing homes through Welsh Government's SHG to the DQR standards to meet thisneed.	
Gender Reassignment *(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)*	Neutral:	The purpose of the LHMA is to identify housing need across RCT to allow the council to deliver housing where it is needed, regardless of gender or identity. However the council does recognise that members of the LGBTQ+ community will benefit from having accessible affordable housing in areas that prior to this LHMA would not have been identified.	

Protected Characteristics	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 *(people who are married or in a civil partnership)*	Neutral	The purpose of the LHMA is to identify housing need across RCT to allow the council to deliver housing where it is needed, regardless of marital or partnership status. However the council does collect this data when completing an application to the common housing register on behalf of services users. This data is then used to calculate bedroom need based on numbers only. This data set has been used to identify current and projected need across the plan period but the partnership status has no impact on the output of this data.	Common housing register (Homefinder RCT)
Pregnancy and Maternity *(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)*	Neutral	The purpose of the LHMA is to identify housing need across RCT to allow the council to deliver housing where it is needed, regardless of pregnancy or maternity. However the council does collect pregnancy data when completing an application to the common housing register on behalf of services users. This data is then used to calculate bedroom need based on numbers only. This data set has been used to identify current and projected need across the plan period but the partnership status has no impact on	Common housing register (Homefinder RCT)

		the output of this data.	
Race *(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)*	Neutral	The purpose of the LHMA is to identify housing need across RCT to allow the council to deliver housing where it is needed, regardless of race. However the council does complete a separate accommodation needs assessment for the Gypsy Traveller community.	
Religion or Belief *(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)*	Neutral	The purpose of the LHMA is to identify housing need across RCT to allow the council to deliver housing where it is needed, regardless of religion or belief.	
Sex *(women and men, girls and boys)*	Neutral	The purpose of the LHMA is to identify housing need across RCT to allow the council to deliver housing where it is needed, regardless of sex. However the council does collect this data when completing an application to the common housing register on behalf of services users. This data is then used to calculate bedroom need based on numbers only. This data set has been used to identify current and projected need across the plan period but the partnership status has no impact on the output of this data.	Common housing register (Homefinder RCT)

| Sexual Orientation *(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)* | Neutral | The purpose of the LHMA is to identify housing need across RCT to allow the council to deliver housing where it is needed, regardless of sexual orientation.

However the council does recognise that members of the LGBTQ+ community will benefit from having accessible affordable housing in areas that prior to this LHMA would not have been identified. | |

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 *(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)*	Neutral	As the LHMA pulls data from the common housing register the local authority has a duty to assess all housing applications that present, including the Armed Forces Community. Therefore this cohorts data set is in included in the LHMA.	Common Housing Register (Homefinder RCT)
Carers *(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)*	Neutral	As the LHMA pulls data from the common housing register the local authority has a duty to assess all housing applications that present, including carers. Therefore this cohorts data set is in included in the LHMA.	Common Housing Register (Homefinder RCT)

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: Liam Richards

Position: Housing Strategy Officer

Date: 31/01/2024

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 <u>Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty</u> 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:

<table>
<tr>
<td>

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

</td>
<td>

- 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

</td>
</tr>
</table>

Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/Income Poverty *(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)*	Select from the following:		
Low and / or No Wealth *(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)*	Select from the following:		
Material Deprivation *(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)*	Select from the following:		

Socio-economic disadvantage	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Area Deprivation *(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)*	Select from the following:		
Socio-economic background *(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)*	Select from the following:		
Socio-economic disadvantage *(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)*	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.**

  N/A

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 data used in this report can be found in the final LHMA with reference to the data sources such as ONS and Stats Wales.

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.

  N/A

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 LHMA will be reviewed and updated again by September 2024 as on the 21 March 2022 Welsh Government Published new guidance that all local authorities must adopt at the next iteration.

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

N/A

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

RCT CBC's Housing Strategy Team will carry out the next LHMA.

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

The next LHMA will set out where investment is needed in RCT to meet the housing needs of the county borough.

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
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.

In summary there are many positive impacts to groups that are covered in the equality impact assessment. As the LHMA is an assessment of all housing need across RCT it naturally takes in to account all cohorts and it will inform future projects/strategies/policies on key data points relating to current and future demand across the county brough.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer: Liam Richards

Name: Liam Richards

Position: Housing Strategy Officer

Date: 28/07/2022

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.

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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:	Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)
Department	Community Housing / Housing Strategy and Investment
Service Director	Derek James
Officer Completing the WLIA	Liam Richards
Email	Liam.richards@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	07385034136
Brief Description	The LHMA allows the council to understand the nature and the make-up of current and future housing needs across RCT, providing robust evidence to support future plan making for the period 2023-28.
Date	30/01/2024
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Service users, employees and the wider community.

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What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	The LHMA informs key policies and investment in the local housing market. It allows the local development plan makers to create policies that support the need of housing identified in the public and private sector. It will also inform how social housing grant is spent across RCT as the output of data will show where more investment is needed in specific areas of RCT. The LHMA will be publicly accessible from the council's own bilingual website and will be published in both Welsh and English for service users, employees and the wider community to access.
Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.	Any impact on Welsh Language groups should only be positive as the development of LHMA will mean that the Welsh language is embedded in working practices by way of granting access to all that require the Welsh versions of future documents, as well as becoming a part of every day practice for the local authority, encouraging more people to use the language where possible.
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.
Other relevant data or research	

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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?
Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language e.g. staff, residents and visitors The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work	Positive	During the Pandemic we have embraced technology in order to provide services differently and this has been an opportunity to promote the Welsh language as people accessing the Council's website and other key partners' websites have access to services and the Welsh language. With this in mind we will be publishing the LHMA in Welsh and	All documents that are published on the council web page are viewable in Welsh and English. Both staff and people in the community are able to engage digitally and actively have their needs met through these methods.	Review how we have embraced technology and provided services differently during the COVID-19 pandemic and further enhance these by ensuring we deliver information in the Welsh language.

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		English to make sure there is fair access to the data that has been produced.		

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?
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	Positive	The Welsh Government's ambition is to see the number of people able to enjoy speaking and using the Welsh language to reach a million by the year 2050, RCTCBC hopes to encourage this ambition by providing the conditions to facilitate an increase in the use of the Welsh language in line with the RCTCBC 5 year Welsh Language Strategy. By publishing the LHMA in Welsh	In line with the Council's Welsh Language Promotional Strategy and our Welsh Language Standards, this strategy will ensure bilingual text (Welsh first) on all Council documentation. Increase in the number of staff and service users accessing Welsh language courses. RCTCBC will encourage staff and partners to enable staff to have access to Welsh	Work with the Welsh Language team to develop future iterations of the LHMA that are fully bilingual. The LHMA is a statutory document, which includes high-level data that will inform future policies and strategies in this area. All of these strategies/policies will be subject to a Welsh language

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		and English we are supporting the Welsh Government in their goals.	Language courses and we will monitor this to ensure its effectiveness.	impact assessment in due course, which will assess these individual policies/strategies' impact on the Welsh language as a result of specific actions, e.g. impact of housing location on Welsh language services/engagement with Welsh language services
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 Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time	Positive	Data from the LHMA can be used to provide work points for many housing specific related strategies designed to tackle challenges that RCT CBC face while maintaining promotion of the use of the Welsh language at every applicable juncture. Allowing access to Welsh and English versions of the LHMA will ensure that future work can be carried out in Welsh for users who wish to do so as well as encourage learners to complete day to day tasks in the Welsh language.	Increase in the number of staff and service users accessing Welsh language courses. RCTCBC will encourage staff and partners to enable staff to have access to Welsh Language courses and we will monitor this to ensure its effectiveness.	Ensure that all material is bilingual with both Welsh and English published in line with the Welsh Language Standards. Our recruitment strategy could incorporate a goal of employing more Welsh Speakers and consider the Welsh Language interview scheme.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

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

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	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?
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. Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work	Positive	The development of the LHMA will increase the Council's ability to deliver services through the medium of Welsh. Consideration to the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh language when dealing with the Council and for staff members who wish to use Welsh at work.	Increasing the availability of assessments and reports such as the LHMA in the Welsh language will increase the use of Welsh by staff as well as third party individuals and organizations.	Ensure that we proactively offer the Welsh version of the LHMA wherever it is published or promoted to ensure those who wish to read/refer to a Welsh version can do so unhindered.
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	Positive	As above	As Above	As Above

Stage 3 - <u>Strengthening the proposal</u>

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?
Review how we have embraced technology and provided services differently during the COVID-19 pandemic and further enhance these by ensuring we deliver information in the Welsh language. We must also review the council's overall ability to deliver the Welsh language, taking in to account previous learning as well as considering the rights of staff members that wish to use Welsh at work.	TCB	TBC
Promote Welsh language access to the LHMA at all times.	Ongoing	RCT CBC Housing Strategy

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?**
Offering all services in accordance with Welsh Language standards	Not all readers of the LHMA are required to comply with the Welsh Language Standards however we will encourage readers to promote the Welsh language, and always make a proactive offer of the Welsh version of the document.

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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
This WLIA clearly outlines how the publication of this assessment will increase the opportunities for stakeholders to engage with the data included in Welsh, and how the service will ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Measure/Standards, and offer opportunities for staff and the public to use Welsh if they wish. Welsh Language Services would advise you to refer a little more, above and in your summary, to the holistic picture of the impact that planning for housing stock can have on the access to, and use of, Welsh language services within the County Borough. This assessment, of course, includes core data that will subsequently be used to inform housing and planning policy in RCT, so an acknowledgement that the		

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policies that derive from it could affect the language, and confirmation that they will be subject to separate WLIAs, would be welcomed.		
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**

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?
As the LHMA is only published once we RCT CBC will make sure that the document is accessible in Welsh and English and is clearly sign posted. We will also encourage any documents that are created off the data produced in the LHMA are created and published in Welsh and English.

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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.

In summary there are many positive impacts to groups that are covered in the equality impact assessment. As the LHMA is an assessment of all housing need across RCT it naturally takes in to account all cohorts and will be published in Welsh and English. This will not only allow speakers and learners access to the assessment data but also allow future strategies/projects/policies to be created in the Welsh Language.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Liam Richards	Service Director Name:	Derek James
Position	Housing Strategy Officer	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

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Signature		Service Director Signature	
Date		Date	

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