



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20th July 2021

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31st March 2021 (Year End/Quarter 4)

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)**

**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, for the financial year ended 31st March 2021.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the continued unprecedented circumstances Council Services are operating within as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Revenue

- 2.2 Note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 31st March 2021 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) including the additional one-off Welsh Government Covid-19 funding accounted for during the year to support service delivery.

Capital

- 2.3 Note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 31st March 2021 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
- 2.4 Note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31st March 2021 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

- 2.5 Note the year-end position regarding progress made against agreed Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).
- 2.6 Note the progress update to enhance the Council's short term and long-term response to extreme weather events (Section 6 of the Executive Summary).

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree the Council's financial and operational performance position as at the 31st March 2021 to enable elected Members and other stakeholders to scrutinise the performance of the Council.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 This report provides Members with a year-end statement of the Council's financial and operational performance position for the financial year ending the 31st March 2021.
- 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, and exceptions are highlighted within the detailed sections to ensure that elected Members and other readers are able to quickly identify the key issues. The report also sets out a position statement of progress in implementing the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on the 18th December 2020 to enhance the Council's short term and long-term response to extreme weather events.
- 4.3 As Members will be aware from Performance Reports presented during 2020/21, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented and widespread challenges in the delivery of Council Services alongside significant additional cost and income losses that have, to date, been funded in the majority of cases by Welsh Government. The fourth quarter Performance Report continues to be set within this context and further information in this regard is included within the Executive Summary.

5.0 QUARTER 4 REPORT

- 5.1 The Quarter 4 report is attached and comprises:
- **Executive Summary** – setting out, at a glance, the overall performance of the Council as at Quarter 4 (i.e. 31st March 2021).

- **Revenue Monitoring** – sections 2a – e setting out the detailed year-end financial spend against budget across our Revenue Budget with exceptions highlighted.
- **Capital Monitoring** – sections 3a – e setting out year-end capital spend across our Capital Programme with exceptions highlighted and section 3f covering Prudential Indicators.
- **Organisational Health** – includes year-end 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 year-end position statements for the priorities of People, Places and Prosperity.
- **Enhancing the Council’s response to extreme weather events** - Section 6 setting out progress made to implement the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on [18th December 2020](#).

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS AND SOCI-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 The Council’s Performance Report sets out the year-end position on financial and operational performance for 2020/21; 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 Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee for review, challenge and where deemed required, the scrutiny of specific areas in more detail. With specific regard to progress made to implementation recommendations to enhance the Council’s response to extreme weather events, this information will be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

10.1 The Corporate Plan progress updates included within this report align with the priorities as set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 "[Making a Difference](#)". With regard to the [Well-being of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) Act 2015](#), at the 4th March 2020 Council meeting, it was agreed that the Corporate Plan priorities would also serve as its Well-being Objectives in line with the Act.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 This report sets out the financial and operational performance of the Council as at Quarter 4 2020/21, that is, 31st March 2021.

11.2 The year-end revenue budget position is a £0.204M overspend and represents an improved position to that reported for quarters 1 to 3 of 2020/21. The position is set in the unprecedented context of Covid-19 and takes account of additional one-off Welsh Government funding claimed during the year, and also reflects the continuation of key budget pressures particularly across Adult Services and Children's Services. It will be critically important that additional Welsh Government funding to address 'core' cost pressures remains in place for 2021/22 and beyond, for example, across social care services, together with additional Covid-19 funding to fund additional expenditure and income losses as a direct result of the pandemic.

11.3 Capital investment as at 31st March 2021 is £102M, supporting visible improvements to infrastructure and assets, taking account of Covid-19 restrictions and safety requirements.

11.4 Good progress was made overall across the Council's three Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity, where focus was afforded on providing essential support to residents and businesses to help counter the significant impact of Covid-19 alongside the continued delivery of strategic projects.

11.5 The second progress update on the delivery of recommendations to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events shows a positive position, with key actions being taken forward that provide a clear direction for the future.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Paul Griffiths

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

20th July 2021

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31st March 2021 (Quarter 4/Year End)

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)**

Item: 11

Background Papers

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths

**COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT
QUARTER 4 2020/21
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 Prosperity, Development & 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 Prosperity, Development & 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 – Quarter 4 (year-end) position statements are included within the following sections:

- 5a – People;
- 5b – Places; and
- 5c – Prosperity.

Section 6 – ENHANCING THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Progress update on the implementation of recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 18th December 2020 to enhance the Council’s response to extreme weather events.

Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

The in-year quarterly Performance Reports during the year have set out the context Council services were operating within further to the introduction of national lockdown measures in March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Executive Summary, bringing together and summarising the Council's financial and operational performance position as at 31st March 2021 (year-end), continues to be set within the context of Council service delivery operating within a very challenging and unprecedented environment as a result of the on-going impact of Covid-19. This has required the Council, like all local authorities in Wales, to continue to adapt and change the way it provides services, many in partnership with others, to help meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Where appropriate, service specific information has been included within this Executive Summary to provide the reader with a full as picture as possible in this regard. In addition, 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	2020/21 – as at 31 st March 2021		
	Full Year Budget £M	Full Year Expenditure £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
Education & Inclusion Services (2a)	191.845	191.767	(0.078)
Community & Children's Services (2b)	159.852	160.351	0.499
Chief Executive (2c)	30.644	30.236	(0.408)
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services (2d)	55.167	55.510	0.343
Sub Total	437.508	437.864	0.356
Authority Wide Budgets (2e)	71.239	71.087	(0.152)
Grand Total	508.747	508.951	0.204

Welsh Government Covid-19 funding incorporated within the full year position at Quarter 4 (31st March 2021)

The full year revenue budget position as at 31st March 2021 is a £0.204M overspend. This position is based on additional costs and income losses incurred as a direct result of the pandemic being offset by additional funding made available by Welsh Government to all local authorities in Wales.

With regard to the Welsh Government funding made available, specific financial assistance has been provided to local authorities for additional expenditure incurred as a result of Covid-19 (for example, additional costs incurred in respect of housing / homelessness, free school meal payments, Adult Social Services, staff cover due to absence / shielding and increased demand for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme) and also income loss where there has been a need to temporarily suspend or reduce service provision (for example, Leisure Centres and the provision of school meals). Welsh Government also provided additional funding toward the end of the year as part of supporting local authorities in their on-going recovery from the pandemic, for example, to support financial resilience, the delivery of on-going projects such as digitisation of services, to support council tax collection rates and additional resources for schools. These resources have been allocated for specific purposes and are included, as appropriate, within the Council's earmarked reserve balances as at 31st March 2021 (draft, subject to audit).

The Table below sets out the total full-year additional costs and income losses incurred and accounted for relating to the 2020/21 financial year.

Full Year Additional Costs And Income Losses Incurred As A Direct Result Of Covid 19 And Assumed To Be Fully Funded By Welsh Government

Service Area	Actual Additional Costs / Income Loss Recovered (Quarters 1 - 4)*
	£M
Education & Inclusion Services	-14.720
Community & Children's Services	-22.890
Chief Executive	-1.922
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	-6.156
Authority Wide	-5.305
TOTAL	-50.993

* Excludes additional costs incurred / projected in respect of Test, Trace and Protect, the funding for which is being made available by Welsh Government. Also excludes spend incurred and funded on Welsh Government schemes which the Council acted as an agent.

Revenue budget variances at Quarter 4 (year-end)

1. Community and Children's Services

ADULT SERVICES

- Long Term Care & Support (£0.519M overspend);
- Commissioned Services (£0.529M overspend);
- Provider Services (£0.354M overspend); and
- Short Term Intervention Services (£0.898M underspend).

CHILDREN SERVICES

- Safeguarding & Support (including Children Looked After) (£2.464M overspend);
- Early Intervention (£0.565M underspend);
- Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (£0.242M underspend);
- Intensive Intervention (£0.974M underspend); and
- Management & Support Services (£0.057M underspend).

TRANSFORMATION

- Service Improvement (£0.076M underspend).

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

- Community Services (£0.247M underspend);
- Communities & Wellbeing (£0.073M underspend); and
- Leisure, Parks & Countryside and Community Facilities (£0.153M underspend).

2. Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services

FRONTLINE SERVICES

- Transportation (£0.184M underspend);
- Facilities Cleaning (£0.118M underspend);
- Waste Services (£0.602M overspend);
- Fleet Management (£0.140M underspend); and
- Group Directorate (£0.068M overspend).

3. Chief Executive

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- Human Resources (£0.134M underspend);
- Legal Services (£0.081M underspend);
- Finance & Digital Services (£0.064M underspend); and
- Corporate Estates (£0.079M underspend).

4. Authority Wide Budgets

- Capital Financing (£0.250M underspend); and.
- Miscellaneous (£0.094M overspend).

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

The Council and its contractors / suppliers have continued to build on the work undertaken during quarters 1 to 3 to ensure safe working arrangements and, in doing so, enabled the on-going delivery of capital programme projects.

Capital Programme Budget

Service Area	2020/21 - as at 31 st March 2021
	Actual Expenditure £M
Chief Executive (3a)	2.495
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services (3b)	73.610
Education & Inclusion Services (3c)	20.992
Community & Children's Services (3d)	5.223
Total	102.320

Key Capital Variances at Quarter 4

- Re-profiling of a number of projects to reflect changes in the total cost of schemes and revised delivery timescales.
- Grant approvals introduced into the Capital Programme: Welsh Government (WG) Targeted Regeneration Investment (TR) Programme (£0.254); Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways Capital Grant (£0.372M); WG Valleys Taskforce Regional (£0.280M); WG Local Transport Fund (£7.104M); WG Active Travel Fund (£2.670M); WG Active Travel Fund Core Allocation (£1.123M); WG Local Transport Network Fund (£0.277M); WG Local Road Refurbishment Grant (£1.260M); WG Safe Routes In The Community (£0.422M); WG Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant (£1.075M); WG Flood Recovery Funding (£1.321M); WG Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme (£0.451M); WG Resilient Roads Fund (£4.514M); WG 21st Century Schools (£7.889M); WG Circular Economy (£0.560M); WG Capital Funding Grant Towards Schools Maintenance Budgets (£4.045M); WG Hwb in Schools Infrastructure Grant (£2.500M); WG WLGA Covid Grant (£0.414M); and Integrated Care Fund (£1.209M).

For information on how the Capital Programme is funded see section 3e by clicking [here](#).

Prudential Indicators

For a detailed breakdown of Prudential Indicators, see section 3f by clicking [here](#).

Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

- **Turnover**

Service Area	2020/21		2019/20	
	As at 31 st March 2021		As at 31 st March 2020	
	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover
Turnover – Council Wide	10,888	6.84	10,670	9.85
Community & Children’s Services	2,946	6.59	2,845 ¹	8.44 ¹
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	941	6.70	964	8.40
Education & Inclusion Services	1,258	6.52	1,265	8.14
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4,873</u>	<u>7.47</u>	<u>4,855</u>	<u>11.64</u>
Primary	3,043	7.49	3,066	9.95
Secondary	1,830	7.43	1,789	14.53
Chief Executive’s Division	870	4.83	741 ¹	8.37 ¹

- **Sickness Absence**

With specific regard to Covid-19 and the recording of sickness absence, where staff have been unavailable for work due to: self-isolating; being part of the shielded list; have underlying conditions that places an individual at risk, such as being pregnant; or lives in the same household as someone that needs to be shielded, these occurrences have not been categorised as ‘sickness absence’ and as such are excluded from the analysis below.

Service Area	2020/21	2019/20
	As at 31 st March 2021 %	As at 31 st March 2020 %
% days lost to sickness absence – Council Wide	3.96	4.16
Community & Children’s Services	6.14	5.61 ¹
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	4.99	4.74
Education & Inclusion Services	3.20	3.70
<u>Schools</u>	<u>2.88</u>	<u>3.56</u>
Primary	3.21	3.79
Secondary	2.33	3.16
Chief Executive’s Division	2.62	2.48 ¹

For a more detailed breakdown of 2020/21 sickness absence information, [click here](#).

¹ Restated for comparative purposes following staff transfer from Community & Children’s Services - Business Services to Chief Executive - Finance & Digital Services

Organisation Health related investment areas

There will be a continued focus on investing in organisational health related areas, for example, IT infrastructure and invest to save energy efficiency schemes, with projects being delivered operationally within services across the Council.

- **Council Strategic Risks**

The Council's Quarter 4 Strategic Risk Register can be viewed by clicking [here](#), with specific updates included setting out the implications Covid-19 and the work undertaken to mitigate the impact as much as possible.

Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN

Corporate Plan priority action plans for 2020/21 were reported to and approved by full Council on the 21st October 2020 covering the three priorities of People, Places and Prosperity. A summary of the progress made across the three priorities for the year ended 31st March 2021 is set out in Sections 5a – c and electronic links have been included to each approved action plan, providing more detailed information on progress during the year.

Corporate Plan Priority Progress Update

- **PEOPLE** (Section 5a)

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

Summary of progress to 31st March 2021

Assessments continued to take a person-centred approach as far as practicable during quarter 4, although our focus was afforded to those with greatest need. However, under ongoing Alert Level 4 restrictions, there has been a need to return to doing more work over the phone and for a lot of people we can do everything we need to do in this way. This has restricted the number of visits to people but, where necessary, we have continued to undertake critical visits in agreement with the person and, where applicable, their carer. However, as the pandemic continues, we experience growing pressures as more people need care and support, and workloads across Adult Services remain high and caseloads become increasingly more complex. There remains a waiting list of cases to be allocated, across Care and Support and in the ACE (Occupational Therapy) Team. Additional external support continued to be commissioned to reduce assessment and review backlogs across Care and Support.

We continued to prioritise hospital discharges and the period since the beginning of December 2020 has continued to be demanding, although the position is now starting to stabilise. Despite care homes supporting the admission of patients from hospital, wherever possible and if they can provide the appropriate care safely, on-going Covid-19 outbreaks and the subsequent Public Health Wales (PHW) Covid free restrictions placed on admissions, is limiting care home placements (in particular, nursing and dementia), resulting in some discharges taking longer to complete. From 1st January to 31st March 2021, we supported in total 665 discharges, around 51 per week. The success of this response is testament to the strength of the established partnership with CTMUHB and our providers.

The Cwrt yr Orsaf development in Pontypridd continued to make progress towards completion in Summer 2021, despite the significant challenges faced by Contractors due to Covid-19. Funding to redevelop the former Danymynydd Care Home into a new 60 unit extra care housing scheme in Porth in line with the Council's strategy to modernise options for older people and deliver extra care housing was agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 25th March 2021. Demolition of the former Care Home is planned for May 2021 and construction of the extra care housing scheme is due to commence in Autumn 2021, following planning approval during the Summer.

We continued to work in partnership with housing providers to deliver modern additional supported housing accommodation for vulnerable people. The Crown Avenue (Treorchy) refurbishment was completed in early October 2020 and opened in January 2021. All of the flats have been allocated to people with a learning disability. Construction of supported housing accommodation at Oxford Street (Mountain Ash) also made good progress through the summer period and was completed in Spring 2021, with the building handed over on the 9th April 2021. Assessments of new tenants has commenced and residents will move in, in Summer 2021.

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

The Council along with its regional Health and local authority partners worked with the care home sector to support the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme and asymptomatic lateral flow testing to frontline social care staff.

The majority of care homes have been subject to PHW Covid free restrictions from 20th December 2020, resulting in limited opportunity to provide outdoor visits since the start of the new Alert Level 4 restrictions. However, where possible, some outdoor “window visits” have taken place in line with risk assessments and PHW and Welsh Government guidance. Indoor care home visits were allowed to resume from 13th March 2021 for one designated visitor. The decision on whether, and in what circumstances care home visits took place, rested with the individual care home provider, which included the Council in-house care homes. In each case, the care home put in place appropriate risk assessments, social distancing and safety measures to ensure resident safety.

In care homes with Covid-19 cases and unable to re-open to visitors, visits for exceptional circumstances, including, but not restricted to, end of life, still continued as they have been throughout the pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, care home providers have strived to maintain contact between their residents and their families, while operating within the wider restrictions in place. This has included, where possible, virtual visits and calls through various forms of technology to ensure residents remained connected with family members.

Whilst the majority of our day and respite services remain temporarily closed, we continued to support our most vulnerable people, assessed as critical due to their own or carer’s needs, in their own homes and in the community. Plans are in place to reopen more service on a phased basis during May 2021 as Covid-19 lockdown restrictions ease.

We restarted full operation of the Stay Well@Home 2 service (7 days a week, including out of hours) from 6th July 2020 and this was extended to Merthyr Tydfil from 20th July 2020. Stay Well @Home 2 has been key to reducing unnecessary attendance to hospital, in particular by the Welsh Ambulance Service, by supporting people to remain safely at home throughout the winter period.

We reinstated our seven Community Resilience Centres following the introduction of local and national restrictions. Since the start of the pandemic a total of 3,393 individual residents have been supported, for example, with shopping, picking up prescriptions, friendly phone calls, dog walking, employment and benefits advice.

Performance in tracing cases and their contacts remained very high in spite of the significant surge in cases in winter 2020. Significant increases in staff for the service were secured from across all three Local Authorities in December in order to address demand and the service coped well, ensured adequate training was in place and completion of workloads. Some staff have returned to their substantive roles and some have moved into the vaccination programme. The staff in Test, Trace & Protect (TTP) will continue to respond to cases and contacts across Cwm Taf and undertake enhanced contact tracing whilst case numbers are manageable. There is flexibility to increase staff resource in TTP if the cases numbers increase.

The Welsh Government funded Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) has been delivered by the Childcare Team within Education and Inclusion Services. Places were allocated based on the submission of a successful application and children were placed with childcare settings that had remained open. The scheme ran from 1st April to 31st August 2020, with over 750 children offered placements and using 102 childcare providers. Flying Start childcare resumed in September 2020 and has remained fully operational since. Settings managed staffing challenges well with minimal impact on availability of provision. Lateral flow tests were also successfully introduced across all settings for staff.

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

We continued to encourage residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing. We introduced online exercise classes via our Leisure For Life App in March 2020 and these continued to be made available. We also introduced some open-air classes, utilising our parks and 3G pitches, to allow customers to exercise in a safe manner outdoors in line with social distancing requirements. Our Sports Development Team also delivered safe, socially distanced exercise opportunities in the summer HUB schools. As at 10th August 2020, gym facilities re-opened in line with social distancing and public health guidelines. This was followed by the introduction of indoor fitness classes on 17th August and swimming pools from 24th August. However, during the firebreak lockdown in October and following the implementation of the Alert Level 4 restrictions on the 20th December 2020, gyms were closed and indoor and outdoor classes were cancelled in line with Welsh Government restrictions on meeting people outside of your household.

Independent and small group outdoor activities have been promoted on all social media platforms and through the Leisure For Life APP, along with key "benefits of regular activity" messages - for example, information to enable local walking, cycling and family activities. Support was also provided to sports clubs and organisations to access the Sport Wales Be Active Fund. All messages were in line with Welsh Government restrictions e.g. exercising alone or with your household during Level 4 restrictions.

A range of weekly wellbeing classes were provided online as part of our Adult Education programme, including Aromatherapy, Singing for wellbeing and lung health, All About Me and Crafts for Wellbeing. A variety of wellbeing self-help videos were also provided through our social media platforms, including support for individuals with anxiety. Learners on our courses also received wellbeing calls from course tutors. An online programme of arts activity and performances has been curated and is available through the theatres' Facebook pages and RCT Theatres' YouTube page.

Children's Services continued to work to Welsh Government statutory guidance, subject to risk assessment and physical distancing requirements, adapting methods of service delivery as necessary. Given our statutory duties, we are incrementally returning to business as usual, with the key difference being working from home and risk management of face to face work. Most staff have now been vaccinated. Priority was given to safely visiting and hearing the voices of children most at risk; this included those on the child protection register, those looked after where there is potential placement breakdown or those where input is critical to maintain them at home. We continued to look after children in both residential and foster care, prioritising children and carers most in need of support. We commissioned UKICS to increase social work capacity in our Intensive Intervention Services. Child Protection Conferences and Children Looked After reviews took place virtually attended by partners and family members where possible.

Youth Engagement & Participation Service (YEPS) staff remained in secondary schools and the support for learners pathway is still in place to ensure those young people who are struggling to return to school have the support to do/ re-engage with school and learning. Proactive street-based youth work provision was established in October, with all YEPS staff re-directed to providing information, advice, guidance and emotional support to young people in communities 5 nights a week. In the 8 weeks between October and the end of December (excluding the 2-week fire-break period) 2,699 contacts were made with young people across the County Borough. The Virtual Youth Offer remained available and will now remain as part of ongoing service delivery including virtual youth clubs, live Q&A sessions and live chat sessions involving BAROD and Sexual Health Nurses from the local health board.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 4

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PEOPLE		
Investment Area	Investment Value² £M	Quarter 4 Update
Leisure Centre Changing Rooms	0.088	This investment funding relates to works at Sobell Leisure Centre for changing room refurbishment and was completed in August 2020.
Extracare Housing	6.974	Works at the former Maesyffynnon Home for the Elderly site were completed in early 2020 and the first residents moved into the new facility in May 2020. Works commenced at the Pontypridd site in July 2019 and is progressing well, and are due to complete in 2021. Proposals for the extracare housing scheme in Porth were agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3 rd December 2020 and consideration of development proposals for Treorchy and Mountain Ash schemes are on-going.
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.
Total	7.362	

² Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.

o **PLACES** (Section 5b)

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

Summary of progress to 31st March 2021

Street cleaning and waste services continued with normal working and this has included grass cutting and fly-tipping activities with Covid-19 safety measures incorporated within operational practices. The Enforcement Team continued to provide additional Covid-19 related support e.g. marshalling at Covid-19 test centres and supporting Public Health with Covid-19 compliance measures and enforcement. Community Recycling Centres continued to operate within required guidelines and have been extremely busy during 2020/21. At the end of the 2020/21 financial year, recycling performance was 69.72% (64.78% last year), the highest ever reported at a year end, and provides a sound platform to build on and achieve the Council's own target of 80% recycling by 2025 in line with the RCT Climate Change commitment.

The Highways Improvement Programme for 2020/21 continued during quarter 4. We have progressed plans for The Cynon Gateway North; the design and [land negotiations](#) of the A4119 dualling between Coed Ely has been progressed; and the Environmental Impact Assessment for Llanharan Bypass is nearing completion with pre-planning consultation anticipated during the early part of the 2021/22 financial year. Our work continued on Storm Dennis repairs with the completion and reopening of the Ynysyngharad Park footbridge in March 2021 and the completion of major earthworks and restoration of the river to normal course in the Tylorstown Tip Phase 2/3 works. Phase 4 of this scheme is currently being designed.

The Council's Transportation Service worked to existing delivery plan priorities during the year, reacting to requests and delivering safe passenger transport services that operated within required Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidelines.

With reference to air quality monitoring, provisional data continued to indicate a positive decrease in nitrogen dioxide levels particularly in urban areas. It should be noted that it could be some time before the immediate and longer-term impacts of Covid-19 travel restrictions are fully understood. Air quality monitoring data will be reviewed in the coming months in preparation for submission of the annual Air Quality Progress Report to Welsh Government required by September 2021.

Substance Misuse service users continued to be supported remotely and face to face meetings were held when necessary. The newly developed Specialist Substance Misuse and Mental Health Team became operational and provided crisis intervention support to residents across Cwm Taf Morgannwg including those residents placed in temporary accommodation including Bed and Breakfast accommodation and hostel provision.

We continued to provide remote and face to face support (where it was considered safe) to those experiencing domestic abuse and recovery plans are being discussed on how to safely return and meet with clients at the Oasis Centre.

Our community cohesion work had been difficult to progress with limited contact throughout the pandemic. Despite this, we continued to explore opportunities for working virtually with our key partners.

We continued to work with our partners, the National Trading Standards Team and North Yorkshire Trading Standards, to ensure scam media accounts and websites were removed. We also increased our social media presence to ensure scam warnings reached a wider audience particularly with the increase of 'voice automated' scam messages from HMRC, DVLA, Royal

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

Mail and COVID test scams. There has also been an increase in Council Tax scams this quarter that we are working on in partnership with the National Anti-Fraud Network.

Our successful work to target the worst hit Truecall clients continued as part of the Carmarthenshire Trading Standards Pilot. This has enabled us to effectively target resources and block scam callers permanently.

This quarter saw a rise in complaints of doorstep crime for building, roofing and gardening work, which is common for this time of year. We increased our messaging to residents to ensure that they protect themselves and can make informed decisions, and how they can report any incidents should they occur.

We continued to invest in our green spaces and increase biodiversity. Grass cutting plans for 2021/22 are being developed that will commence in April, and our biodiversity areas will be cut at the end of August. We also progressed the signposting of wildflower management areas.

Our work to repair flood damage in Ynysangharad Park has been completed, and our programme of playground upgrade and repairs continues.

The latest Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group took place on [17 March 2021](#).

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 4

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value³ £M	Quarter 4 Update
Highways Infrastructure Repairs	8.624	<p>The additional resources are being used in conjunction with existing resources to deliver a programme of highways infrastructure repairs between 2020/21 and 2022/23.</p> <p>The Council's new Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24, as approved by Council on 10th March 2021, allocated further additional investment resources £3M to this area and will be reflected within the 2021/22 quarter 1 Performance Report.</p>
Play Areas	0.675	<p>There are 28 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2020/21. As at 31st March 2021, 17 had been completed, 1 remained under construction, 5 had been designed, costed and scheduled and 5 are to be designed. Due to prioritising schemes and contractor restrictions/delays, the 11 schemes not completed at year-end will be carried forward to 2021/22.</p> <p>The Council's new Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24, as approved by Council on 10th March 2021, allocated further additional investment resources £0.250M to this area and will be reflected within the 2021/22 quarter 1 Performance Report.</p>
Skate Parks/Multi Use Games Areas	0.184	<p>There are 4 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2020/21 and include rebuilding and line marking. The on-going Covid-19 restrictions has impacted on contractor availability with 2 schemes under construction and 2 to be designed; all 4 schemes will be carried forward and completed in 2021/22.</p>
Cynon Gateway South – Mountain Ash Cross Valley Link	4.750	<p>On 16th October 2020 the link road between the A4059 and B4275 Miskin Road was opened.</p>
Structures: St Albans Bridge and Brook Street Footbridge	2.574	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Alban's Bridge – the bridge was opened on 11th December 2020 with reinstatement works completed in quarter 4; and • Brook St. Footbridge – the estimated start date for works is summer 2021 and discussions are on-going with Transport for Wales in respect of the work to be undertaken.
Structures	2.791	<p>The investment funding has been allocated to support structure projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed schemes – Williamstown Footbridge, Station Street bridge (Treherbert), Castell lfor (Hopkinstown),

³ 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 ³ £M	Quarter 4 Update
		<p>Rhydyfelin Culverts, Gwawr Street (Aberaman - repairs to walls) and Phase 1 of B4273 Ynysybwl/Glyncoch Retaining Walls; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New scheme – Bodringallt bridge (Ystrad) - where works are due to start in mid-2021.
Parks Structures	1.335	<p>The investment funding has been allocated to support various footbridge repairs and replacements within Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works completed - Station Street River Wall (Treherbert); Bridge replacement of Nant Lonydd Bridge (Upper Boat); Replacement culverts at Blaennantygroes and Hirwaun Welfare Ground; retaining wall maintenance at Dare Valley Country Park; and replacement footbridges at Clydach Vale Countryside Park, near Crownhill Community Centre and at Llwynau Farm; and • Contracting process in progress - Bridge deck and parapet replacement of Maesyfelin Footbridge (Pontyclun); and • Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes. <p>The Council's new Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24, as approved by Council on 10th March 2021, allocated further additional investment resources £0.750M to this area and will be reflected within the 2021/22 quarter 1 Performance Report.</p>
Parks and Green Spaces	1.000	<p>This investment funding is supporting drainage, pavilion and infrastructure improvements to various parks sites. The programme comprises 93 schemes that are being managed across financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22.</p> <p>The Council's new Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24, as approved by Council on 10th March 2021, allocated further additional investment resources £0.500M to this area and will be reflected within the 2021/22 quarter 1 Performance Report.</p>
Cemeteries	0.088	<p>This investment funding has been allocated to deliver works at 4 cemetery locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works completed - Maes Yr Arian, Mountain Ash (replace entrance gate and fence) and Byn Yr Gaer, Hirwaun (repair of damaged palisade); • Trealaw – reset road drains; and • Glyntaff Cemetery - additional roadworks; waste removal; additional top car park, introduction of security measures, supply, delivery and installation of materials for decoration of the South Chapel; public conveniences; creation of screen and store; and replacement of fencing around main car park.

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES

Investment Area	Investment Value ³ £M	Quarter 4 Update
Llanharan Bypass	2.000	This investment funding is supporting various stages of development, preliminary design, ground investigations and ecology investigations. The next stage programmed is the pre-Planning Application Consultation that is scheduled to be undertaken during summer 2021.
A4119 Dualling (Stinkpot Hill)	6.000	This investment funding is supporting the dualling of the highway between the South Wales Fire Service Headquarters roundabout and Coed Ely roundabout. Detail design work is progressing; planning permission was granted for an Active Travel footbridge toward the northern end of the project; and work is on-going to secure land required and the associated Compulsory Purchase Order has been submitted.
Community Hubs	0.401	<p>This investment funding relates to supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porth Plaza – works were completed on 8th June 2020; and • Treorchy – procurement process underway for works to be undertaken to improve the proposed site of Treorchy Community Hub at Treorchy Library (cladding and new windows).
Gelli/Treorchy Link Road	0.400	This investment funding relates to investigatory works for a solution which will help alleviate congestion at Stag Square. Feasibility and preliminary design options are ongoing and a WeITAG stage 1 has been completed.
Cynon Gateway (North), Aberdare Bypass	2.000	This investment funding relates to the preliminary design for a bypass continuation from A4059 Aberdare to join the A465 Heads Of the Valleys road. Following the pre-Planning Application Consultation during quarter 3, the responses were evaluated and a planning application submitted in quarter 4.
Bryn Pica Eco Park	1.400	This investment funding is to support enabling works, planning and ecology for the development of an Eco Park at the Waste Management Facility.
Dinas Community Recycling Centre	0.250	This investment funding relates to the provision of a new office building and improvements on the site of Dinas Community Recycling Centre following the demolition of the previous site building. Works have been completed in respect of the new office building, garage, IT networking, CCTV and lighting.
Land Drainage	0.750	<p>This investment funding is supporting drainage and culvert network works. The ongoing programme includes works at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abercynon (Plantation Road) and Porth Relief Road – works complete; • Cwmbach – works commenced and scheduled for completion in the first half of 2021/22; and

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES

Investment Area	Investment Value³ £M	Quarter 4 Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property Flood Resistance Programme – on-going engagement with property owners and provision of flood prevention measures e.g. flood gates.
Total	35.222	

o **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 March 2021

Covid-19 recovery grants for town centre businesses has provided over 80 businesses across RCT with grants totalling £435,000 to make external improvements to premises. Other renewed grant offers for businesses include a new flood resilience grant, a new major projects investment fund and refocussed enterprise investment fund and town centre maintenance grant, providing a comprehensive package of support to help businesses survive, adapt and diversify. Since September, the enterprise investment fund has supported 50 businesses with grant awards totalling £275,000 and 7 businesses have benefitted from flood resilience grants. Plans to deliver a package of support for manufacturing businesses, in partnership with Welsh Government's South East Wales Regional Team, will be progressed in the new financial year.

Key schemes are underway which will lead to a more sustainable future for our town centres, including the redevelopment of Mountain Ash Town Hall and Llwynypia Courthouse. Also in Mountain Ash, the Oxford buildings scheme is now complete, delivering supported housing for adults with learning disabilities. Good progress is being made on the Porth Transport hub with planning permission granted, detailed development discussions continuing with Transport Wales and the construction tender process underway. A grant award to Rhondda Housing will see the delivery of a new housing development replacing badly fire damaged properties in Tonypany. Construction of 20 modern business units at Robertstown is well underway, with completion planned for late 2021. Across RCT several key commercial property redevelopments have also commenced which will repurpose empty properties for new uses, with further schemes in the development stages.

Engagement on the draft RCT Tourism Strategy is currently underway. Development work at Dare Valley Country Park and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park continues as part of the Valleys Regional Park development. Zip World is now opened, with other key projects including Abernant and Rhondda Tunnels under development. As the Tourism sector reopens, we continue to promote visits to RCT through marketing campaigns and engage with local tourism businesses. Funding has also been granted for the development of a cultural hub in Treorchy, with external work underway.

Work continued on the Local Development Plan review, with over 200 potential sites put forward during the call for candidate sites, covering a wide range of uses.

In 2020/21, 164 affordable housing units were delivered utilising £8.2M Social Housing Grant allocation. Increased funding of £15.3M has been secured for 2021/22. The social housing lettings agency scheme also continued to progress well with positive engagement with landlords.

During the second lockdown period, schools were provided with guidance and support on distance, digital and blended learning, including sharing best practice and the provision of bespoke support packages to best meet the needs of individual schools. The return of pupils to face to face learning has been well organised in partnership with schools, with no significant operational issues. School improvement services continue to work closely with schools to evaluate the impact of Covid-19 on learner outcomes and ensure that strategic approaches promote high quality teaching and learning to improve outcomes for our children and young people.

Pupil wellbeing continued to be a high priority and effective use of grant funding continued to support strategic action plans for Wellbeing and Additional Learning Needs Transformation, including training in nurture approaches. Workshops, virtual training and the Education Psychology Service helpline

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

continued to provide advice and guidance to schools on supporting wellbeing and pupils with additional learning needs.

Significant progress is being made on the second wave of school investments in Band B, including completion of the first phase of works at Ffynnon Taf primary school and work commencing at YGG Aberdar. Projects in the greater Pontypridd area are also underway, with 3 projects out to tender and 2 in the design phase.

Referrals into employment support programmes have increased, with Communities for Work+ supporting 369 people into work and the Communities for Work programme achieving targets for engaging with adults and young people over the lifetime of the scheme. The chromebook loan scheme has seen 30 devices being loaned to clients to carry out job search and training, and to attend online interviews. In addition, during 2020/21 the Council recruited a further 26 graduates and 33 apprentices with plans for the next intake in September 2021 now underway.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 4

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value ⁴ £M	Quarter 4 Update
Empty Property Grant	1.500	At present, all empty property grant applications are processed via the Welsh Government funded Valley Taskforce Scheme and this approach will continue until the Welsh Government scheme closes on 31 st March 2021.
Schools	0.836	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schemes on-going include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cymmer Primary – demolition of the canteen and erection of fencing was completed in August 2020. Carpark works to be completed during summer 2021; ○ Ferndale Community School – all works completed (i.e. to the main swimming pool hall, construction of new retaining wall and entrance path and new signage installed); ○ Gelli Primary – all works completed (i.e. internal refurbishment, two classroom extension, additional external works, fencing, new kitchen windows and resurfacing of driveway and line marking); and ○ Llanharan Primary – all works completed (i.e. to remodel/refurbish foundation phase classrooms, extend yard, alter/fence-in carpark and 2 classroom extension (including toilets and associated external works)).
Transport Infrastructure	2.500	<p>This investment funding is supporting a wider programme of highways capital works including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Network Improvement completed on the A4059 (near Cwmbach / Aberaman) to improve traffic flow at a roundabout / extending the two-lane approach; • Pedestrian crossings completed in Trealaw, Penrhiwceiber and Mountain Ash to improve road safety and promote active travel; • Design work has commenced at further pedestrian crossing locations including Tonyrefail, Groesfaen and Llanharan (to improve road safety and promote active travel); • A4058 Asda Tonypandy junction - design and development ongoing to improve junction capacity and traffic flow; and • A4059 / Bowls Club junction, feasibility study commenced to investigate improving the junction to improve traffic flow along the A4059.
Tonyrefail Roundabout	0.500	This investment funding relates to Tonyrefail roundabout for feasibility and design to improve the congestion and compliment the strategic development at Coed Ely. Works on-going include preliminary design of the main junction together with Active Travel

⁴ 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 ⁴ £M	Quarter 4 Update
		improvements. Further ground investigation work and drainage surveys were carried out in quarter 3 and design work is continuing.
Llys Cadwyn Development	2.024	<p>Project complete.</p> <p>3 Llys Cadwyn handed over to Transport for Wales and lease agreements signed for the A3 units. Marketing of the office and A3 space in 2 Llys Cadwyn is ongoing. Final works were also undertaken on the footbridge, including the installation of permanent gates.</p>
Park and Ride Programme	1.000	<p>This investment funding is supporting the development work needed to create additional ‘park and ride’ car parking spaces at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pontyclun - feasibility design has been carried out and preliminary design is due to commence; and • Porth – phase 3 feasibility design is complete and preliminary design is underway.
Strategic Regeneration Investment	0.200	<p>This funding has been approved for the Guto Square development (Mountain Ash) which will provide a bigger and improved area for public use in the heart of the town centre for community events and business uses, and also additional car parking spaces for shoppers and visitors to the town. The demolition phase of the project commenced on 22nd February, for a period of 6 weeks, with the demolition and removal of two vacant / dilapidated buildings and the area prepared for the construction phase. The project is scheduled for completion during summer 2021.</p>
Robertstown and Coed Ely ERDF Match Funding	4.200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robertstown – good progress made during quarter 4 including: foundations laid, steel frames erected and roofing works underway for a number of plots; formation of the access road is underway; and manhole installation and culvert diversion in progress. • Coed Ely – the building was handed over on 15th January 2021. During quarter 4, air tests were undertaken, CO2 / Smoke vents installed, signage installed and snagging works progressed. Work is on-going to secure a tenant for the unit.
Total	12.760	

Section 6 – ENHANCING THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

The 18th December 2020 Cabinet meeting agreed a series of recommendations to enhance the Council’s short and long term response to extreme weather events and which limit the impact of flooding on those communities most at risk.

The progress made by Council Services to implement the recommendations can be viewed [here](#) and will be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
