



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

21st November 2022

COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 30th September 2022 (Quarter 2)

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL 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 six-months of this financial year (to the 30th September 2022).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

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

Revenue

- 2.2 Note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 30th September 2022 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary).

Capital

- 2.3 Note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 30th September 2022 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
- 2.4 Note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 30th September 2022 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

Corporate Plan Priorities

- 2.5 Note the Quarter 2 progress updates for the Council's 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).
- 2.7 Note the progress update in respect of the Council's response to tackling Climate Change (Section 7 of the Executive Summary).

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree the Council's financial and operational performance position as at the 30th September 2022 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 second update of the Council's financial and operational performance position for the financial year ending the 31st March 2023.
- 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, 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) and progress updates in respect of enhancing the Council's response to extreme weather events and to tackle climate change.
- 4.3 The report is set in the context of the on-going impact of Covid-19 and cost-of-living crisis, both of which are contributing to significant increases in demand and cost pressures across a number of services. Members will note that the Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship Fund, that funded the majority of additional expenditure and income losses incurred as a result of the pandemic, ceased from 1st April 2022 with the requirement for local authorities to manage any on-going service and financial implications from within existing resources. Within this very challenging and changing environment, the Council is maintaining its focus on frontline service delivery, in line with Corporate Plan priorities, to help support the needs of residents and businesses.

4.4 Further information on the above position together with the proactive steps being taken by the Council are included within the Executive Summary.

5.0 QUARTER 2 REPORT

5.1 The Quarter 2 report is attached and comprises:

- **Executive Summary** – setting out, at a glance, the overall performance of the Council as at Quarter 2 (i.e. 30th September 2022).
- **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.
- **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](#).
- **Tackling Climate Change** – Section 7 setting out the work being progressed across services 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 6-months of 2022/23; as a result, there are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty implications to report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Following consideration by Cabinet, this Report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny for review, challenge and where deemed required, the scrutiny of specific areas in line with the Committee’s Terms of Reference.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

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

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

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

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 This report sets out the financial and operational performance of the Council as at Quarter 2 2022/23, that is, 30th September 2022.

11.2 The Quarter 2 revenue budget position is projecting a £10.277M overspend, this excludes the cost implications of the 2022/23 pay award for NJC employees, agreed on 1st November 2022, and the 2022/23 teachers pay award offer made by Welsh Government, these equating to an increase in the pay bill of £10.5M for the current year, and results in an overall projected overspend of almost £21M.

11.3 With specific regard to the full year projection, forecasted as at September 2022, is showing significant budget pressures continuing to be present and is in line with that reported within the first quarter Performance Report: increases in demand for services, particularly social care services; additional inflationary cost pressures, for example, home to school contract costs; and where less income is anticipated to be received by services due to reduced take-up, for example, Leisure Services. Work is continuing as part of the Council's robust financial and service management arrangements to review all areas of expenditure and income to bring the revenue position closer in line with budget by year-end. In parallel, the Council is working closely with Welsh Government to set out the unprecedented financial challenges facing the Council, like all local authorities in Wales, and to reinforce the urgent case for additional funding to be made available by the UK Government to support the continued delivery of the range of vital services provided by local government in Wales.

- 11.4 Capital investment as at 30th September 2022 is £45.485M, representing significant on-going capital investment in the Council's assets and infrastructure across the County Borough.
- 11.5 The second quarter progress updates for the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity demonstrate good progress overall in supporting the delivery of improved outcomes for residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 11.6 The progress update on the delivery of recommendations to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events shows positive progress at the mid-point of the year, with key actions being progress to support the Council's arrangements.
- 11.7 A new section has been incorporated within the report, Section 7 Tackling Climate Change, and provides a progress update on the work being progressed across services to support the delivery of the Council's Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT'.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer: Paul Griffiths

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

21 November 2022

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

Item: 4

Background Papers

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths

**COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT
QUARTER 2 2022/23
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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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 2 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 7 – THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Progress update on the work being progressed across services to support the delivery of the Council’s Climate Change Strategy ‘Think Climate RCT’.

Section 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Executive Summary brings together and summarises the Council's financial and operational performance position as at 30th September 2022 (Quarter 2).

The Quarter 2 update, in line with that reported at quarter 1, is set in the context of the Council's Services managing the on-going effects of communities recovering from the pandemic and the United Kingdom wide cost-of-living crisis, both of which are contributing to increases in demand for many services and significant inflationary cost pressures. Within this very challenging and changing environment, the Council is maintaining its focus on frontline service delivery, in line with Corporate Plan priorities, 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

	2022/23 – as at 30 th September 2022 (Quarter 2)		
Service Area	Full Year Budget £M	Projected Expenditure as at Quarter 2 £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
Education & Inclusion Services (2a)	207.776	207.558	(0.218)
Community & Children's Services (2b)	181.078	188.638	7.560
Chief Executive (2c)	35.478	35.393	(0.085)
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services (2d)	64.352	67.438	3.086
Sub Total	488.684	499.027	10.343
Authority Wide Budgets (2e)	78.108	78.042	(0.066)
Grand Total	566.792	577.069	10.277

The full year revenue budget variance, projected as at 30th September 2022, is a £10.277M overspend. Whilst this forecasted position represents a marginal improvement compared to the quarter 1 projection (i.e. £10.405M projected overspend), the same factors and conditions are driving significant budget pressures, over and above the additional resources built into the 2022/23 revenue budget. These are continued:

- High demand and cost of social care:
 - Adult Services – for external residential / nursing placements (specialist placements) and Supported Living Schemes; and
 - Children’s Services – for in-house and external residential placements.
- Inflationary cost pressures driven by higher energy prices, higher wages in the external market and demand for some products outweighing supply – this has impacted Home To School contract costs in particular as a result of rising fuel prices and levels of pay, with the Council also incurring higher levels of expenditure on fuel and food in the direct delivery of services.
- Lower levels of service take-up resulting in reduced levels of income received – a key contributory factor being the on-going effects of the pandemic where customer behaviour has not to date fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, for example, Leisure Services, and noting that for this service area income levels are showing an improved position compared to quarter 1.

In respect of the 2022/23 pay award offer made by national employers for all NJC employees, notification of acceptance of the offer was received on 1st November 2022 (i.e. a flat rate increase of £1,925 per employee, irrespective of their Spinal Column Point / Grade). With regard to the 2022/23 teachers pay award offer made by Welsh Government of 5%, who have devolved responsibility for teachers pay, negotiations and consultation are currently on-going as is the case for other negotiating bodies. For this Council, these amount to an increase in the pay bill above budgeted levels of £10.5M. This is not factored into the above position and increases the overall projected overspend for 2022/23 to almost £21M.

Work is on-going to review cost reduction options across all service areas, for example, energy usage reduction actions, enhanced recruitment control arrangements and early delivery of efficiency savings, to bring the position closer in line with budget by year-end as well as assessing earmarked reserves to provide one-off funding opportunities in 2022/23. With regard to earmarked reserves, a risk assessment has resulted in a number having been identified to be ringfenced with a view to being redirected to support the in-year pressure.

There will be a continued focus on the above programme of work during the last half of the financial year to address the in-year financial position and updates will be reported as part of quarterly Performance Reporting arrangements.

Following on, revenue budget variances, projected at Quarter 2, for each Service Group are set out below.

Revenue budget variances projected at Quarter 2

1. Education & Inclusion Services

EDUCATION & INCLUSION SERVICES

- Additional Learning Needs (£0.277M underspend); and

- Education other than at School (£0.273M underspend).

21st CENTURY SCHOOLS

- Catering (£0.354M overspend).

2. Community and Children's Services

ADULT SERVICES

- Long Term Care & Support (£0.382M overspend);
- Commissioned Services (£4.716M overspend);
- Provider Services (£1.315M overspend);
- Short Term Intervention Services (£0.949M underspend), and
- Management, Safeguarding & Support Services (£0.182M overspend).

CHILDREN SERVICES

- Safeguarding & Support (including Children Looked After) (£1.280M overspend);
- Early Intervention (£0.101M overspend); and
- Intensive Intervention (£0.374M underspend).

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

- Public Protection (£0.348M underspend);
- Community Services (£0.086M underspend);
- Communities & Wellbeing (£0.055M underspend); and
- Leisure, Countryside and Cultural Services (£1.409M overspend).

3. Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services

PROSPERITY & DEVELOPMENT

- Prosperity & Development (£0.077M underspend).

FRONTLINE SERVICES

- Highways Management (£0.054M overspend);
- Transportation (£3.320M overspend);
- Street Cleansing (£0.059M overspend);
- Waste Services (£0.173M underspend); and
- Parks Services (£0.090M underspend).

4. Chief Executive

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- Democratic Services & Communications (£0.053M underspend);
- Finance & Digital Services (£0.125M underspend); and
- Corporate Estates (£0.084M overspend).

5. Authority Wide Budgets

- Miscellaneous (£0.108M 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	2022/23 - as at 30th September 2022	
	Capital Budget £M	Actual Expenditure £M
Chief Executive (3a)	5.389	0.709
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services (3b)	83.425	26.566
Education & Inclusion Services (3c)	69.378	17.549
Community & Children's Services (3d)	13.928	0.661
Total	172.120	45.485

Key Capital Variances at Quarter 2

- 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) Additional Learning Needs Grant (£1.621M); WG Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant (£31.797M); WG Bus Infrastructure Fund Grant (£0.440M); WG Universal Primary Free School Meal Grant (£2.837M); WG Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (£1.474M); and WG Coal Tips Safety Grant (£4.470M).

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	2022/23		2021/22			
	As at 30 th September 2022		As at 30 th September 2021		As at 31 st March 2022	
	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover
Turnover – Council Wide	10,880	7.12	10,979	6.71	11,079	11.30
Community & Children’s Services ¹	2,776	9.11	2,939	6.46	2,976	12.70
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	773	4.66	921	7.60	945	11.22
Education & Inclusion Services	1,268	3.08	1,244	5.06	1,233	9.08
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4,957</u>	<u>8.01</u>	<u>4,976</u>	<u>7.60</u>	<u>5,013</u>	<u>11.35</u>
Primary	3,112	6.33	3,108	6.34	3,238	9.51
Secondary	1,845	10.84	1,868	9.69	1,775	14.70
Chief Executive’s Division	1,106	4.52	899	4.00	912	9.54

- Sickness Absence

Service Area	2022/23	2021/22	
	As at 30 th September 2022 %	As at 30 th September 2021 %	As at 31 st March 2022 %
% days lost to sickness absence – Council Wide	5.17	4.30	5.40
Community & Children’s Services ¹	7.66	6.80	7.46
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	5.29	5.47	5.62
Education & Inclusion Services	4.37	3.70	4.88
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4.36</u>	<u>2.94</u>	<u>4.61</u>
Primary	4.76	3.12	4.77
Secondary	3.70	2.63	4.31
Chief Executive’s Division	3.32	3.27	3.54

For a more detailed breakdown of 2022/23 staff turnover and sickness absence information [click here](#).

¹ 2022/23 position reflects service area restructures

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 Strategic Risk Register is reviewed on an on-going basis to take account of the changing internal and external operating environment, including the on-going impact of Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis. The quarter 2 review has identified the need to revise the risk rating for two strategic risks:

- Risk 14 (i.e. If individual school budgets are not appropriately managed, then schools will be required to deliver budget recovery plans and efficiencies at a time when investment and support should be at the forefront of planning) – Risk Score revised from 12 to 16, reflecting the very challenging environment schools are operating within, both in the current financial year and also the future outlook for the Council as a whole as per the updated Medium Term Financial Plan reported to Cabinet on 26th September 2022; and
- Risk 25 (i.e. If the planning arrangements to support the on-going recovery from Covid-19 are not joined up and delivered with partners, then the capability of the Council to support the required improvements to the health and economic well-being of the County Borough will be diminished / fragmented) – Risk Score revised from 25 to 16, reflecting the on-going transition of Covid-19 from pandemic to endemic status in line with Welsh Government guidance and the arrangements the Council has in place, with partners, to ensure there continues to be an holistic focus on testing, incidents, outbreaks and contact tracing.

The Council's updated Strategic Risk Register can be viewed by [clicking here](#). The Strategic Risk Register will be kept under on-gong review and further updates will be reported during the last half of the financial year as part of quarterly Performance Reporting arrangements.

Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN

Corporate Plan priority action plans are in place and cover the three priorities of People, Places and Prosperity. For quarter 2, each action plan includes a number of performance measures to accompany key actions, their re-introduction reflecting services' on-going recovery from the pandemic and aim to provide Members with a full as picture as possible of the Council's performance. For Members information, the reintroduction of in-year reporting of performance measures, the first time since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, will be an on-going process and be subject to revision / refinement to ensure they help measure the difference the Council's work is having on residents and communities.

A summary of progress made across each of the three priorities as at 30th September 2022 (Quarter 2) 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 second quarter of the year.

Corporate Plan Priority Progress Update

- **PEOPLE** (Section 5a)

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

Summary of progress to 30th September 2022

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. Construction of the new extra care facility in Porth is progressing well and plans for a further three extra care facilities in Mountain Ash, Treorchy and Ferndale are being developed. 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.

Working with [Trivallis](#), we opened a [supported accommodation scheme](#) in Llanhari following a refurbishment of Elm Road accommodation. This scheme provides a safe, secure and high-quality environment for adults with learning disabilities. Assessments have been completed and individuals have started to move into their accommodation. A similar supported living scheme in Treorchy is also under construction in partnership with [Cynon Taf Housing Association](#) and is due to be completed in Spring 2023, slightly later than planned. A further scheme is also planned at the ['Big Shed' development](#) in Tonypany. Proposals for the [former Bronllwyn Care Home in Gelli](#) were approved by [Cabinet](#) in July 2022. The development will provide new specialist care accommodation for people with learning disabilities as part of the wider modernisation of Council residential care provision.

We are taking forward the Council's review on the future shape of residential care for older people to ensure we create the right model of service delivery to respond to increasing demand and changing needs in the long term. A report will be provided to Cabinet in quarter 3 which will set out development proposals and options for modernisation of, and investment in, the Council's residential services.

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

We continue to invest in reablement services to prevent escalation of need increasing or enable recovery and independence. Commission Care & Repair have increased service capacity in order to reduce waiting times for minor adaptations and small and medium Disabled Facility Grants. It was agreed that a new Intermediate Care Step Up and Step Down facility would be created to avoid hospital admission and support discharge. We are working with Health to open this new facility from October 2022.

We are also empowering people to be more independent at home by continuing to promote direct payments as a way of managing individual care needs. We have reviewed our existing direct payment policy and new guidance has been developed and shared with staff, service users and our commissioned direct payment support provider. The new policy and guidance has been completed but implementation has been delayed until December 2022 so that guidance can be updated for medication administration for personal assistants. We have also commissioned [Community Catalyst](#) to support people and local partners to develop small enterprises and ventures that can provide real choice and increase the number and range of homecare and support options for local people.

We are also building on our engagement in 2021/22 and learning from the pandemic to inform the transformation of day services going forward 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 is currently being developed and employment and volunteering are a specific element; a range of co-production events are being held to inform writing of draft strategy and will be reported to Cabinet in due course. We have developed a range of links with employers and pathways to employment are being developed with [Elite](#). Volunteering opportunities continue to be developed with our partners and internally with community development officers.

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. We continue to invest in our playgrounds and work has begun on our programme of investment for 2022/23, with 5 projects completed so far. We have also improved the fitness suite in [Hawthorn Leisure Centre](#), which is now open to the public. A new 3G pitch in Baglan Field/Ynysfio Field, Treherbert is also available for use by the public and sports clubs. This means that Rhondda Cynon Taf now has 14 3G facilities spread across the County Borough, and crucially means that the ambition to ensure that residents have access to such a facility within a 3-mile radius of wherever they live has been achieved.

The pandemic highlighted how important and valued our libraries are to our communities. We are enhancing the services available at our new libraries in [Llys Cadwyn](#) and the [Treorchy Cultural Hub](#) with a focus on community engagement and partnership. We have also involved communities in seventeen 'Community Conversations' sessions, engaging 275 individuals across RCT as part of the implementation of the National Lottery Heritage Fund '[Altered Images](#)' project. Feedback from the sessions will inform the Year 2 Action Plan. The main aim of the Altered Images project is to help record and research memorials and monuments throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf as well as capturing the diverse stories and memories of our neighbourhoods.

We continue to prioritise strengthening relationships with residents and community groups and finding out what is important to residents. This includes working to ensure that communities have

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

access to information, advice and guidance both digitally and locally. Following the severe disruption of the pandemic, our Community Co-ordinators have now returned to working in community bases and our One4all services are also fully open including the re-introduction of a drop-in service at [Pontyclun Library](#). We want to ensure older people feel safe and welcome in their communities by working in partnership with the Older People's Advisory Group to develop a plan to achieve Age Friendly Wales status. Progress is being made with local developments noted within Gilfach Goch Community Venue.

We want to increase the opportunities for people to learn and use Welsh within their communities and we are working with Menter Iaith to deliver Welsh courses and classes across Rhondda Cynon Taf and enhancing the provision at [Garth Olwg Centre](#) as part of this.

Integrating health and social care and providing support for those with mental health problems and complex needs.

We continue to collaborate with our partners to support older people to stay in their homes longer, prevent unnecessary stays in hospital and to help get people home from hospital more quickly when they are well enough. We are working with Health to explore options for the development of an integrated community health and social care locality model and have completed a review of options for an integrated community model. A draft Integrated Community Services Model has been completed and shared with the Health Board and regional local authority partners for agreement by the [Regional Partnership Board](#) in October 2022. We are also working together to improve patient experience and redesign the pathways for integrated primary and community based urgent care services and 'home first' discharge from hospital services. This includes working with Health to implement a review of the current health and social care system and implement the Welsh Government's [Discharge to Recover then Assess Model](#) (D2RA) pathways as part of the [6 goals for urgent and emergency care programme initiative](#). Implementation is planned for December 2022.

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. Redesign work has continued but completion has been delayed due to covid pressures and planned organisational restructures in the Health Board. A new work programme and timescales have been agreed with Health.

Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.

We continue to improve access to timely information, advice and assistance to facilitate improved access to, and engagement in, early intervention and prevention services for children, young people and families. The new RCT Families website is complete however the launch has been delayed due to difficulties with the website host. We are currently reviewing the capacity and ability to develop multi-use areas and evaluate building capacity within our Children and Family centres to support the development of an access plan for community groups, during day time, evenings and weekends going forward.

We continue to focus our services on early intervention and prevention to improve the life outcomes for children in RCT. We have appointed an additional Mental Health & Wellbeing Officer to increase capacity in YEPS to meet the increased demand. We are also revising existing Children and Communities Grant contracts with providers to support the delivery of integrated support pathways supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children, young people

PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful

and families. This work has included establishing a 'lot' for Counselling on the Approved Providers list, which includes counselling services for children and adults. We are embedding a suite of 16+ Support projects that are being offered to young people leaving education with a destination including the Becoming Independent Project and Reducing Risk of Youth Homelessness Project. Youth Homelessness interventions are all underway via a combination of short and long term projects led by the Youth Homelessness Officer and the Youth Homeless Education Officer.

We want to make sure that those children that cannot remain with their families can be looked after closer to home. We are continuing to work with providers to develop placement sufficiency close to home. A Residential Children's Services Strategy and action plan for the next 5 years is being drafted. The draft strategy will be pre-scrutinised in November 2022. We are working with [Foster Wales](#) to increase the recruitment of foster carers, in particular, those who are able to support children with more complex needs. Enquiries are increasing but only small numbers of new foster carers are being approved to date. We are also developing a revised Housing Options model for care-leavers to whom the Council owes a corporate parenting duty in order that they can leave care placements in a safe, planned way which avoids homelessness wherever possible. Two dedicated Housing Solutions Officers have been appointed and a referral pathway document has been drafted.

We continue to strengthen participation of children and young people to promote engagement and involvement specifically with Children Looked After and partner agencies to ensure co-production and that the voice of children and young people are heard in service development and delivery. We have developed a Participation Strategy which incorporates different communication approaches when engaging with children and young people.

We are delivering the Early Years Transformation agenda in RCT in order to ensure early years services are universally available and specialist services are targeted by need and not geographical location. This will also improve early intervention and prevention outcomes across the County Borough. Health characteristics data transfer has been completed. An Early Years Vulnerability Project plan is in place and a full profile test underway; however, full information sharing protocols are yet to be agreed. This work is being led by Public Health Wales. We continue to pilot the new integrated Early Years delivery model and are currently leading on the external evaluation of the new delivery model in RCT on behalf of the region. The data continues to be reviewed and reported on a regular basis to Senior Managers in RCT and CTMUHB. There has been a significant improvement in the number of Schedule of Growing Skills assessments (SOGS) and ante natal visits undertaken by Health Visitors during the last quarter.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 2

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PEOPLE		
Investment Area	Investment Value² £M	Quarter 2 Update
Extracare Housing	6.974	<p>This investment funding covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Porth - agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3rd December 2020. Progress to date includes: the vacation of the building; site surveys and demolition works completed; planning permission granted 16th December 2021; and contractor on site and progressing with works (and noting that previous projects delivered in this area include: the former Maesyffynnon Home for the Elderly site (Aberaman) and Pontypridd "Cwrt yr Orsaf" Extra Care Housing Scheme, opened in May 2020 and October 2021 respectively). <p>Plans for a further three extra care facilities in Mountain Ash, Treorchy and Ferndale are being developed.</p>
Tackling Poverty Fund	0.300	<p>This investment funding is to help address areas where there are high levels of poverty (including fuel poverty) to increase the disposable income of households, for example, by supporting households to reduce energy bills, helping to overcome barriers to find employment. An application to the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund has been submitted and, if successful, the funding will be used for Heating Grants and Solar Panels in line with this existing priority area for the Council.</p>
Total	7.274	

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 30th September 2022

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

We continue to promote good recycling practices through campaigns and education. The [Education Centre at Bryn Pica](#) has reopened offering schools to take part in face to face visits which will run alongside our online sessions. Our campaigns have focussed on key recycling activity at [Easter](#) and the [Jubilee celebrations](#). Winners of our [Schools Easter Egg Recycling Challenge](#) were announced in August. We also continue to promote seasonal recycling competitions in schools e.g. in July schools were invited to take part in our School Uniform Recycling Competition. This quarter we have also promoted '[Zero Waste Week](#)' during September.

The tonnage of recycled waste during Quarter 2 is lower than the same period last year (39,847 tonnes compared to 46,788 tonnes in 2021/22) and our overall recycling percentage is also lower i.e. 66.74% compared to 69.78% at Quarter 2 2021/22. Work is on-going with landlords, agents and residents to encourage good recycling practices that will reduce municipal waste and have a positive effect on the environment, and we continue to work with [Caru Cymru \(Keep Wales Tidy\)](#) to support community activity e.g. litter picks.

The Council's Enforcement Team has continued to monitor and act against fly-tippers with 961 recorded incidents this quarter (2,945 last year) and the [outcomes](#) of [enforcement activity](#) have been published on the Council's Website. In addition, the enforcement off street parking restrictions and school keep clear zones continues to ensure the safe passage of both drivers and residents. Appropriate enforcement action to ensure that the Public Spaces Protection Order for dog controls is complied with continues and includes taking [relevant court action](#) and [publicising](#) the outcomes.

We are progressing our climate change agenda through the trialling of alternative fuelled refuse vehicles and the development of a Draft [ULEV Fleet Transition Plan](#). We have progressed plans for [EV charging facilities](#) across the County Borough and continue to explore areas where we can create renewable energy e.g. The Coed Ely Solar Farm, and potential hydro developments. We also continue to engage with Welsh Government in respect of grant funding to develop an Eco Park at Bryn Pica, that includes trials for recycling plastic, and there is on-going focus on implementing procurement policies to reduce the use of single use plastic items.

We also opened the [new re-use shop](#) on Aberdare High Street during the quarter which is the third in the County Borough and now means that there is a '[Shed](#)' in every area of Rhondda, Cynon and Taf for residents to visit and enjoy.

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, including progressing the [A4119 duelling scheme in Coed Ely](#), undertaking repairs at [Maerdy mountain](#) and completing work at [Nant Cwm Parc Cantilever and Institute Bridge scheme](#) in Treorchy and progressing work on the [Brook Street footbridge](#) at Ystrad Rhondda Railway Station. We also continue to progress the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act and flood risk

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

mitigation measures. An update on the recommendations contained in the review of the Council's response to Storm Dennis [Cabinet Report 18 December 2020](#) can be found in Section 6 of this Executive Summary. This year Section 19 Flood Reports have been released for [Trehafod](#), [Cwmbach](#), [Abercwmboi](#), [Fernhill and Porth](#), [Aberdare and Aberaman](#) and [Rhydyfelin and Hawthorn](#). We have also commenced flood alleviation work in [Treorchy](#), [local drainage improvements at Tanycoed Terrace in Abercwmboi](#), two [resilient road schemes in Treherbert](#) and completed [major culvert upgrades on the A4061 Rhigos Road](#). A public exhibition has also been held on the [Tylorstown Landslip Project](#),

We are also progressing active travel initiatives across Rhondda Cynon Taf including Treorchy to Treherbert and those on the Cynon Trail at Cwmbach and Abercynon. We are also identifying improvements in crossing facilities adjacent to schools, which in the long term will increase the percentage of pupils walking to school, with the consequential improvement in health and well-being, and help to prevent accidents and reduce traffic movements and vehicle emissions. Maes Y Bryn Safe Routes in Communities works have commenced with lighting upgrades on the Public Right of Way on approach to the school and the upgrade of the Pelican crossing to a puffin crossing on Llantrisant Road. We are also consulting on improvements on Crown Hill to improve safety.

Ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and where residents feel safe

Our community cohesion work is being progressed and are providing opportunities to engage through our Community Hubs. A paper relating to [Food Resilience](#) was presented to the Council's Cabinet in June highlighting the work offered to residents experiencing food poverty and this included the work being done to achieve bronze award status in [Sustainable Food Places](#). We are also establishing a community focussed café in Garth Olwg; Menter Iaith have been granted a lease and will be operating the café in the new year.

Our work to prevent anti-social behaviour in town centres continues in partnership with the Probation Service and [Pobl](#) and includes the relocation of Mill Street Hostel. We are also [progressing](#) the appointment of [Community Wardens](#) to provide a high-profile presence in our town centres. Three Community Wardens and two Senior Community Wardens are in post and the remaining Community Wardens will be in place in quarter 3.

The [Barod](#) Integrated Substance Misuse Service (now including Bridgend) commenced in April this year, and we continue to recruit resources to increase resilience in this area. We have improved booking arrangements for substance misuse training and have taken opportunities to share good practice wherever possible. We have also provided valuable 'Overdose Awareness' sessions to local hotel and hostel staff following a rise in local drug related deaths within supported accommodation. Additional 'Drop-in' centres have been developed at Penrhys, to nurture community relationships, and for Ukraine nationals to provide harm reduction support as required.

Our domestic abuse support provision has been improved with the recruitment of a Health IDVA at Royal Glamorgan Hospital, and despite some delays we are still progressing the Oasis Centre and Domestic Abuses Services joint working model. The 'Healthy Relationships' workshops that have been developed will also inform early support for prevention and intervention of homeless families housed in temporary accommodation. The commissioning of a Regional Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP) across the CTM region is being progressed. The pilot is now up and running and an evaluation will be completed by the end of 2022/23.

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

To keep our communities safe, this quarter we have piloted a 'Young Friends' against scams (YFAS) awareness training event to children aged 8-12 years at Ysgol Nantgwyn which was positively received. We also continue to publish cases where rogue traders have been prosecuted on the Council's website including two cases relating to the sale of counterfeit goods at [Merthyr Tydfil](#) and [Mountain Ash](#). In addition, a case relating to [taxi licencing](#) was also published which demonstrates the Council's commitment to keeping residents safe.

To support the [Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Schemes](#) (United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)), the [Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy](#) (ARAP) scheme and the Widening Dispersal Scheme, we are working with social landlords and tenants to prevent instances of homelessness the provision of a new Virtual Tenancy Ready Classroom that proves information on what to expect when searching for and moving into a new home, tenant rights and responsibilities, and where to go for help and support. All information is translated to aid understanding. [Newydd Housing](#) are also submitting this project for consideration in the 'Welsh Housing Awards'. A concert was also held to [welcome Ukrainian people](#) residing in the County Borough.

Getting the best out of our parks by looking after and investing in our greenspaces

We continue to invest in our green spaces and increase biodiversity. Our [Playground Investment Programme is also progressing](#) to deliver planned improvements during 2022/23 with 5 projects completed so far and we continue to improve our digital platforms to provide a more accessible service to residents. A 'Tracks and Trails' Project has been completed at Dare Valley Country Park. We have supported the [Keep Britain Tidy](#) - 'Love Parks Week' campaign, and celebrated retaining [Green Flag Awards](#) at Dare Valley Country Park, Aberdare; Taff's Well Park and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd, in recognition of their excellent visitor facilities, high environmental standards, and commitment to delivering great quality green spaces.

In June this year, the Council's [2022-2025 'Think Climate RCT' – Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030](#), Climate Change Strategy was agreed by [Cabinet](#) with the strategy providing a framework to support carbon reduction across both the Council and the County Borough. An associated Decarbonisation Plan to reduce specific carbon reduction elements that inform the Council's Carbon Footprint and meet Welsh Government reporting requirements, is in development.

In support of this, work to establish natural carbon storage solutions continues with a commissioned Peat Bog study in Cwmparc scheduled shortly, and 3 other potential peatbog sites being explored. Connected to this, the [Draft RCT Tree, Woodlands and Hedgerow Strategy](#) was approved by Cabinet in June 2022. This Strategy recognises the important carbon storing role that trees, vegetation and soils have in the 'carbon cycle'. The Strategy is out for consultation until the end of October with residents and stakeholders, more information is available in the [accompanying press release](#).

We have promoted our grass cutting schedules and the importance of protecting our designated [Biodiversity Areas](#) to encourage the growth of wildflowers and attract pollinators. New biodiversity signage celebrating biodiversity has been installed at Dare Valley Country Park and a signage strategy at Cwm Clydach Country Park is also being developed, and we continue to encourage residents to report sightings of wildlife and flora, and take part in activities like 'Grab a Rake' on the Council's [Biodiversity webpages](#). Work has also commenced to increase the capacity and improve biodiversity at [Clydach Vale Lake](#).

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

Our work with partners such as Natural Resources Wales continues in support of projects like '[Healthy Hillside](#)s' which includes working with South Wales Fire and Rescue on [Operation Dawns Glaw](#), a taskforce set up to reduce the number of grass fires.

We continue to progress activity in support of the 2024 National Eisteddfod for Wales. More information will be available following the Eisteddfod public meeting later this year. [Visit Rhondda Cynon Taf](#) also supported [National Coach Week 2022](#).

During this quarter many events have been held in RCT including [the Big Welsh Bite](#) at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park in August and a variety of free sporting, cultural and play-based activities and events as part of the [Summer of Fun](#) for young people across the County Borough. We have also began promotion of our winter activities including the return of [Nos Galan 2022](#) and [Santa's Toy Mine](#) at the Rhondda Heritage Park.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 2

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value ³ £M	Quarter 2 Update
Highways Infrastructure Repairs	6.826	The additional resources are being used in conjunction with existing resources to deliver a programme of highways infrastructure repairs between 2022/23 and 2024/25.
Unadopted Roads	0.600	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 21 streets which are included in the programme, 6 were completed as at the end of quarter 2 2022/23, contractors are on site for 1 scheme which is ongoing and the remaining 14 schemes are scheduled to be completed during the year.
Play Areas	0.814	There are 19 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2022/23. As at 30th September 2022, 5 had been completed, 2 were under construction, 3 had been designed, costed and scheduled and 9 are to be designed.
Skate Parks/Multi Use Games Areas	0.391	There are 3 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2022/23 and will be progressed during the year. £200k additional investment has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the 'Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities' report to full Council (28 th September 2022).
Structures: Brook Street Footbridge	2.351	This funding is supporting the replacement of the footbridge. Construction works are progressing well and on programme. The old bridge sections have been removed and the new bridge sections are due to be lifted in to place in quarter 3.
Structures	3.516	The investment funding has been allocated to support structure projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nant Cwm Parc Cantilever and Institute Bridge Strengthening – works complete. • Major retaining wall refurbishments - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retaining walls at Brewery Terrace (Pontygwaith), Salem Terrace (Llwynypia) and Dinas Road (Dinas) - scheduled to go out to tender in quarter 3 2022/23. ○ Maerdy Mountain walls – works complete. ○ High Street Wall, Llantrisant – works being undertaken by the Council due to the risk of collapse of the wall.

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 2 Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Harcourt Terrace Wall, Penrhiwceiber - works being completed by Transport for Wales as part of a jointly funded project with the Council. ● Llanharan Railway Footbridge - works recommenced on site following licence / Natural Resources Wales approvals and . piling is scheduled to commence in quarter 3. ● Imperial Bridge – works commenced on site in April 2022 and are scheduled for completion in quarter 3. ● Bodringallt Bridge Infilling – delays due to the need to consider drainage position. ● Rhigos Rock Anchors – scheduled to go to tender in quarter 3. ● Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
Parks Structures	0.730	<p>The investment funding has been allocated to support various footbridge repairs and replacements within Parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gelli Isaf – Scheduled Monument Conservation Scheme – works have commenced on site for Phase 1 of the repairs. ● Pentre Footbridge - works complete. ● Rhondda Heritage Park Wall - scheduled to go to tender in quarter 3. ● Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.
Parks and Green Spaces	2.755	<p>This investment funding is supporting drainage, pavilion and infrastructure improvements to various parks sites. The 2022/23 programme comprises of 72 schemes and, as at quarter 2, 24 full schemes have been completed. The remaining schemes will be progressed during 2022/23 as part of an on-going programme of work. An additional £230k has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the ‘Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities’ report to full Council (28th September 2022).</p>
Llanharan Link Road	5.558	<p>This investment funding is supporting various stages of development, preliminary design, ground investigations and ecology surveys. Following the Pre-Planning Application Consultation (PAC) which took place in 2021, work is progressing to prepare all documentation in readiness for a full planning application which is to be submitted in the last half of the financial year. This scheme is also subject to the Welsh Government’s Roads Review.</p>

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value³ £M	Quarter 2 Update
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. Following on from advanced works, the appointed contractor commenced the main construction works in August setting up the traffic management arrangements and has carried out site clearance works.
Community Hubs	0.190	Works are being planned for the foyer area of the Park & Dare which forms part of The Hub and external funding opportunities are also being explored.
Gelli/Treorchy Link Road	0.393	This investment funding relates to investigatory works for a solution which will help alleviate congestion at Stag Square. Feasibility and a WelTAG stage 1 has been completed and is in the process of review to inform WelTAG stage 2.
Cynon Gateway (North)	1.551	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. Following receipt of planning permission, work is ongoing to procure a designer for the detailed design stage of the project. This scheme is also subject to the Welsh Government's Roads Review.
Bryn Pica Eco Park	1.286	This investment funding is to support enabling works, planning and ecology for the development of an Eco Park at the Bryn Pica Waste Management Facility. Discussions are on-going with Welsh Government in respect of funding opportunities.
Streetcare (New scheme)	0.020	This investment funding is to be used across the County Borough to replace worn/damaged bins (mainly dog bins). The bins will be ordered in quarter 3 and will be installed as necessary before the end of the financial year. The additional funding has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the 'Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities' report to full Council (28 th September 2022).
Porth Interchange Metro + LTF	--	As set out in the Porth Regeneration Strategy, a new Transport Hub in the Town Centre is currently under construction, funded by UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, WG Local Transport Fund and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (total project costs £5.4M). During quarter 2, the roofing panels were installed and works continued in line with the construction schedule. The construction is due to complete in March 2023.

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES

Investment Area	Investment Value³ £M	Quarter 2 Update
Leisure – Darran Park 3G Pitch (New scheme)	0.175	This investment funding is to develop the Astro Turf Pitch in Darran Park (Ferndale) into a 3G pitch. The additional funding has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the ‘Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities’ report to full Council (28 th September 2022).
Total	34.191	

- PROSPERITY (Section 5c)

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

Summary of progress to 30th September 2022

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 range of support is available through the Council to support business growth and expansion in town centres, including the Enterprise Investment Fund and Town Centre Maintenance Grant. Given the current economic challenges these will be reviewed to ensure that the most appropriate mix of support is available to help businesses to navigate these challenges and take advantage of emerging opportunities such as digital trading opportunities. Services continue to work closely with business representatives such as Business Improvement Districts to inform this work, and the development of a Business Engagement Strategy. Work is also continuing to improve the accessibility of Council tenders to local Small and Medium Sized Enterprises through improved communication and consideration of lotting structures.

A new three year programme of funding for town centre property improvements has become available through the Welsh Government Transforming Towns fund and the identified pipeline of potential improvement projects in our town centres has been shared with Welsh Government officials as a basis for endorsement for funding. This will set the scene for our improvement programme over the next three years. An application for a programme of project delivery has been made and a decision is expected in quarter 3. Existing town centre projects are continue to progress, including the Porth Transport Hub, and work is now underway at the Pontypridd Southern Gateway where property acquisition for redevelopment has taken place at the Bingo Hall and former M&S sites. A package of town centre improvement projects for Aberdare is currently being developed to form part of the draft regeneration strategy for engagement and consultation. Rhondda Housing Association Wales are delivering [13 affordable apartments in Tonypandy town centre](#) to regenerate a town centre site where the previous building was damaged by fire, following the Council providing funding through Welsh Government's Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme for demolition work at the site.

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

Preparation continues for the revised Local Development Plan, which will contain strategic level policies on land use and protection including carbon reduction and climate change. A second [call for candidate sites](#) was undertaken to identify locations suitable for potential development and further engagement with key stakeholders and analysis of detailed evidence has also taken place.

Working with Cardiff Capital Region, we continue to progress [Housing viability gap funding](#) to remediate contaminated land conditions across 3 brownfield sites at the former Cwm Coking works, former Aberdare hospital site and Heol y Wenallt. A planning application has been submitted for the Aberdare site and an application is due to be submitted for Heol y Wenallt shortly; decisions on these adjoining sites are likely to be considered simultaneously. An £8 million package is close to being agreed with a housing developer and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to remediate the site at Cwm Coking.

Following a public exhibition, work began onsite to deliver the [A4119 Coed Ely dualling scheme](#) which will also provide a separate community route. A planning application for the Llanharan bypass is due

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

to be submitted in quarter 4. Tender documents have also been prepared for the Cynon Gateway North scheme, but this will be impacted by the Welsh Government Roads Review decision.

Work continues with broadband suppliers and Welsh Government to improve connectivity within the County Borough, although there are some delays to planned timescales due to Welsh Government tenders.

Work continues to develop the visitor economy, with considerable marketing and promotional activity this autumn. Zip World Tower have been supported in their new [Tower Climber](#) project and work continues to support the organisation of the [National Eisteddfod of Wales 2024](#). Work is ongoing to progress opportunities for cross promotion at our Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateway sites.

Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great Education

Work continues in partnership with Central South Consortium to regularly review the progress of all schools. The introduction of all school review meetings is helpfully contributing to this work and the information provided is being used to inform further action. A Team Around the School protocol has been agreed for schools requiring co-ordinated LA/CSC support and will be piloted in the autumn term. Strategies being developed for the Curriculum for Wales are due to be operational from the next academic year, and CSC has ensured that its work programme will enable updates on progress for this area to be captured appropriately. The impact of Covid-19 on learner progress continues to be a key area for Improvement Partners to review and capture, and local data is being collated by CSC. However, there is currently no agreed national approach to how schools are mapping learner progress. A report has been produced on the [impact of Family Engagement Officers](#) and an evaluation of Step 4 provision was produced in January, with proposals for tranche 3 underway. Final reporting on Step 4 projects will be undertaken in the autumn term, with schools required to present impact of the work undertaken. A good practice conference for Step 4 also took place in the summer term.

The Writing Project, a commissioned literacy project aimed at improving standards of writing in primary and secondary schools, has been rolled out and a CSC report produced outlining the impact of the project to date.

Work continues to ensure effective anti-bullying strategies in our schools. Presentations have been delivered to primary and secondary Headteacher meetings to raise awareness of peer-on-peer sexual harassment and guidance has been provided to all schools. Improvements have been made to data collection systems to ensure all incidents of bullying are appropriately recorded; however, due to concerns raised over low rates of reporting by incidents, a bullying survey has been piloted and will be undertaken in all secondary schools in November to gather data directly from pupils. An anti-racism plan has been completed in consultation with the RCT BAME working group and is now being implemented.

Support continues for schools to implement new ALN legislation, including development of a professional learning programme for release in the autumn term, and review of schools self-evaluation. An Early years ALN coordinator forum has been established and met in September. Work has commenced between the Council, schools and early years settings to enhance transition from early years settings into schools for children with additional learning needs. Following agreement of a protocol of roles and responsibilities, a pilot is being undertaken. A pilot is also underway to evaluate an enhanced post-16 transition protocol for learners with additional learning needs. An [update on implementation of the ALNET Act](#) was presented to Cabinet in September.

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

An Early Years Strategic Plan has been produced to ensure all learners have access to the right support. Engagement and consultation on the strategy and supporting action plan will be undertaken in the second half of the autumn term.

Investment in our school buildings continues. Band B project Business cases have been submitted to Welsh Government in accordance with the Strategic outline programme. Works on site are close to completion to provide additional capacity at [YG Rhydwaun](#) and [YGG Aberdar](#), with minor snagging only remaining. A number of other projects commenced over the summer holidays and autumn term for the Welsh medium Primary School, Rhydyfelin; Pontypridd High; Hawthorn High; Pontyclun Primary School; Penygawsi Primary School; Llanilltud Faerdref Primary School; and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive. All new build elements will be net zero carbon in operation. An [update on current special school provision](#) was reported to Cabinet on 26th September 2022.

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 increase the supply of energy efficient, low carbon homes. 17 schemes in the social housing grant programme development plan are categorised as 'new build – modern methods of construction'. Rhondda Housing Association Wales' Skyline project has continued with progress following the Social Housing Grant submission. The sale of Porth Infants School to Cynon Taf Community Housing Group has now been complete. Cynon Taf Community Housing Group have made a Social Housing Grant submission and a planning application has been submitted.

The Council worked with Rhondda Housing Association to deliver [redevelopment of Abertonllwyd House](#) in Treherbert which was previously empty for several years into supported accommodation.

Following research into best practice, the allocation of extra care provision via the social housing allocation policy has been approved and information is being updated to inform homefinder applicants about the extra care offer.

The [rapid rehousing plan](#), which develops a housing led approach for rehousing people who have experienced homelessness, where possible reducing or removing the need for temporary accommodation, was approved by Cabinet on 18th July. Work continues to develop the new Empty Homes Strategy and a Private Rented Sector strategy, which will both be presented to Cabinet later in this financial year.

There will be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages

Support for people seeking work continued through our Employment Support programmes. Between April and September 2022, over 20% of those supported into work through the Communities for Work Plus scheme had work limiting health conditions and disabilities, the highest proportion to date. Council staff continue to engage with Welsh Government to review future priorities and national funding arrangements. Proposals for a new employment support grant to be confirmed in Quarter 3. Links have been made between employment and youth services to provide support and training for identified young people leaving school with no destination for work, study or training through the Welsh Government Youth Guarantee Grant fund scheme, with an increase in the numbers of young people engaged on the scheme. As part of the expansion of employment routes for 16 – 24 year olds, planning has taken place for the 'Black sheep' programme, a construction skills course aimed at young people with a variety of learning needs.

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

20 new graduate and 45 new apprentices have started their careers at the Council. 4 people with learning disabilities commenced Gateway to employment placements in September and 7 young people are currently engaged on Access to Employment, a 12 month programme for young people with barriers to employment who have been identified as having high potential. The Council and partner organisations also held a [careers fair](#) with over 50 organisations taking part, showcasing opportunities at the Council, partners and a range of RCT businesses and with careers advice and guidance available from a range of training and education providers.

We also continue to provide more informal learning opportunities to engage people in learning and support wellbeing. A series of family learning engagement programmes is being developed in targeted communities, with courses in Penrhys and Pontygwaith primary schools starting at the end of September.

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

Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 2

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value ⁴ £M	Quarter 2 Update
Empty Property Grant	2.213	79 applications received, 56 surveyed, 25 approved and 14 completed. The Council's funding allocation is now fully committed and the on-line application process has closed.
Schools	3.103	<p>This investment funding is supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YGG Llyn Y Forwyn Primary (transferring the school to a new building on a new site) - site investigation surveys have been undertaken, land has been purchased, project / cost managers have been appointed to support delivery of the scheme and a Design and Build contractor has been appointed to undertake the land reclamation works and construct a new Primary school. A strategy is being developed for the reclamation works and the design development for the school is on-going. Welsh Government have approved the Outline Business Case and the scheme can now progress to Full Business Case. • Other works (as approved by Cabinet 21st March 2022) - toilet refurbishments (£0.300M), boiler replacements (£0.700M), roof renewals (£1.445M) and classroom upgrades (£0.126M) – the majority of works were completed during the 2022 summer holidays and the remainder will be programmed for 2023/24.
Transport Infrastructure	2.118	<p>This investment funding is supporting a wider programme of highways capital works including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing design work for pedestrian crossing enhancement projects at Groesfaen, Llanharan and Ty Nant (to improve road safety and promote active travel) – all projects are scheduled for construction in quarter 4 2022/23. Tonyrefail crossing was installed in Quarter 2. • A4059 / Bowls Club junction - feasibility study completed to investigate junction / traffic flow improvements along the A4059. The options will be considered and the preferred option taken forward to preliminary design. • A4059 Quarter Mile junction, feasibility proposals have been developed - the next steps will be preliminary design including ground investigation work.
Park and Ride Programme	0.529	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

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 2 Update
		for All, improved CCTV coverage and Electric Vehicle charging points at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pontyclun - feasibility design to improve an existing facility is ongoing in partnership with Network Rail and Transport for Wales. • Porth – phase 3 detailed design work has been completed.
Drainage (New Scheme)	1.000	This investment funding is supporting drainage and culvert network works. The ongoing programme includes: design and business case developments at 3 locations; design and works construction at 5 locations; and delivering, as match funding contributions, 21 Welsh Government grant funded schemes across the County Borough. The additional funding has been included, as at quarter 2, in line with the ‘Council Corporate Plan – Investment Priorities’ report to full Council (28 th September 2022).
Robertstown and Coed Ely ERDF Match Funding	4.200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robertstown – good progress continues to be made in Quarter 2 with most of the units now complete and snagging works taking place. Works are continuing to the external areas. • Coed Ely – scheme completed and the tenant occupied the premises from July 2021.
Total	13.163	

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.

Section 7 –The Council’s response to tackling Climate Change

On 22nd June 2022, following engagement with residents and communities, [Cabinet agreed](#) its response to tackling Climate Change in a wide-ranging Climate Change Strategy – ‘Think Climate RCT’. Cabinet also agreed that the monitoring of the Strategy is included in the Council’s quarterly Performance Reports and thereafter scrutinised by the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

[The Climate Change Strategy](#) 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 County Borough Council will be a Carbon Neutral Council;
- Rhondda Cynon Taf 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.

Detailed plans that affect all services across the Council, structured around the Corporate Plan priorities, and a Decarbonisation Plan to support the reduction of the Council's Carbon Footprint are in development. Key updates include:

- On 29 September 2022, the [Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee](#) considered reports on the Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy Implementation Plan and Green Waste Collections; and
- The [Climate Change Cabinet Sub Committee](#) at its meeting on 3 October 2022 received reports on the Council's Carbon Footprint Dashboard; Proposed Solar Farm; Energy Projects progress including Electric Charging; the Local Nature Plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf; and Peatlands in RCT.

This will be an on-going programme of work and progress updates will be incorporated within quarterly Performance Reports.
