

The Council's draft Corporate Performance Report Self Assessment Summary 2021-22

This document contains information about the planning and progress of the Council's priorities which are the Council's Well-being objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and also the Council's summary Self Assessment as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

This document is available in other languages and formats on request.

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Introduction

This is the first year of our new style annual Corporate Performance Report which provides a summary of our 2021/22 Self Assessment, and acts as a signpost to the new and existing information we have used to keep our performance under review. Our annual Self Assessment comprises information about

1. **How we have delivered our Priorities** – reporting our progress and plans through the wide range of information already available to residents, communities and our stakeholders about how we are delivering our Priorities i.e. our Well-being Objectives through our formal quarterly [Performance and Resources reports](#) to Cabinet and Council Committees and the Council's various Social Media channels.
2. **Our assessment of our corporate functions – including how we are meeting the Socioeconomic Duty**
3. **The Self Evaluation of our services**
4. **Our application of the Sustainable Development Principle** and information that shows how we are implementing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Our previous Corporate Performance Reports, the most recent report for 2021/22 is [here](#), was designed to meet requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. This Measure is now disappplied. The 'freedom' from the Measure, has enabled the Council to reflect on the previous arrangements and to take a more proportionate, pragmatic and timely approach to planning and reporting the Council's priorities, make better use of the plethora of information already made widely available and reduce the reporting burdens so far as possible. In doing so this has also provided the opportunity to include our new annual Self Assessment and in so doing, meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The Self Assessment

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 put in place a wide range of new statutory duties. The Performance and Governance duties outlined in [Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Act](#) are about strengthening and empowering local government... *'defining principal councils as self-improving organisations through a system based on self-assessment and panel performance assessment'*. Among other things, the Act requires Public Bodies to

- keep performance under review
- consult on performance and
- report on performance, producing a self assessment report in respect of each financial year.

We have a strong track record of reviewing our performance through well embedded monitoring, support and challenge arrangements across all levels of the Council resulting in a positive performance culture in which the whole organisation continually strives for excellence. We also have wide ranging programmes of consultation and engagement activities with residents, staff and stakeholders that help to inform and shape our work and set our priorities.

The full 'catalogue' of available information to evidence how we achieve this is contained within the four areas described within this Self Assessment i.e.

1. **How we have delivered our Priorities**
2. **Our assessment of our corporate functions**
3. **The Self Evaluation of our services**
4. **Our application of the Sustainable Development Principle**

The information considered within the four areas that comprise our Self Assessment runs into thousands of pages, and many more hundreds of hyperlinked documents, policies, strategies and plans that provide more detailed supporting evidence and data, a selection of which can be found [here](#). This available 'catalogue' also includes updates contained in the quarterly Performance and Resources reports to [Cabinet](#), stand-alone reports as part of the Cabinet work programme and its Sub Committees and Steering Groups; Scrutiny and Pre Scrutiny reports; [Governance and Audit Committee](#) considerations; Improvement and differing Regional Partnership Boards as well as Joint Committees. Much of this information is and has been publicly available for up to eighteen months. For this reason, and also that we are already well into the 2022/23 reporting year, it is not timely, nor is it of significant added value to the reader to reproduce the detail of these assessments. However, by providing high level summaries and signposts, we can demonstrate our open and transparent approach and provide the reader seeking more detail with access the information they need.

This Council has a strong track record of performance review together with robust and regular performance monitoring by Senior Leadership Team and elected Members. It also has well embedded self-assessment processes in place at service and corporate levels as set out in our [Performance Management Framework](#). This means that we are able to support and challenge services and the corporate support areas to continually improve and set appropriate service

priorities for Delivery and Priority Planning, for consideration, monitoring and scrutiny by elected Members in meetings of Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees and Council. Our approach to responding to Regulators' reports is open and transparent and reports considered by Governance and Audit and Scrutiny Committees can be found [here](#).

A position statement in respect of our readiness to meet the new statutory duty of self assessment, particularly in the light of our earlier established performance culture, was considered by [Cabinet in March 2021](#).

Because of the unprecedented events of the last two years, between Spring 2020 and Autumn 2021, some of our self assessment processes were held in abeyance to allow appropriate direct focus on the response to and recovery phases from the Covid pandemic. However, quarterly reporting to elected Members experienced the least disruption. In late 2021 we resumed a full cycle of Service Self Evaluations and an assessment of our corporate functions.

Given the 'gap' in some aspects of our self-assessment knowledge and the value in providing the new administration a more comprehensive and timely suite of information, we have taken a pragmatic approach to meeting the new reporting requirements in this first year of the [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act](#) and at the same time taken the opportunity to further strengthen how we meet existing reporting requirements to reduce reporting burdens and make best use of existing reporting streams.

The following sections set out the four areas in our 2021/22 Self Assessment 'suite' comprising high level summaries of progress in delivering the Council's Priority Plans, i.e. Well-being Objectives; Assessments for fourteen Corporate/cross cutting areas of work, information about our Service Self Evaluations for twenty-one areas of service and our application of the Sustainable Development Principle.

Throughout the Assessment the Council can evidence consistent improvement over the past few years, which continued during the unprecedented global pandemic, when we continued to deliver our priorities, providing a solid foundation to build and accelerate progress following recovery.

The continued improvement continues to be driven by the strong and focused leadership from the Leader and Cabinet. In the coming months, work will start on the involvement and preparations for our new Corporate Plan, setting out our plans and ambitions beyond 2024.

Political leadership of the Council has been stable for a number of years, and remains constant following the 2022 Local Government elections. The stability and strength of leadership was recognised by staff in a staff survey considered by Senior Leadership Team in February 2022. Of the staff that responded,

- 75% agreed or strongly agreed that RCT is a strong Council that leads the way in many services.
- 19% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- 5% in total, were unsure, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

These findings provide assurance that staff saw and felt strong leadership during the most challenging period in the existence of RCTCBC and we will continue to develop and deliver this strong and visible leadership.

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How we have delivered our Priorities

The Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 '[Making A Difference](#)' sets out our Vision, sets our three priorities PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY and our approach. Together, these strategic aspects, direct everything we do and are well embedded into other Council's strategies and planning arrangements, including for Work Force and Financial planning and Risk Management. Each of the priorities contribute to the achieving the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of RCT, and of Wales.

The detailed plans to deliver our three priorities PEOPLE, PLACES and PROSPERITY are currently agreed by Council and subsequently monitored and scrutinised by elected Members in [Cabinet](#), [Scrutiny](#) and [Governance and Audit Committees](#) is part of the [quarterly Performance and Resources Reports](#).

The quarterly Performance and Resources Reports to Cabinet, currently comprises

- **Executive Summary** of Performance by quarter.
- **Revenue Budget Monitoring** - setting out the detailed financial spend against budget across our Revenue Budget with exceptions highlighted.
- **Capital Budget Monitoring** – setting out spend across our Capital Programme with exceptions highlighted and a section covering Prudential Indicators.
- **Organisational Health data**– includes staff turnover, sickness absence, organisational health related investment areas and an update on the Council's Strategic Risk Register.
- **Delivering our Corporate Plan:** Progress in delivering our Corporate Priorities; People, Places and Prosperity.
- **Our response to extreme weather events** - progress made to implement the recommendations agreed by [Cabinet on 18th December 2020](#).

In respect of delivering our Corporate Plan and in particular the priorities it sets out, the quarterly reports provide an overview of our progress, with hyperlinks to further and more detailed reports, case studies and relevant 'comms', and also presents more detailed progress reporting through updates to each of the three Action Plans. The 2021/22 end of year report was considered by Cabinet on [18 July 2022](#).

We can see from this information that overall, we are making good progress in delivering our priorities but we also know those areas we need to improve.

There is no single report that can provide a complete, timely and comprehensive picture of the work undertaken across the Council that contributes to the delivering our priorities. For example, the Annual Governance Statement contained within the Statement of Accounts provides an assessment of the Council's Governance arrangements and the extent to which it effectively manages the delivery of its services and priorities and its resources. [The 2020/21 Statement](#) indicated that these governance arrangements are in place.

However, the information contained within the quarterly reports provide a helpful overview from which the reader can seek further detailed information.

The following three sections, provide a summary of the progress of each of our priorities as described the end of year report, together with a link to each of the three 2022/23 Priority Plans that will form the basis of monitoring and scrutiny of our progress, up to and including 31 March 2023.

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PEOPLE - Are independent, healthy and successful

Introduction

We put in place plans to help PEOPLE to be independent, healthy and successful because we want to give people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds the best chance to live a good quality of life, both now and in the future. We believe that by working with partners to help people to stay healthy and active and involved in communities, preventing many long-term issues from arising, people can stay well for longer. Where people do need help, we need to make this help easier for them to find. Residents told us this is important to them and their families.

General Statement of progress

Despite the challenges that remain from the Covid-19 pandemic, we continued to make good progress as a Council and in partnerships. We 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 and have continued the planned building work on new residential accommodation. We continued to encourage all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing and re-opened our leisure facilities including the new [Llys Cadwyn](#) centre in Pontypridd. We continued to work with partners to support older people to stay in their homes longer, prevent unnecessary stays in hospital and to help get people home from hospital safely and more quickly when they are well enough, although we recognise that there is more to do. We remained focused on supporting our most vulnerable residents and families. We know that there is much to do help keep our residents of all ages and backgrounds safe and well.

More detail can be found in our end of year [quarterly performance report](#) to Cabinet 18 July 2022. This includes a financial update on our investment priority areas and information about how we have

- opened [Cwrt Orsaf](#) Pontypridd, our third extra care facility in RCT, alongside Ty Heulog in Talbot Green and Maesyffynnon in Aberaman, with other facilities in progress in Porth and Treorchy.
- put in place [school holiday fun and activities](#) in 15 of our schools, around 400 children took part.
- opened a supported Accommodation Scheme for adults with a learning disability with plans being developed to provide a range of supported housing options that meet the needs of vulnerable people.
- reopened [Lido Ponty](#) and [Hawthorn Swimming Pool](#).
- introduced a new range of targeted leisure activities to keep people active, including [‘Made for Mams’](#) and [videos](#) featuring walking routes
- delivered a programme of Targeted Play provision for vulnerable 5-14 year olds with care and support needs.
- launched the new [‘YEPs’ App](#) to provide more and better information as support for young people.

and

- continued our review of residential care for older people.
- continued to develop our work to support recovery and independence and working with UHB to avoid hospital admission and support hospital discharge.
- continued to develop digital solutions to support people and their families.
- continued to strengthen our arrangements to train our Adult Services staff in different ways of working with individual and families.
- started to put in place a different way to help people to manage their care needs through direct payments through the new 'Community Catalyst' model.
- talked to people about new day services for people with a learning disability that provide meaningful activity and opportunities for them to achieve their personal goals.
- continued to develop our Community Hubs as places that people can meet and socialise, strengthening relationships with residents and community groups.
- involved people in the development of a new inclusive and accessible plan for our theatres.
- Prevented more homelessness in the County Borough, from 48% in Quarter 1 of 2021/22 to 69% at year end. Stand alone data for the final quarter performance was 77%.
- provided information and assistance to those people supporting Ukrainians fleeing conflict and also the Ukrainian families who have arrived in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- continued to work with partners to help people to stay in their own homes for longer, manage transfers of care and improve end of life care in the community.
- continued to review and Mental Health services.
- continued to our work to make sure that those children that cannot stay with their families are looked after closer to home and those young people leaving care have the right support.
- continued to transform early years support so that people can access help no matter where they live
- continued to develop the Social Prescribing model.

You can also find out more about our services in the [Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021/22](#)

The detailed plans to deliver our **PEOPLE priority in 2022/23** can be found [here](#).

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

Introduction

We put in place plans for PLACES because we know that having a clean, pleasant and well-maintained environment is important to residents. Having efficient recycling and waste collections, welcoming green spaces, clean streets and well-maintained roads are some of the ways we can make residents' daily lives more pleasant as well as for our visitors who come to enjoy all that Rhondda Cynon Taf has to offer. However, our greatest challenge is to play our part in tackling Climate Change and we have a new '[Tackling Climate Change](#)' Strategy in place to direct the work to meet the carbon reduction goals we have set out ourselves.

General Statement

Over the last year, we have continued to make good progress as a Council and as part of wider partnerships, to make PLACES where people are proud to live, work and play. By supporting and working with residents we recycled 67.18% of the waste we collected and we also continued to enforce the zero tolerance messages for environmental crimes. We progressed our carbon reduction plans by developing the EV Charging Infrastructure, changing the system of collection and recycling of our 'green waste' and widening opportunities to develop Active Travel. We took steps to keep residents safe e.g. responding to residents feedback to continue 'No Alcohol Zones' in Pontypridd and Aberdare, supporting people experiencing domestic and sexual violence to get the help they need when they present in a hospital setting and working on all Wales operations to tackle illegal trading. We also improved services to those residents in need of help and support with substance misuse. We have continued to create and support new biodiversity and climate related projects including establishing a Sustainable Food Partnership. However, we know we have more to do to continue to improve PLACES and to achieve our short and long term climate ambitions, including achieving our ambitious recycling and reuse targets, embracing the circular economy, putting in place adaptation and mitigation solutions to help tackle the impact of climate change to minimise the effect on our residents and in doing so, helping to improve air quality across the County Borough.

More detail about how we did this can be found in our end of year [quarterly performance report](#) to Cabinet 18 July 2022. This includes a financial update on our investment priority areas about how we have

- completed a comprehensive £27M Investment Programme on our highways and structures improvements, drainage improvements and storm recovery across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- published twelve [Section 19](#) Flood Reports.
- put in place an [Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy](#) and provided [EV Charging Points installation progress](#) information on the Council's website
- recycled 67.18% the waste we collected.
- taken enforcement action against 997 fly tipping incidents, and

- saw [South Wales Parking Group](#) process 20,000 Penalty Charge Notices for incidents within RCT
- talked to residents about [Food Waste Recycling](#) and about why some choose not to.
- launched a new sustainable [Green Waste Collection](#) system with almost 45,000 households signing up, the majority of which did so on line.
- launched our new [Biodiversity web page](#) providing information about what RCT has to offer.
- put in place '[Try before you buy](#)' EV taxi trial as part of Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, which included preparations to make live three dedicated 65kw electric taxi charging points at Pontypridd, Porth and Aberdare.
- established the [RCT Sustainable Food Partnership](#) to ensure that residents have access to healthy, tasty, affordable food that's good for the environment and for the local economy.
- worked with the Health Board and the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide specialist independent advice and support to domestic abuse victims who make a disclosure of abuse whilst attending A & E for treatment and/or hospital appointments at Royal Glamorgan.
- re launched '[Ask for Angela](#)' campaign to support people feeling vulnerable or unsafe and in need of access to a safe spaces in premises signed up to the [Pubwatch](#) scheme.
- opened the [Gravity Family Bike Park](#) at Dare Valley Country Park.

and

- trialled Low Carbon Vehicles and fuel alternatives in our fleet.
- continued to develop our arrangements to manage and install further publicly accessible charging points and seeking additional funding to expand further.
- continued to develop ways to generate renewable energy and reuse hard plastics.
- continued to continue to develop Bryn Pica Eco Park and seek funding opportunities to go develop further.
- continued to prepare to support businesses and social landlords to implement the planned changes to trade waste recycling.
- continued our work to reduce our use of single use plastics in the Council through the changes to our procurement processes.
- continued to dispose/recycle our office equipment and technology more sustainably
- continued to work with partners to reduce waste through blitz programmes and improving recycling habits in community bin collection points.
- through the [RCT Food Support Fund](#) and the [Sustainable Food Places](#) Network, continued to support residents to access food parcels, fresh fruit and vegetables
- continued to prosecute fraudulent activity, including through [Operation CeCe](#) which seized 1 Million illegal cigarettes.

The detailed plans to deliver our **PLACES priority in 2022/23** can be found [here](#).

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

Introduction

We put in place plans for PROSPERITY because we want to create opportunities for people to reach their potential through education and training and for businesses across the County Borough to flourish both now and in the future. We are continuing to invest in our schools, early years settings and also our Town Centres, bringing in more jobs and creating new homes, along with opportunities for leisure and social activities. We believe that RCT has much to offer, and we want to make sure that we make best use of our work with partners including to improve the availability of low carbon public and accessible transport, strengthen tourism and create new jobs, especially in the 'green' economy.

General Statement of progress

We continued to make positive progress both as a Council and working in partnership despite challenges remaining from the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly for our schools and businesses. We continued to support businesses and lead in ambitious plans to transform our town centres to unlock their economic, social and cultural potential whilst balancing environmental considerations. We also worked closely with partners to deliver quality, affordable and energy efficient homes and continued the development of a strong local development plan for the long-term future of the County Borough. Our new Education Strategic Plan will drive ongoing support and improvement for our schools, ensuring wellbeing and inclusion are at the heart of our approach, and we supported adults of all ages to develop their skills, find employment or develop their careers.

More detail about how we did this can be found in our end of year [quarterly performance report](#) to Cabinet 18 July 2022. This includes a financial update on our investment priorities areas and information about how we have

- completed a range of property and site redevelopment projects in our town centres, including the redevelopment of Rhos (Guto) Square in Mountain Ash and the [Porth Transport Hub](#).
- set out a [Pontypridd Town Centre draft Placemaking Plan](#) to provide a vision for the regeneration of the town to unlock the town's economic, social and cultural potential and supported redevelopment of disused sites including the former Bingo Hall and Marks & Spencer building.
- supported Active Travel and public transport in our town centres by obtaining planning permission for expanding Park and Ride schemes at Porth, Treorchy and Llwynypia and completing Active Travel studies in Pontypridd, Aberdare and Porth Town Centres.
- put in place our new [Tourism Strategy](#) and how we plan to promote our landscape, culture and heritage to support the local economy.
- agreed a new Education Strategic Plan outlining priorities for the next three years and also submitted our new [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan](#) to Welsh Government

- put in place new systems to identify where our schools and learners most need support, including those most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and put in place help and guidance to improve standards and deliver the new curriculum
- completed schemes to improve Early Years facilities at Dolau Primary school, Gwauncelyn Primary school and YGG Llantrisant, funded by Welsh Government's Early Years Grant.
- worked with housing associations and landlords to support people with a range of needs, including young people leaving care, to find and stay in suitable homes

and continued to

- lead on the £15M [Transforming Towns](#) grant across the Cardiff City Region and a strong pipeline of potential projects is in development, including review of currently disused sites.
- support our local businesses, including enabling smaller businesses to compete for Council contracts by improving communication and completing the roll out of wifi to 7 town centres
- develop a Revised Local Development Plan with an amended and extended plan period 2022 – 2037, to fully respond to the key issues we now face, including Climate Change and the impacts of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- develop the Masterplan for the [Llanilid Strategic opportunity area](#) and town centre placemaking plans. This includes dialogue with developers and Cardiff Capital Region City deal to support the development of new housing on brownfield sites.
- deliver major transport schemes including dualling the A4119; the Llanharran bypass scheme and the Cynon Gateway North project.
- review and extend our pilot of Family Engagement Officers to support children and families to improve their wellbeing and school attendance.
- ensure effective arrangements are in place to meet the requirements of the [ALNET Act](#), a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
- [invest in our school buildings](#) to develop high quality learning environments and community facilities to meet long-term needs, including Net Zero carbon buildings.
- support an increase in the number of energy efficient, low carbon homes in RCT, including working with Rhondda Housing Association to develop a Zero Carbon home using local timber as part of the [Skyline project](#).
- support retrofitting existing homes to make them more energy efficient
- provide a [range of support](#) for people to gain skills, find employment and develop their careers through our employment support programmes, graduate and apprenticeship programme. This also includes specialist support for those with particular needs including young people, those leaving care and people with learning disabilities.

The detailed plans to deliver our **PROSPERITY priority in 2022/23** can be found [here](#).

Our assessment of corporate functions – including how we are meeting the Socioeconomic Duties

We have identified fourteen corporate/cross cutting areas of work that underpins everything we do. These cross cutting areas of work also comprise the set of seven core activities ‘*that are common to the corporate governance of public bodies.....likely to most effectively secure the type of change required*’ as set out in the [core guidance](#) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Where this is case, in preparing our assessments we can also demonstrate how we are applying the core activities of the Act.

Corporate/Cross Cutting	Core Activities (WFG)
1. Strategic planning and Approach	1. Corporate planning
2. Governance and Scrutiny	2. Financial planning
3. Finance Performance and Risk Management	3. Performance Management
4. Human Resources	4. Risk management
5. Asset Management	5. Workforce planning
6. IT/Information Management	6. Assets
7. Procurement and Commissioning	7. Procurement
8. Partnerships	
9. Involvement, Engagement and Customer Feedback	
10. Welsh Language	
11. Equalities and Socio-economic Duty	
12. Regulators’ Feedback	
13. Net Zero	
14. Well-being of Future Generations	

The performance of each of these fourteen areas has been assessed to consider how they are supporting the delivery of the Council’s services and priorities and enabling the Council to meet relevant statutory requirements. A summary of each of these assessments can be found below.

1. Strategic planning and Approach/Corporate Planning’

Despite the unprecedented challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and the essential response and refocus required to support our residents, the Council’s strategic vision, priorities and approach directed the Council’s resources to where they made the most difference to the people and communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This has remained the case beyond the pandemic as we return to business as usual.

However, we know we have more to do to make sure that the Council’s priorities are fully reflected in all Council strategies/policies etc. We will ensure that that our

leadership, challenge, support and ambition remain strong and transparent so that we continue to uphold the strong ethos of self-awareness and continual improvement that has become embedded across the Council's services over recent years. We will continue to make best use of all our resources and to strengthen our knowledge of our communities so that we can ensure that our focus on their needs remains clear and priorities are relevant, particularly as we start to consider our corporate planning beyond 2024.

2. **Governance and Scrutiny**

The Council continues to strengthen its governance, scrutiny and accountability arrangements to more effectively inform and robustly challenge itself and its policies to drive forward change. We are also continuing to improve access to the democratic process and demonstrate improved outcomes for residents and communities through our decision-making arrangements. The areas of focus in the last year included continuing to develop capacity and support to enable elected Members to effectively discharge their responsibilities. The Council has continued to enhance its diversity of representation, aided by greater use of technology in virtual and hybrid meetings also meeting the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. There remains much to do to fully meet and embed these requirements. Building the progress made to support the previous administration we are ensuring that the new 'Council' arising from the 2022 Local Government elections, has the information, equipment and relevant support in place to enable all members to conduct the business of the Council in person and through virtual meetings in the language of their choice. The new Participation Strategy will be finalised and implemented in the Autumn, widening access to democracy for people of all ages and abilities. The work to create and develop a regional South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) continues, with the aim of transitioning the Cardiff Capital Region's existing operational and delivery model into a single corporate body with the CJC adopting the existing decision-making and oversight role of the Joint Committee but progress has been slowed by the need to address a number of taxation status issues and associated risks at national level. The Council's part in scrutinising the delivery of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board, continues to ensure all public sector organisations in the region, work to deliver the Well-being Goals and apply the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

3. **Financial Planning, Performance and Risk Management**

Strong and visible leadership and a clear strategic direction continues to provide a solid platform to prioritise resource and deliver an ambitious improvement programme for the benefit of residents, this underpinned by robust service and financial management arrangements. We have made positive progress in delivering our priorities in the context of the prolonged challenges arising from austerity and more recently the pandemic, and feedback from our external regulators confirms that the arrangements we have in place demonstrate the Council is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council's resources are directed to the delivery of its priorities through our Performance Management arrangements which contribute to a strong performance culture built on openness and transparency, and support and challenge at an Officer and elected Member levels, and the organisation's financial planning and risk management arrangements effectively support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities, as evidenced via the in-year and year-end [Performance Reporting](#) arrangements.

The Council has a sound approach to medium term financial planning, with these arrangements being key to support the on-going financial stability of the Council through the forecasted very challenging period ahead.

4. **Human Resources/Workforce Planning**

In the last year, the Council focused its HR resources to continue to support Managers, Headteachers and staff across the Council as they emerged from various stages of the pandemic and tackled the ongoing and changing national and local challenges within their services. This has meant redeploying HR staff, recruiting and resourcing new services such as TTP, supporting the co-ordination and delivery of Covid testing and Vaccine programme, putting in place shielding arrangements for 'at risk' staff and facilitating risk assessments for all staff to safely return to work together with supporting their well-being. At the same time, the Council has been introducing a new HR/Payroll system, 'iTrent' which is currently being rolled out incrementally following a period of 'parallel running' with the existing HR Vision system.

With a different HR focus over the last two years, during 2022-23 we will embed and develop the positive HR processes learned during this time and reflect these in the planned revisions to our HR strategy and Workforce Plan. We will also use the findings of the Audit Wales '[Springing Forward](#)' review of HR to challenge how we manage the new HR arrangements, policies and procedures to better support services as they emerge from the pandemic and meet the new challenges and opportunities ahead and strengthen our data and benchmarking arrangements. We are also taking steps to digitise, modernise and strengthen our recruitment processes and widen our pool of candidates. We will work to maximise the functionality of the new HR/Payroll system to enable the Council to better inform and manage its workforce processes and associated data and benchmarking.

5. **Asset Management**

Pre pandemic, the Council made an early positive start to reduce the occupied office accommodation space and exceeded the target reduction of 20% set out in the [2016 Corporate Plan](#). During the pandemic, to enable services to meet their needs and to facilitate social distancing arising from Covid restrictions, previously unoccupied space was, of necessity, reoccupied. As a result, the use and occupation levels of our buildings have changed significantly over the last year or so, they align with other aspects of Agile Working i.e. Workforce and Digitisation. The Council's 'Built Asset Review' will inform an Office Accommodation Strategy where further targets for reducing occupied space will be agreed. The office accommodation portfolio in use

during 2021/22 will form the new baseline for setting targets and monitoring results in future years.

We regularly review our Corporate Asset Management Plan 2018-23, (CAMP) for our property assets. A new CAMP will be considered and implemented in April 2023. The new CAMP will reflect the changing needs and purpose of our built assets and the need to fully reflect the changing energy needs and usage so that they minimise energy use and carbon emissions. Similar energy saving work is ongoing across existing and proposed projects in our School Investment Programme and other Council Investment Programmes.

The Office Accommodation Strategy will inform the future development of the CAMP and Corporate Estates will continue to be pivotal in managing the Council's Climate Change aspirations through the new Decarbonisation Plan. The Decarbonisation plan is a key component of the [Council's Climate Change Strategy](#) and is currently being developed. Community Asset Transfer will continue to be considered as an option for surplus Council properties, particularly as Agile Working becomes embedded and more Council properties become vacant.

6. IT/Information Management

Building on the positive achievement of its first Digital Strategy [Digital RCT – Our 2020 Digital Vision](#) and the further rapid progress in digitalisation necessitated by Covid pandemic, the Council continues to make strong progress in supporting organisational and service changes through its new [Digital Strategy 2022 – 2026](#).

The new Strategy, agreed by [Cabinet in June 2022](#), sets out the Council's vision of being a 'Digitally Driven Council', to maximise the benefits of digital for our Communities, Customers i.e. residents, businesses, staff, learners, elected Members and visitors; and for the Council, with an emphasis on digital inclusion to ensure individuals and communities are not 'left behind'. A central part of this work is strengthening our data insight and intelligence through the provision of timely and accessible data. Integral to this vision, the strategy also sets out how the Council will further improve Cyber resilience and enhance the protection of our data and assets.

Key ICT and Digital requirements supported across the Council include the introduction of a new HR/Payroll system, Hybrid Working, Corporate Data Dashboards, supporting ICT needs of elected Members arising from the Local Government Election and the Emergency Control Centre for managing major incidents.

Our approach supports the delivery of the Council's [Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 'Making a Difference'](#) and the National Digital Strategy for Wales and also seeks to contribute to the National Well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We are also developing our work with others to maximise the benefits of regional working, including through the digital work stream of the Northern Valleys Transformation Fund. Through the strategy we continue to develop and strengthen the integration between our digital work and other Corporate areas to support service delivery and our ambition to become a carbon

neutral Council by 2030. Effective governance arrangements for monitoring progress are currently being developed to ensure effective support and challenge of the delivery of the strategy.

7. Procurement and Commissioning

The Council made significant achievements through our procurement arrangements both as a Council and in partnerships with other public bodies, during the Covid pandemic. For example, purchasing Personal Protective Equipment at speed to keep residents and staff safe and services operating as effectively as possible during repeated and irregular Covid restrictions. As we returned to 'normal', the Procurement focus has been on supporting the Council's recovery plans and developing and implementing the new [Commissioning, Socially Responsible Procurement & Contract Management Strategy 2021-2024](#) and also to put in place early preparations to meet the requirements of the [Draft Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Bill](#).

The Council is also focussed on meeting its Carbon reduction targets. Within Procurement and Commissioning arrangements, early work to ensure we meet these targets in respect of 'local' procurement and single use plastic, are being widened and accelerated to encompass the wider Scope 3 emissions arising from procured goods and services and built assets, which are a significant proportion of the Council's Carbon Footprint.

Despite our positive progress to date, we know we have more to do to further strengthen and embed our procurement arrangements and to further maximise our spending power and contribute the prosperity of County Borough. Our plans also include introducing formal performance management and scrutiny of our arrangements and putting in place improved communication with businesses.

8. Partnerships

The Council has a positive track record of partnership working and collaborating with others. Examples range from formal Regional Partnerships like the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal to working with community groups to meet a particular and immediate need, or to bid for and deliver specific time limited grant funded projects. There also continues to be positive examples of collaborative arrangements in place within the Council. Our plans to review our partnerships to ensure that they effectively deliver outcomes that benefit people and communities in RCT, were affected by the need to refocus our work during the pandemic. However, this will remain on our work programme 2022 and beyond and we will use the findings from relevant Welsh Government and Audit Wales Reports to challenge our Regional Partnership arrangements. We will also ensure that we continue to maximise partnership opportunities including those afforded by the Corporate Joint Committees.

9. Involvement, Engagement and Customer Feedback.

We know we need to keep widening and strengthening our engagement and involvement and make better use of the information we receive from the various feedback channels.

The Council has a good track record of talking to residents and communities and finding out what matters to them. We are always looking for better and easier ways for people to get involved and to give their views and opinions on the decisions that affect them. These mechanisms will be developed further in the Council's new Participation Strategy. In 2021-22 we restarted some of our face to face conversations with people, as well as using our new online engagement platform '[Let's Talk](#)' which we launched in April 2021 using [Climate Change](#) as our 'pilot'. We have also put in place additional resource to manage and coordinate data insights in respect of the County Borough which also supports the Welsh language and Socio-economic Impact Assessments and better informs our engagement and community data arrangements.

Feedback from our customers who are residents, businesses and stakeholders as well as our visitors is also valuable to us as we strive to continually improve the services we provide. We have good evidence of using individual feedback to inform service change. However, we also recognise that we need to effectively maximise the strategic value of the data/information available to us. In the last year, have started preparatory work in advance of the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management by April 2023. This preparation includes data cleansing and the service user engagement that in turn, will inform data requirements and the shape, content and timeliness of reports. This work will be key to ensuring that strategic and service needs are met by the new system.

10. **Welsh Language**

The Council continues to make positive progress in implementing the Welsh Language Standards, treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English Language and enabling people live their lives through the medium of the Welsh language if they choose. In doing so, we are reducing the Council's risk of non-compliance with the Welsh Language standards. Over the last year our work includes widening our use of digital technology to increase bilingual service options and support Welsh language compliance, investment in Welsh language training to facilitate simultaneous translation and staff training more generally. We have also strengthened our Welsh Language Impact Assessment processes and compliance processes and have led other Welsh Councils to develop and implement a new Grants Policy. However, there is more to do to make sure that the Welsh language Impact Assessments achieve the intended outcomes. We also need to increase the Welsh Language capacity within our services, better facilitate the use of the Welsh Language more widely across the County Borough and ensure that the proportion of Welsh speaking staff is representative of the population of RCT as identified by the 2011 census. i.e. 12.5%.

11. **Equalities and Socio-economic Duty**

The Council continues to have a strong commitment to fairness and equalities as evidenced in the strategic approach and implementation of our Strategic Equality Plan, our most recent report published [in March 2022](#). Progressing our work set out in the [Strategic Equality Plan](#) was challenging due to the pandemic and resource issues arising. However, we have delivered in the majority of the objectives. The Council and its services also demonstrated a flexible approach outside the Plan, by responding to unexpected matters e.g. responding to the racial equality issues arising from the impact of the death of George Floyd

Despite our progress, we know we have more to do to embed understanding and the practical application of the wide range of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues across the Council's services. At a Service level, Equalities and Diversity has continued to feature in the Council's Service Self Evaluation processes which continues to provide a timely and transparent vehicle for strategic challenge and support of our services, helps to inform our statutory reporting requirements and reinforces the wider understanding and implementation of related Equalities strategies across the Council's services.

We also need to respond to the needs of our communities and further demonstrate that we are meeting new statutory requirements, arising from the Socio-economic Duty. At a community level, we are continuing to engage with residents to gain a better understanding of the barriers they face.

A full evaluation of the [Strategic Equality Plan](#) will be completed later in 2022, as part of the work to develop our new Plan, scheduled for Cabinet consideration in 2023.

12. Regulators' Feedback

The Council has a strong track record of constructive and productive relationships with its Regulators. Evidence shows that the Council responds well to feedback within Regulatory reports specific to RCT, and also uses National Reports and Studies to challenge how it delivers and commissions services.

However, as we emerge from the pandemic and as full Regulatory programmes resume, we need to revisit our processes including continuing to strengthen the arrangements for embedding the Sustainable Development Principle/Well - being of Future Generations Act into our arrangements, working with the Welsh language and Equalities and Human Rights Commissioners to make their feedback more transparent. We will also continue to align Regulators' feedback with Delivery Planning as well as Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committees in the new administration to provide additional internal assurance to elected Members and communities.

13. Net Zero

The Council has made positive progress towards setting and meeting its early Carbon Reduction targets and implementing a wide ranging, flexible and ambitious initial work programme. To date, our direction has been set and our progress has been monitored by agreed political and officer governance and project management

arrangements, directed by the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group and latterly, Sub Committee. However, there is still much to do to increase the scale and pace of our work and to better inform and support both our staff and residents so that they can contribute fully to helping the Council to meet the climate challenges across all Council services and the County Borough and to contribute to the national and global targets.

Cabinet's agreement to a comprehensive and ambitious Climate Change Strategy [in June 2022](#) and the continuing work to develop the Council's Decarbonisation Plan will provide a focus and framework that will both strengthen and accelerate our work to date. Progress in relation to the Decarbonisation Plan will accompany updates in respect of the Climate Change Strategy as part of the Quarterly Performance Reports to Cabinet.

14. Well-being of Future Generations

Given the Council's ambitions, the pace of change required to deliver its priorities, and the impact of the pandemic on the services to respond to immediate need, the level of progress in implementing the Act is generally positive. However, work in some service and corporate areas are more advanced than others. The knowledge and experience of all the public bodies subject to Act, including the need for more focused support from national bodies, continues to grow and mature. Previous feedback from Regulators in respect of the Council's approach to implementing the Act was generally positive but we know there is more to do. With the recent new national approach by Audit Wales to test how Public Bodies are applying the SD principle in all its reviews, inevitably gaps in our approaches, including the support provided by the Commissioner are being exposed.

The Self Evaluation of our services

Our annual Service Self Evaluation (SSE) has been in place since 2016. In completing the SSE, services are encouraged and require honesty and self-awareness and to continually strive for excellence within the resources we have available.

The SSE asks services

1. how they are performing
2. evidence how they know, and
3. identify what they can do to improve

The process enables services to reflect and evaluate performance and identify their strengths, priorities and areas for improvement which in turn inform annual Service Delivery Plans and also the [Council's Priority Plans](#).

The SSEs also

- help elected Members to support, challenge and scrutinise performance, progress and planning.
- assist services in providing evidence for audit or inspection and deliver the requirements of relevant legislation.
- help services make better decisions and manage risks.
- demonstrate value for money, potential for service change, spend or efficiencies and identify the impact of new or amended service provision.
- enable corporate services to priorities service support.
- provide mechanism/information for 'corporate' monitoring and 'cross-cutting' services with the information they require to compile strategic action plans and statutory reports for the Council e.g. *Climate Change; [Welsh Language Standards](#), Biodiversity; [Equalities](#) and [Socio-economic Duty](#).

The SSE model is refreshed annually to ensure it takes account of feedback from services and remains relevant and fit for purpose. Over the years it has been developed so that services can provide information about Sustainable Development Principle through the five Ways of Working and other cross cutting themes that inform statutory reports, such as those set out above*. The [2021 SSE model](#) and the [judgement criteria](#) applied in Autumn 2021 is available.

The [suite of twenty-one SSEs](#) were completed within services in late 2021. They were reviewed by the respective Cabinet Member, signed off by the Group Director and have also been subject to an independent challenge by the Chief Executive in meetings with Service Heads. These Evaluations are also made available on the Council's Intranet site for internal reference/use.

The information contained within the SSEs, and the service priorities emerging, informed the Delivery Plan for each service for 2022/23. The Delivery Plans are subject to 'in service' monitoring. Relevant actions are also included in the Council's Priority Plans, monitored by

and reported in the quarterly [Performance Reports to Cabinet](#) and thereafter to various Scrutiny Committees. The Priority Plans are referenced in Section 1 above.

DRAFT

How we are applying the Sustainable Development principle and contributing to the seven national Well-being goals

Sustainable Development is defined as a process of improving the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of Wales.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act develops this further by requiring Public Bodies to meet the principle by applying 5 Ways of Working and contributing to seven national Well-being goals. The Act also indicates [seven core activities](#) that are most likely to secure change, see section 2 above. The Council's approach to the Well-being of Future Generations agreed by [Cabinet in 2016](#) is to embed its requirements into the Council's business. The necessary refocus of our work to deal with the pandemic has resulted in slower than anticipated progress to develop this further. However, we can point to many case examples of how we are applying the Act and are contributing to the seven national Well-being goals in our Priority Plans. A selection of our contributions to the goals have been summarised for illustrative purposes in Appendix A.

The Act requires the Council to set well-being objectives that maximise its contribution to achieving the well-being goals. In doing so, the Council will be expected to take all reasonable steps to meet those well-being objectives. It is proposed that the Wellbeing objectives will be the three priorities set out in the draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024.

The Council's Corporate Plan agreed [by Cabinet in March 2020](#), sets out a vision, principles and our priorities that will maximise our contribution to the seven national Well-being goals. The national goals, together with the five Ways of Working, have been incorporated into the detailed action plans that have delivered the Council's three priorities and have been summarised in our annual [Corporate Performance Reports](#) (CPRs).

Our CPRs have also previously set out our progress in meeting the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, mostly recently in [2021/22](#). This year, as we have changed our approach to annual corporate reporting, our progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Principle and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is included at Section 14 of the assessment of corporate/cross cutting functions.

Some of the ways we are contributing to the 7 National Well-being Goals

National Well-being Goal	PEOPLE Ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful	PLACES Where people are proud to live, work and play	PROSPERITY Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper
Prosperous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Children and Young People by giving them a great start in life through our Resilient Families programme Redeveloping vacant properties in line with regeneration strategies to bring prominent town centre buildings back into use and improve our housing offer e.g. new Oxford Buildings Supported Housing Scheme in Mountain Ash and The Big Shed development in Tonypany. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping people and traffic moving on well-maintained roads and pavements including the work we do to keep our roads open in the winter months Providing new business facilities that will support the long term economic future of the region Progressing schemes that will benefit communities now and in the future including the A4119 duelling and active travel scheme from Coed Ely Roundabout to Llantrisant Business Park . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting businesses to adapt and diversify Developing placemaking plans in Pontypridd, Porth and Tonypany and supporting a range of redevelopment to revitalise our town centres Building new homes and working with developers to facilitate building homes on brownfield sites where appropriate Supporting people to develop new skills Providing schools where children can achieve the best they can
Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing site disturbance and material waste with shorter construction schedules by using modular construction methods in the construction of our Extra Care facilities. Producing online videos of our most popular walking routes across the County Borough, which provide a visual walk through and directions for the route to encourage people to explore our natural green spaces. Some of the videos have been targeted at new mums via our ‘Made For Mams’ programme to encourage new mums to exercise in the outdoors alongside other mums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing, valuing and celebrating our Green Spaces Launching our new Biodiversity web page Involving and engaging residents in our Let’s Talk Wildflowers and new Draft ‘Action for Nature’ recovery action plan conversations Increasing flood alleviation measures including work at Aberdare and Ynyshir. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting biodiversity by protecting existing habitats where possible and creating new areas for wildlife on our school sites Integrating biodiversity into planning and Local Development Plan arrangements

National Well-being Goal	PEOPLE Ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful	PLACES Where people are proud to live, work and play	PROSPERITY Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper
Healthier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping people to stay as well as they can by encouraging increased activity in a setting that is right for the individual e.g. at home, in our leisure centres, in our outdoor green spaces and in community facilities in schools Providing reablement support and Assistive Technologies to ensure our older, vulnerable or those who have a disability can remain independent within their communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressing and maintaining Green Flag standards in our parks to ensure they provide a sanctuary for residents, contribute to improved physical and mental well-being, engage with nature, encourage play and opportunities to come together. Continuing to tackle environmental crime and holding those who commit the offences accountable Engaging with residents on Active Travel routes including schemes between Pontygwaith and Maerdy, links with Treforest Industrial Estate and the Church Village Community Route. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding the number of family engagement officers in schools following a successful pilot, providing support to children and families for wellbeing and engagement in education Providing enhanced counselling support to young people, including those most impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic Finding ways to protect air quality and promote health through active travel and local amenities when planning new developments, including completing studies into active travel in Pontypridd, Porth and Aberdare town centres
More Equal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to develop our housing offers so residents can enjoy the benefits of independent living e.g. Extra Care facilities and Supported Housing Schemes. Setting up a Sustainable Food Network as part of our Sustainable Food Places project to tackle food poverty in our communities Providing sanitary products to our communities via the WG Period Dignity in Communities Grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising awareness of Hate Crime Ensuring domestic abuse support is available to all in need including specialist IDVA support for children and young people, an IDVA in Health and another with Housing First. Providing support to those in need of help with substance misuse through increased outreach work undertaken by Barod and promoting the support we provide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing alternative learning, career planning and work experience for those young people who struggle to engage in classroom-based learning Providing sanitary products to help tackle period poverty for girls and women in our communities loaning devices and mifi to children, young people and job seekers to help them continue education and training online

National Well-being Goal	PEOPLE Ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful	PLACES Where people are proud to live, work and play	PROSPERITY Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper
Cohesive Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people to stay in their own homes for longer and enabling them to contribute to communities and strengthen social relationships • Supporting and promoting volunteering opportunities within our communities via our Community Hubs • Supporting communities to be well connected through our Neighbourhood Networks. 	<p>Keeping people safe and helping them to feel safe by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responding to community requests for action • tackling anti- social behaviour • Protecting those vulnerable to doorstep crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving housing for all our residents and creating pleasant neighbourhoods in which communities can thrive.
Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to provide online and face to face cultural and arts opportunities including a free online production of Aladdin and events like the People’s Library Wales in Pontypridd Library • Providing a varied Adult Education programme, including local history and basic Welsh language skills to help parents support their child’s development, that can be accessed face to face and online, therefore removing some identified barriers to learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, involving and preparing for Rhondda Cynon Taf to host the National Eisteddfod for Wales in 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating the culture and history of the area in our theatres and parks and developing the Valleys Regional Park • Supporting the redevelopment of the YMCA building and the Muni Arts Centre in Pontypridd to develop a cultural hub • Promoting RCT as a visitor destination, including the Eisteddfod

National Well-being Goal	PEOPLE Ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful	PLACES Where people are proud to live, work and play	PROSPERITY Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, be entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper
Globally Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating the County Borough response to the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis. • Our work with PONT, a volunteer-based charity organisation in RCT which is making a difference to lives in Mbale, Eastern Uganda and which aims to support Ugandan organisations who have the potential to tackle poverty in their towns and villages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to encourage recycling and reuse and implementing a new Green Waste Collection Service • Progressing our plans to tackle and reduce the impact of Climate Change through Council services and the County Borough and to meet of 2030 targets, including the publication of the Council's Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy 2021-2030 and Climate Change Strategy 'Think Climate RCT' (2022-2025) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Fair Trade Initiatives • Developing renewable energy projects like Taffs Well Thermal Spring • Working with Rhondda Housing Association to develop a zero-carbon home using local timber as part of the Skyline project