

Audit Wales – Community Resilience and Self Reliance – ‘Together we Can’

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<p>What are we trying to achieve, the outcome</p>	<p>The Council’s Corporate Plan recognises the strong business, voluntary, community and religious groups across RCT and sets out how the Council will work with residents so that communities are able to do more for themselves; have more control over what they can do to support their communities and help residents to live safely and independently for as long as possible; and also maximise the impact of our resources.</p> <p>Continuing to strengthen relationships with residents and communities to achieve these outcomes is not only a priority for the Council, importantly, it also provides opportunities to improve the current and future economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the residents and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p>
<p>Why we need to do it:</p>	<p>The Council has a positive track record of supporting communities, significantly but not exclusively through our ‘RCT Together’ approach. The Council’s Corporate Plan sets out the strategic approach to sharing responsibility to achieve this in <i>the context of reducing budgets and growing demand pressures, the traditional role of the local authority as service deliverer continues to evolve and change</i>. The Corporate Plan anticipated the different relationship with communities as moving to one where we work together and where both residents and businesses take a shared responsibility for themselves and the communities in which they live and work.</p> <p>The Covid pandemic accelerated and strengthened partnership working with the third sector, health services and the police in tackling the complex and multi-faceted challenges, the legacy of which continue to face communities and core services. Since 2019, Covid and other recent and unprecedented events, i.e. impact of storms Dennis, Ciara and Jorge, support for people fleeing conflict in Ukraine and more recently the response to the cost of living crisis, also accelerated and embedded the development of Community Resilience Hubs and put Neighbourhood Networks at the forefront of a coordinated response.</p>

Recommendation	Council's Response	Next Steps	Timescale	Responsible Officer
<p>To strengthen community resilience and support people to be more self-reliant, local authorities need to ensure they have the right arrangements and systems in place. We recommend that local authorities use the evaluation tool in Appendix 2 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-evaluate current engagement, management, performance and practice; • identify where improvement is needed; and • draft and implement an action plan with timeframes and responsibilities clearly set out to address the gaps and weaknesses identified in completing the evaluation tool. 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Audit Wales report identifies several complex and interconnected issues across a range of services. The Council is considering the detail of the report so that we can more effectively maximise resources in developing our approach.</p> <p>Since February 2020, the community landscape has shifted significantly. We have seen strengthened communities and stronger relationships forged from many events outside the control of both communities and the Council; the response to Storms in February 2020 and thereafter Covid, the Cost of Living crisis and the community response to supporting people from Ukraine. Positively, the events over the last three years brought forward the Council's Community Resilience Hub development significantly ahead of schedule.</p> <p>As a result of experience of dealing with the unprecedented events we have learnt even more about what each partner has to offer</p>	<p>The Council will be in stronger position to work with communities to help them to meet their identified needs for the next three years through the Shared Prosperity Fund – RCTCBC Community Grant.</p> <p>The Community Fund and work to help communities to identify their own needs will continue through the various community communication channels in place. The Council will use all relevant tools to identify need, including the Audit Wales evaluation tool featured in ‘Together we Can’. We are also undertaking a review of Community Resilience Hubs during 2023-24.</p>	<p>March 2024 (recognising that this will be an on-going programme of work)</p>	<p>Syd Dennis / Caroline O'Neill</p>

APPENDIX 3a

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	and we will continue to build on these strong relationships.			
<p>To help local authorities address the gaps they identify following their self-evaluation, we recommend that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formally approve the completed Action Plan arising from the evaluation exercise; • regularly report, monitor and evaluate performance at relevant scrutiny committees; and • revise actions and targets in light of the authority's evaluation and assessment of its performance. 	<p>Noted. Any action plan arising from the review and the use of the Audit Wales evaluation tool will be monitored as part of our planning and grant monitoring arrangements. Work undertaken across the County Borough is also subject to regular reporting and scrutiny as part of the Council's governance arrangements.</p>	<p>The actions arising from the work in the recommendation above will also address this recommendation.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Syd Dennis / Caroline O'Neill</p>