

# Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership

Aligned in our desire for a better future for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf and future generations.

## Business in the Community

Business in the Community transforms businesses, lives and communities to deliver:

- Sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Greater social mobility
- A faster and fairer transition to net zero and climate resilience

We are a high-impact network of collaborative, innovative and purposeful leaders with a unique ability to connect businesses to some of the UK's hardest-to-reach communities.

## Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Rhondda Cynon Taf is the third largest Local Authority in Wales providing services for the local community, businesses and the 237,651 people who live there.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Corporate Plan 'Working with Our Communities' sets out its Vision where 'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future' and sets out its four well-being objectives:

- **People and Communities** – Supporting and empowering Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
- **Work and Business** – helping to strengthen and grow Rhondda Cynon Taf's economy.
- **Nature and Environment** – a green and clean Rhondda Cynon Taf that improves and protects the environment and nature.
- **Culture, Heritage, and Welsh Language** – recognizing and celebrating Rhondda Cynon Taf's past, present, and future.

## BITC's Place Programme

The UK is one of the most geographically unequal countries in the developed world, and Place-based transformation is needed in communities most at risk of being left behind. This approach requires longer-term collaboration between the local council, community leaders, businesses, and government, with real vision, leadership and an understanding of local needs to make change happen.

Over the last 40 years, BITC has identified what is needed to deliver change within places of high deprivation and low social mobility and developed a blueprint approach for community regeneration focused on uniting stakeholders around a single vision.

We work in Places across the UK, such as Newport, Blackpool, Rochdale, Coventry, Bradford, Sheffield and Norwich transforming lives and enabling greater social mobility. While the places look and feel different, because they are place-led, our approach is consistent.

BITC's approach builds on our unique business network and experience of harnessing business leaders' skills and convening power to facilitate local partnerships between businesses, communities and local councils. BITC's local development leads play a crucial role in breaking down long-standing barriers between stakeholders to convene partnerships.

## BITC'S PLACE APPROACH: HOW WE WORK

While the Places look and feel different, because they are Place-led, our approach is consistent



## BITC's approach to setting up the place: the first 12 months

- **Recruit a Strategic Partnership Manager** - The Strategic Partnership Manager is a driven and tenacious individual, integral to the creation of trust, collaboration, and partnerships. They develop a deep understanding of the place and businesses' role in creating long-term change. They help solve day-to-day problems, whilst facilitating strategic, cross-sector relationships.
- **Galvanising Leadership and setting up the Place Board** - Securing the expertise, resource, and commitment from across the sectors, bringing together individuals with



passion and power over the key issues in the place to form an informal, business-led steering group.

- **Stakeholder engagement and building traction** – community conversations, mapping and engaging stakeholders and achieving ‘quick-wins’, in order to create momentum, build credibility and gain trust. early action will be tangible and aligned to local priorities.
- **Establish a vision and determining the priorities of the place** – Establishing a long-term, strategic vision for the place is an essential tool to: recognise and leverage the unique strengths, heritage, and identity of the place; draw on local pride; set long-term direction and attract inward investment; convene stakeholders; align disparate activity around a shared ambition. The vision will be created and owned locally and form the basis of a draft Prospectus document. Whilst the vision will outline priorities over a 10+ year period, action planning will help to prioritise those that we can begin to address in Year 2, based on local capacity, available resources, and level of urgency. This will translate into key workstreams, owned and led by a member of the steering group and a sub-group of delivery partners.

## Identifying Priorities / Vision

BITC and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will work in partnership to identify the issues we aim to address and to support us to do this we will use the Community Insight profile for RCT January 2024, the Community Insights ward profile, local area energy plans, Rhondda Cynon Taf Corporate Plan, Index of Multiple Deprivation and other key Rhondda Cynon Taf strategy documents.

### The Community Insight profile for RCT shows that:

- People with no qualifications - 24.2% of working age people (Wales= 19.9%)
- People with highest qualification level 4+ (degree) - 26.7% of working age people (Wales= 31.5%)
- Repeated pupil absence is the percentage of primary and secondary school pupils missing more than 15% of school sessions – 6.2% (Wales average 5.3%)
- Youth unemployment is 5.3% (Wales average = 4.4%)
- Incapacity benefit claimants 8.0% (Wales average = 6.0%)
- Working age workless benefit claimants 11.1% (Wales average = 9.3%)
- Personal Independence Payments (PIP) have been introduced to replace Disability Living Allowance for all new claimants. PIP helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health or terminal ill-health. 15.1% of people (Wales= 12.5%)
  - PIP with mental health conditions 5.2% of people (Wales= 4.5%)



- Universal Credit claimants provides are benefits payable to all people of working age (16-64) who need additional financial support due to low income, worklessness, poor health, caring responsibilities, bereavement or disability 16.0% (Wales average = 15.5%)
- Housing Benefit claimants provides a measure on the number of households living in poverty 9.7% (Wales average 9.4%)
- Number of people in RCT January 2024 living in the most deprived 20% of areas in Wales 27.0% (Wales average = 19.5%)
- Vulnerable children, children in relative low income families 23.0% (Wales average = 21.2%)
- Vulnerable children, children in absolute low income families 15.1% (Wales average = 14.4%)
- Vulnerable children, number of people living in the most deprived 20% of areas in Wales on the Child Index 28.0% (Wales average = 23.4%)
- People renting from Housing Association or Social Landlord 8.2% (Wales average = 7.8%)
- Households with multiple deprivation are households experiencing four key measures of deprivation:
  1. All adult household members have no or low qualifications
  2. At least one household member is out of work (due to unemployment or poor health)
  3. At least one household member has a disability
  4. The household is living in overcrowded conditions
    - a. Household is deprived in 1 dimension 33.1% (Wales average = 33.4%)
    - b. Household is deprived in 3 dimensions 5.9% (Wales average = 4.5%)
- Mental health related benefits (DWP Feb-23) 4.0% of working age adults (Wales average = 2.9%)
- Number of people living in health deprivation 'hotspots' 42.0% (Wales average = 19.3%)
- Households living in 'Fuel Poverty' - 15.6% (Wales average = 13.9%)
- People with no access to a vehicle - 22.2% of 104,931 households (Wales = 19.4%)

## Improved Outcomes

**Determining what we focus on and our priorities will be agreed following consultations with the community, business and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.** However, based on the levels of deprivation indicated in the Community Insights profile and where Rhondda Cynon Taf Council deprivation indicators are higher than the Wales average, over the longer-term (10+ years) our place programme could work towards the following example outcomes:





1. **Education, Employment & Skills activities** that will help to improve people's confidence and self-esteem and raise people's aspirations -
  - Improve educational attainment
  - Increase number of people with high level skills and qualifications
  - Increase the potential for economic growth
  - Increase numbers of people in good quality employment
2. **Build Community resilience**
  - Enable communities to be resourceful, resilient and self-sufficient
  - Grow the capacity of the community
  - Galvanising that sense of pride that people have to help them strive for a better future
  - Work in partnership with the Welsh Government's Integrated health and social care hubs to improve health outcomes
  - Improve the wellbeing of future generations
3. **Reduce carbon, achieve net zero and improve nature**
  - Use the local area energy plans to reduce fuel poverty and create affordable warmth
  - Enable people to gain the skills to access the jobs created by climate action
  - Create more green spaces
  - Create more community growing spaces
  - Build resilience to climate impacts, such as flooding and excess heat

This is about long-term collaboration and the action planning that we do in year 1 will help to prioritise what we focus on in year 2 and 3.

## Deep Dive Ward

Rhondda Cynon Taf covers 424 km<sup>2</sup> (164 sq miles) and the RCT CI report has identified wards with the highest levels of adverse impacts. We will review those wards against the ability of businesses to provide support, to identify specific places to focus.



## Case Study

### THE JOURNEY TO NEWPORT, BITC'S MOST RECENT PLACE



#### NEWPORT

- ✓ Evidence of need
- ✓ Levers for change
- ✓ Business leadership & investment
- ✓ Local government engagement & investment

#### 1. BOARD COMMITMENT

*The Wales Leadership Board were keen to establish a Place for Wales.*

#### 2. INITIAL IDENTIFICATION OF PLACES

*The Board identified a shortlist of places, including Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) and Rhyl.*

#### 3. EVALUATION AGAINST PLACE CRITERIA

*RCT and Rhyl scored low on levers for change and business leadership. Newport scored well across all four categories.*

#### 4. INITIAL INVESTMENT SECURED

*KLA (via its KLA Foundation) made a three-year investment upfront to support the establishment of the place.*

#### 5. DEPLOY RESOURCE

*BITC resource was appointed to begin building relationships on the ground.*

#### 6. A COALITION OF FUNDERS

*Working with the Wales Leadership Board, other companies invested incl. Welsh Water, Wales & West Utilities, Mott McDonald, STG Aerospace and University of South Wales.*

#### 7. COUNCIL BACKING

*In negotiation with Newport Council for funding and support.*

## BITC Cymru Leadership board

[BITC Cymru's Leadership Board](#) chaired by **Peter Perry, Chief Executive, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water** is a network of senior leaders whose mission is to make Wales a responsible business nation.

They will bring their influence to bear in transforming the prospects of a place and creating a blueprint for business engagement in place-based transformation across Wales.

**They have been instrumental in launching the place programme in Newport and are fully supportive of a place in the Rhondda Cynon Taff.**



## Cost

### BITC'S PLACE APPROACH: WHAT IT COSTS

**£100K**

(per place, per year)



#### BUSINESS FUNDING

Typically makes up at least 50% of the overall funding.



#### COUNCIL MATCH FUNDING

We aim to get councils to match every £ of corporate contribution on a 1:1 basis.

**££££**



#### OTHER FUNDING OPPS

To support the delivery of projects in the place.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council contribution - £50,000 per year for a minimum 3-year period.

## BITC Contact

Tracy Rees, Senior Lead and Interim Wales Director [Tracy.Rees@bitc.org.uk](mailto:Tracy.Rees@bitc.org.uk)

