



COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG
RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision



Mae'r Penderfyniad Wedi'i Ddirprwyo hwn wedi'i bennu yn 'Benderfyniad Allweddol' gan ei fod yn debygol o:

This Delegated Decision has been established as a 'Key Decision' as it is likely:

a) arwain at y Cyngor yn ysgwyddo gwariant sylweddol neu wneud arbedion sylweddol;
to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant;

☐

neu / or:

b) fod yn arwyddocaol o ran sut mae'n effeithio ar gymunedau sy'n byw neu'n gweithio mewn ardal sy'n cynnwys dwy etholaeth neu adran etholiadol neu ragor.
to be significant in terms of its effects on Communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards.

X

c) Eraill / Other:

PWNC | SUBJECT: RCT Together – Community Asset Transfer of Treherbert Community Education Centre, Dumfries Street, Treherbert CF42 5PN to Black Mountains College Project (Charity No. 1180681).

DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

To approve the grant of a 25 year lease of Treherbert Community Education Centre in accordance with the provisions of the Community Asset Transfer Scheme to Black Mountains College Project (Charity No. 1180681) on terms to be agreed to the satisfaction of the Council.



In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director of Corporate Estates and the Director of Public Health, Protection & Community Services.

PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:

To approve the grant of a 25 year lease to Black Mountains College Project (Charity No. 1180681) as set out in Paragraph 3 of the accompanying Officer report.

Llofnod y Prif Swyddog



Chief Officer Signature(s)

 David Powell Enw (priflythrennau) Name (Print Name)	Director - Corporate Estates Swydd Designation	07.02.25 Dyddiad Date
 Louise Davies Enw (priflythrennau) Name (Print Name)	Director - Public Health, Protection & Community Services Swydd Designation	07.02.25 Dyddiad Date

Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION

	Cllr Maureen Webber Cabinet Member for Council Business and Corporate Estates	05.02.25
	Cllr Bob Harris Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities	05.02.25
LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE	ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION	DYDDIAD DATE

LLOFNODSWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE	ENW A SWYDD NAME AND DESIGNATION	DYDDIAD DATE

A FYDD Y PENDERFYNIAD YMA'N CAEL EFFAITH AR Y WARD?

WILL THIS DECISION HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WARD?

BYDD | YES ✓

NA FYDD | NO

Unrhyw sylwadau pellach/Oes angen rhoi gwybod i'r Aelod Lleol: ✓

Any further comments/Need for Local Member to be informed: Both Ward Members are aware of the proposal and are in support.

RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

YDY | YES NAC YDY | NO ✓

Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:

Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Lywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:

If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Member or Deputy Presiding Member or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Llywydd | Presiding Member) (Dyddiad | Date)

DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision Cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.

AT DDEFNYDD Y SWYDDFA YN UNIG | FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Council's Website:- ____11.02.25____

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Nodwch: Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar:

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be:

____17.02.25____
DYDDIAD / DATE

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :✓

Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:

Cyfadrn Directorate:	Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Enw'r Person Cyswllt Contact Name:	Stephen Smith
Swydd Designation:	Community Development Officer, RCT Together Team
Rhif Ffôn Telephone Number:	07786 523656

DELEGATED DECISION

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE ESTATES AND DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

3rd FEBRUARY 2025

RCT TOGETHER – COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF TREHERBERT COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE, DUMFRIES STREET, TREHERBERT CF42 5PN TO BLACK MOUNTAINS COLLEGE PROJECT (CHARITY No. 1180681)

**Author(s): Stephen Smith, Community Development Officer, RCT Together
Team**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the grant of a 25 year lease of Treherbert Community Education Centre to Black Mountains College Project (Charity No. 1180681) on terms to be agreed to the satisfaction of the Director of Corporate Estates, (in consultation with the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services).
- 1.2 In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended Officer decision of the Director of Corporate Estates and the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

- 2.1 To approve the grant of a 25 year lease of Treherbert Community Education Centre to Black Mountains College Project (Charity No. 1180681) on terms to be agreed to the satisfaction of the Director of Corporate Estates, (in consultation with the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services).
- 2.2 In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended Officer decision of the Director of Corporate Estates and the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 A business plan was submitted by Black Mountains College Project (BMCP) in

September 2024 for the proposed lease of Treherbert Community Education Centre, a valued community facility for the people of Treherbert.

- 3.2 BMCP have been working in partnership with Welcome To Our Woods Ltd (the current interim tenant) and Down To Earth for the past 2 years working to engage, support and develop the capacity of the community in Treherbert to raise awareness of the need for climate adaptation skills, through the creation of inclusive learning environments, developing skills in regenerative horticulture, coppicing & greenwood trades, sustainable food and allotments, supporting potential employability routes and the economic regeneration of Treherbert.
- 3.3 BMCP plans to secure significant capital and revenue funding to refurbish the currently vacant building and transform it into an exemplar “Green Skills Hub” that offers a range of education, training and community opportunities. The proposed lease will enable BMCP to apply for both capital and revenue funding to renovate and retrofit the building and begin delivery of its proposed curriculum.
- 3.4 At the Strategic Community Asset Transfer Panel meeting held on 20th September 2024, it was recommended to approve the lease of 25 years to BMCP based on the following reasons:
 - 3.4.1 Treherbert Community Education Centre was originally declared surplus in 2014 and following a period of occupation by a community group, has been vacant since 2021. The building would benefit from upgrade works to address statutory compliance requirements as a minimum for the proposed operation.
 - 3.4.2 A “30 Day Window of Opportunity” advertising the building to any “not for personal profit” organisation was previously publicised on the Council’s website in May 2021.
 - 3.4.3 BMCP aspirations are to secure significant capital funding for the proposed renovation and retrofit development of the building to include the potential installation of heat pumps, solar thermal panelling, photovoltaic panels, external and internal insulation and electrical vehicle charging points (accessible to the wider community). This, with the aim of returning the building back into a climate focussed education and learning centre with all the key energy efficiency infrastructure in place to reduce its carbon footprint.
 - 3.4.4 The proposed retrofitted building will be used as an active learning environment along with other key locations in Treherbert to support the following proposed delivery programme to enable residents, communities and businesses to adapt to a warming world. These would include:

Skills for Life	Skills for Employment	Skills for System Change	Cross Cutting Activity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Learning • Adult Community Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land-based • Nature-based • Renewable Energy • Buildings & Retrofit • Business & Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological Futures Camp • BA (Hons) Sustainable Futures • Radical Adaptation Short Courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Placements • Volunteering • Citizen Science • Student Support
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3.4.5 The proposed “Green Skills Hub” will enable BMCP to achieve this by creating a focus for net zero skills development and green industry creation in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the wider Valleys areas. Over the next five years they project the following delivery outcomes:

	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
No. of NVQs delivered	1	5	10	11	12
No. of people gaining a qualification	12	60	120	132	144
No. of individual jobs created	2	7	13	14	15
No. of FTE jobs created	0.8	4	8.2	8.8	9.4
No. of community workshops	10	15	20	20	20
No. of community members learning new skills	40	60	80	80	80

3.4.6 Other benefits reported by BCMP in their delivered courses to date include sustained engagement of students with additional health and learning support needs who would normally disengage from formal learning environments. It was acknowledged there was the potential for the “Green Skills Hub” to contribute to the economic development in the North of the valley. With increased footfall from staff, students, and visitors, Treherbert’s High Street could see an increase in footfall and a more diverse customer base.

3.4.7 Finally, the proposal addresses many of the priorities laid out in the Council’s Corporate Plan “Working with our Communities” and Climate Change Strategy “Making Rhondda Cynon Taf Carbon Neutral by 2030” to raise awareness of Climate Adaptation and the need to reduce our Carbon Footprint.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council’s RCT Together approach for progressing Community Asset Transfers was agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 30th October 2014. This approach supports the Council to work with communities and partner agencies to sustain delivery of services that the Council may no longer be able to deliver on its own.

4.2 Under RCT Together, applications are considered from “not for personal profit making” voluntary and community groups, social enterprises and Town and

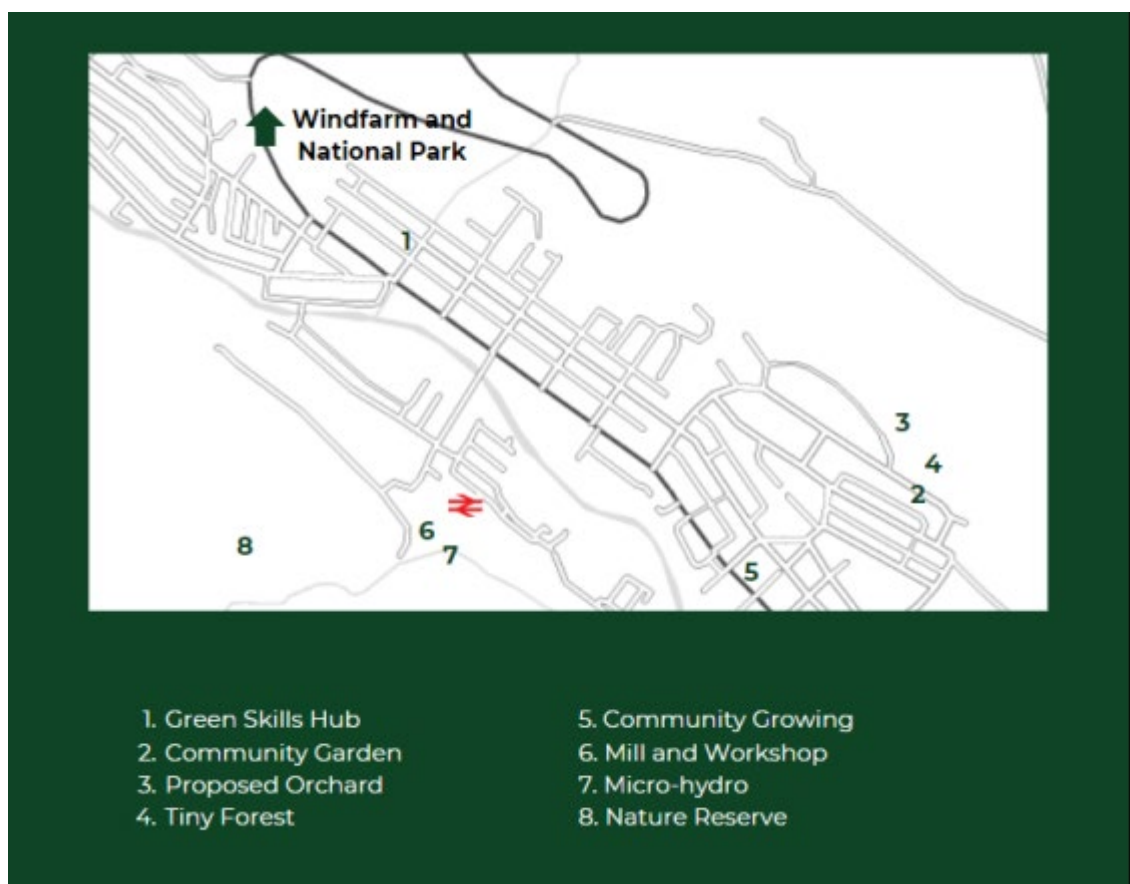
Community council for activities, services and facilities which benefit residents within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- 4.3 At the Cabinet meeting on 19th May 2016, it was agreed that applications for asset transfer could be dealt with under the Council's Delegated Decisions framework. High level asset Transfers will need to be reported to Cabinet if officers and the appropriate Cabinet Member feel that this is required.
- 4.4 A review of RCT Together was undertaken and approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 21st November 2018 to ensure any future Community Asset Transfers that are progressed, align with the Council's Community Hub development programme and can deliver the Council's strategic service requirements. Each Hub will support a neighbourhood network of preventative community services and activities that will support people living in our communities to improve their independence, resilience, health and well-being.

Overview of Black Mountains College Project

- 4.5 Black Mountains College Project (Charity No. 1180681 / Company No 1193702) was incorporated in 2018 as a Private Limited Company by guarantee without share capital and registered with charitable status and its registered office address is in Talgarth, Brecon LD3 0AH. The organisation was founded as a response to the climate and ecological emergency, recognising a growing need for climate adaptation skills to support how we live and work, and to enable systems change for a warming world. Their mission is to deliver "accessible education that empower communities, and the people within them to flourish in a warming world."
- 4.6 BMCP currently employs 32 staff (20 full time) and for the proposed Treherbert campus it is anticipated they will initially employ 3 staff for the following roles (with potential opportunities for a further 6 full time equivalent posts to be created):
- **A Centre Manager** – to manage the day to day operations, including building development and compliance, health and safety of staff, students and visitors. Support the academic team delivery, manage promotion and hire of the facility, Budget holder for the building, managing external contractors (cleaners, maintenance, systems) and line managing staff.
 - **Admin / Receptionist** – responsible for front of house, support academic admin, building admin (purchasing, invoicing, etc)
 - **Community & Business Engagement Officer** – building relationships with organisations and networks in the Rhondda, deliver community focused workshops and events and organise volunteering opportunities for students.
- 4.7 Black Mountains College Project is a robust organisation with clear governance, positive financial history, nine trustees and charitable objectives that meet the rationale for the proposed lease. They have experience and knowledge in successfully managing and financing a property portfolio, including education establishments.

- 4.8 BMCP have a track record of successfully leveraging in capital and revenue grant funding to sustain their activities. They have recently completed a Community Asset Transfer to re-develop the Old Victorian School into an education and community hub for Talgarth in South Powys. They have experience in building developments.
- 4.9 BMCP have developed local partnership arrangements with “Welcome to Our Woods (current interim tenant) and Down to Earth. Their work has the potential to positively support priorities of local thematic networks such The RCT Climate Action Network, RCT Local Nature Partnership and the RCT Sustainable Food Partnership. BMCP has a track record of delivering Further Education Qualifications since 2021 and Higher Education Qualifications since 2023. Underpinning these qualifications is their partnership with Neath Port Talbot College Group and Cardiff Metropolitan. BMCP began delivering Further Education courses in the Rhondda in 2023.
- 4.10 The Green Skills Hub Development which offers education, training and community opportunities cannot be taught in isolation from the natural habitat. The vision is the college will be integrated into the town, walking between classroom and key outdoor learning spaces. This has real potential to stimulate the local economy and provide additional benefits for health and well-being.



- 4.11 The proposal will support the Welsh Governments “Just Transition Framework” vision for a fairer, greener Wales by 2050, where existing and future generations have been equipped with the right skills for good jobs. Through

the creation of an inclusive Climate Adaptation learning environment, developing skills for life, skills for employment and skills for systems change in areas such as sustainable food, energy efficiency, renewable energy and allotments etc, supporting employability and contributing to the regeneration of Treherbert. The improvements in transport links (rail and road) will enable a wider catchment area to better access the former Treherbert Community Education Centre.

- 4.12 BMCP educational offer will initially be focused on vocational qualifications, specifically NVQs and professional accreditation to enable those in employment to develop the skills to access green skills employment opportunities. The group plans to widen their offer over the next five years to include apprenticeships and the delivery of higher education qualifications.

Risks

- 4.13 BMCP have an aspirational development plan for the next 3 years which covers ongoing community engagement and consultation, implementation of fundraising strategy, proposed retrofit of the building and educational delivery programme. BMCP will shortly apply to lever in key sources of funding as well as continuing to explore additional funding streams and opportunities to support the initial renovation and retrofit of the building. The group are confident that there is robust evidence of need for the building and for the green skills curriculum that will be on offer.
- 4.14 BMCP have a clear understanding of both operational risks (including student recruitment, safeguarding and welfare, delivery and quality) and strategic risks (including governance, partnership, and income). Regular reviews of these risks are undertaken and they utilise robust processes and procedures. They recruit qualified and experienced staff and deliver mandatory training. Their academic processes have been assessed by their partners Neath Port Talbot College and Cardiff Metropolitan University, and Health and Safety and HR process by external consultants. For specialist roles they recruit staff with relevant training and experience including membership of Chartered bodies. Their fundraising processes are compliant with regulatory bodies and their financial position is externally audited on an annual basis and reported to the Charity Commission.
- 4.15 BMCP maintain compliance and legislative changes through their external consultants, partners and networks, and membership with specialist bodies including the WCVA.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report or the Cabinet Business Officer.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE

- 6.1 There are no Welsh Language implications arising from this report. BMCP are proud to be a Welsh organisation and promote the Welsh Language and culture in all their activities and education offer. The group are looking to develop and implement a Welsh Language Action Plan to support their proposed development.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 A “30 Day Window of Opportunity” advertising the Community Asset Transfer opportunity to any “not for personal profit” community organisation to submit an “Expression of Interest” to lease the centre was previously promoted on the Council’s website and to community networks in May 2021.
- 7.2 The Group with its key partner “Welcome to Our Woods” have undertaken a range of consultation and community engagement opportunities with local partners, ward members, stakeholders, existing user groups and the local community. Discussions for the proposed transfer has evidenced support that the proposal meets community needs and demand for this building to be re-opened and sustained for the long-term future. The group are also planning additional community engagement & consultation events to help inform the usage and design of the building. The partners continue to maintain communication via social media and provide local residents with a newsletter update as developments progress.
- 7.3 The Centre will be integrated into the local community. In developing the building, the Group will be delivering co-production activities to support the community in the building usage and their access. This will include open days, volunteer clean-up days, and attendance at community events as well as working with wider third sector groups and engaging with businesses and statutory provision, particularly schools. In the long-term, they aim to deliver workshops and engagement activities that meet their charitable purpose and that support skill development.
- 7.4 BMCP’s key locality partner “Welcome to Our Woods” are core members of the RCT Sustainable Food Partnership – Strategic Steering Group, providing insight and direction towards meeting the vision of the Partnership that every person in Rhondda Cynon Taf can access nutritious, affordable and sustainable food. This network incorporates community stakeholders, local groups and organisations the opportunity to work together to identify needs and solutions, deliver community activities with a purpose of developing and strengthening community resilience and solution focussed outcomes for sustainable food practices.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There will be no ongoing cost implications to the Council associated with the leasehold transfer of Treherbert Community Education Centre. BMCP will be responsible for all future capital and revenue costs associated with the

operation of the building. This will include repair, maintenance and statutory compliance responsibilities.

- 8.2 BMCP have a proven track record of leveraging in funding and generating income through its educational activities. BMCP will be reliant on grant funding for short to medium term sustainability. Their focus is now on securing funding for the renovation and retrofit of the building. Their track record of accessing funding to date provides confidence in their ability to make this a viable and sustainable green community education facility.
- 8.3 Any surpluses generated will be reinvested back into sustaining delivery of their services and activities and maintaining the building.
- 8.4 The lease transfer will enable BMCP the ability to lever in external funding sources that the Council would not be eligible for in order to maintain and extend the lifespan of this much valued community asset through the development of a “Green Skills Hub”.
- 8.5 An initial 2 year rent free period will be granted to support the physical redevelopment period of the building. BMCP will then pay an Open Market Rent for the remainder of the 25 year lease period.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, Councils can dispose of land and buildings provided that best consideration is achieved.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL’S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP

- 10.1 Black Mountains College Project proposals align with both national and local objectives and priorities thus re-enforcing the potential public benefit that is delivered through the project, in turn contributing to the Council’s vision:

“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.”

- 10.2 The Council is approaching this principle in different ways and has launched RCT Together as a means of engaging and involving residents in how services are best sustained in communities:

“The Council’s vision is to develop a new relationship with residents that enables them to be independent and resilient and to take on greater responsibility for their local communities. This is not about the Council shifting its responsibility – it is about recognising that residents want to be more involved in what happens in their community”.

- 10.3 The ‘RCT Together’ approach, now aligning with the Council’s developments of Community Hubs and Neighbourhood Networks will further strengthen the

involvement of local residents and community groups in determining the best use of its assets to enable the community to strengthen its resilience and wellbeing.

- 10.4 Along with 44 public bodies across Wales, the Council is subject to the statutory requirements of the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**, which sets a common vision for the long-term well-being of people and communities through seven national well-being goals and provides a framework for public services to work differently through five sustainable development principles. These principles include thinking about the **long-term impact** of our actions, seeking to **prevent** issues from occurring in the first place or from worsening, **involving people** and communities in decisions made that affect them, working together **collaboratively** with other organisations and integrating our work to understand the knock-on effects of what we do. ***BMCP's proposal aims to develop Treherbert as a "College Town" and a "Green Skills Hub" which will deliver accessible "climate focussed" education to empower communities and its people to flourish in a warming world.*** The **Wellbeing of Future Generations** is at the heart of the project and will support the social, economic and environmental well-being of communities in RCT and beyond. It also supports the key actions within Welsh Government's adaptation plan **"Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales"**.
- 10.5 Climate change will impact on all four well-being objectives within Rhondda Cynon Taf's **Corporate Plan 2024-30 "Working with our Communities"**. This proposal will support the delivery of those objectives through the creation of an inclusive learning environment, developing Green Skills for Life, Employment & System Change including areas such as nature and horticulture, buildings and retrofit, renewable energy and sustainable food, supporting employability, and contributing to the economic regeneration of Treherbert. Increased skills locally within the net zero agenda will support the Local Authorities own **Decarbonisation Strategy (2023-25)**, as well as the delivery of its Woodland Management Plan, Biodiversity Management Plan, and EV Charging Strategy.
- 10.6 BCMP refer to a growing body of evidence into climate "tipping points" which has indicated that we are globally on the cusp of irreversible change and that mitigation alone cannot prepare us for a changing climate.¹ All sectors must now focus on adaptation and how to prepare ourselves and the most vulnerable for a warming world. Welsh Government's recently consulted upon **"Just Transition Framework"** creates a vision for a fairer, greener Wales by 2050 where "existing and future generations have been equipped with the right skills for good jobs".² It wants to encourage the development of green industries that consider the needs of future generations. Within Wales, IEMA³ (Institute of Environmental Management * Assessment) has estimated that:
- To achieve net zero by 2050, we will need 25,000 energy related roles and 23,000 green infrastructure roles.
 - Annually there will be 7,900 jobs required to improve and retrofit homes.

¹ <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abn7950>

² <https://www.gov.wales/just-transition-framework>

³ <https://www.greencareershubs.com/green-future/uk-regional-view/>

- Around 127,000 jobs will require upskilling because of transitioning to net-zero.
- 10.7 BMCP also indicate that in-direct roles such as communications, project management and finance, will also need to upskill and be comfortable in measuring and communicating about environmental impact. Almost half of Welsh businesses (47%) are reporting worrying skills shortages, with 48% of Welsh businesses lacking confidence to adopt green technologies⁴. However, within Rhondda Cynon Taf there are currently no land-based educational courses⁵, nor professional courses covering retrofit, renewable energies, green manufacturing, and limited IEMA professional courses⁶. There are no courses within the Cardiff Capital Region, for example on carbon accountancy, environmental communications, environmental & social justice, or sustainable food production.
- 10.8 At a local level, evidence shows from the Treherbert Skyline pilot research⁷ that there is a real desire for community ownership of land across the Valleys and the ability to create social and economic value through local land management and energy production. In building capacity for this, skills development is a key element of the Rhondda Skyline project (funded through The National Lottery Climate Action Fund). The development of a college campus and a Green Skills Hub is the natural successor to this project, and one that is supported by stakeholders across the climate action network.
- 10.9 By addressing the growing gap in skills and knowledge of the green economy the project will support the work of organisations in the RCT Climate Action Network, the local Nature Partnership and the RCT Sustainable Food Partnership. BCMP propose to work in partnership with key providers to develop complimentary provision that supports the needs of local businesses and drives green entrepreneurship within the area.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS (please specify)

- 11.1 Treherbert Community Education Centre has been an integral community asset within the community for many years, as a colliery school, then a junior school, followed by a place of informal community learning and latterly a venue for young people and as a Welsh medium early year provision for the very young. The Centre has witnessed the establishment and expansion of heavy industry and then its decline with all the associated effects on jobs and services. Combine this with its geographic isolation then you have a unique opportunity combining the local environment and the building as a means of addressing climate adaptation skills in Treherbert.
- 11.2 In addition, within Treherbert, operates Welcome to Our Woods, a community partnership delivering innovative environmental projects and social enterprise opportunities including land management for forestry, supply of timber and

⁴ https://www.britishchambers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/The_Open_University_Business_Barometer_2024.pdf

⁵ <https://www.cymoedd.ac.uk/adult-learners/>

⁶ <https://www.gov.wales/green-personal-learning-accounts-plas-approved-courses>

⁷ <http://www.thegreenvalleys.org/wp-content/uploads/skyline-final.pdf>

orchards. Also, smaller food production schemes using hydroponics and local allotments. However, with recent improvements in transport infrastructure (new Metro service and Heads of the Valleys Road), Treherbert has now opened up for people from across RCT and further afield to access these opportunities. Now there is the prospect to create a Green Skills Hub with BMCP, developing new skills and knowledge leading to accredited qualifications in this growing green industry. This has the real potential to stimulate the local economy and bring in new jobs and finance, and act as a catalyst for training and employing local people to create decent jobs closer to home, as well as benefits in health and well-being.

- 11.3 **Education** – BMCP green curriculum will support the development of green skills defined as “the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a society which reduces the impact of human activity on the environment”. There is a low public awareness of green skills and green career paths. Upskilling workers will be necessary to address green skills shortages, as well as increasing the workforce in key green sectors. Stakeholders suggest that the quality and uptake of vocational education and training are important factors for developing green skills in the workforce.
- 11.4 **Employment** – BMCP will primarily offer young people and people looking to change careers an opportunity to access the training and knowledge to take-up employment in the growing green economy. The Green Economy refers to careers that reduce carbon emissions, restore nature and help us adapt to our changing climate. At present all research highlights the employment gap in this area of work. Skills could be grown and livelihoods created in industries that provide economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being. There is potential within these industries for significant job growth and the current mismatch between numbers of people able to fulfil these roles.

12. **CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 Globally the impact of climate change is being felt by more frequent extreme weather events and impacts are being felt on food security, energy costs and production, housing, transport and health. BCMP proposal has the potential to offer a viable and sustainable opportunity to provide green, climate adaptation & environmentally focused education courses for a wide range of learner needs both from within the community, across RCT and beyond.
- 12.2 Black Mountains College was set up as a direct response to climate change and the need for society to learn the skills to adapt. They recognise that the responsibility to deliver their work in a responsible way, minimizing negative impacts on the environment and promoting ways of working in harmony with nature. They promote the circular economy, both in terms of recycling, reusing, and repurposing but also the sharing of skills and resources with others and procuring goods and services locally. They are currently working with Business Wales to calculate their carbon footprint and develop an action plan to minimize further any impact they make on the environment.

- 12.3 The benefits of transferring an asset to a “not for personal profit” organisation on a long term lease can be substantial, unlocking community enterprise, encouraging volunteer commitment, enabling the organisation to attract the necessary capital investment to create an exemplar Green Skills Hub which is accessible, energy efficient and delivers the necessary climate adaptation/behavioural learning to support future generations live in a “warming world”. Providing opportunities for learners to access green skills and knowledge which may increase opportunities for employment in a growing and emerging employment sector.
- 12.4 BMCP have already evidenced their ability to develop, maintain and grow a nationally recognised education establishment based on the same green environmental principles they propose for Treherbert Community Education Centre in Powys. Whilst there is recognition that BMCP short term sustainability will be dependent on successfully accessing grant funding, it is believed that should this phase be successful then the project will bring in funding through Qualification in Wales for teaching and other income generation opportunities.
- 12.5 In supporting this proposal, the risk to the Council is low. Should the group not be in a position to lever in the necessary capital development funding then it is anticipated that the building will return to the Council in an improved state due to the interim stewardship arrangements and investment provided by Welcome to the Woods (the current interim tenant).
- 12.6 The Officer recommendation is therefore to approve the granting of a 25 year lease to Black Mountains College Project with periodic support being offered by the RCT Together Community Development Team alongside other relevant support agencies.