



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25TH JUNE 2020

COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS - SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY DURING CORONAVIRUS

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (COUNCILLOR A MORGAN)

Authors: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive; Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development; David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates; Roger Waters, Service Director of Highways & Transportation.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the action taken to continue to safely deliver key infrastructure and construction projects during the current COVID 19 pandemic to support businesses and help support the local economy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the information provided and notes the action taken to date to continue the safe delivery of priority £200m infrastructure and regeneration projects, supporting over 200 jobs, over the period of the COVID 19 pandemic;
- 2.2 Requests that a further report is presented to the following Cabinet setting out the actions the Council proposes to take, in partnership with Welsh Government, Cardiff Capital Region and private sector partners, to mitigate the economic impact of COVID 19 on the local and regional economy.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide a summary for Cabinet of the major infrastructure and regeneration work that has continued to be undertaken, safely in accordance with safe distancing and other health & safety guidelines, since the COVID 19 restrictions were imposed by the UK and Welsh Governments.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On 23rd March, the UK government announced unprecedented lockdown measures to stop the spread of the COVID 19 virus between households, changing the way in which everyone in the UK lives their daily lives. This resulted in an initial three week lockdown of the movement of people, forcing people to remain at home, other than key workers.
- 4.2 Clearly these measures have had a significant impact on the local economy. Whilst the UK and Welsh Governments have put in place a range of interventions to support businesses across a wide range of sectors, locally, the Council has continued to safely deliver key strategic projects across a wide range of service areas. The report sets out the comprehensive list of key projects continued to be safely delivered by teams from corporate estates, regeneration, housing, highways, transportation, and flood recovery and prevention that are important elements of the Council's wider infrastructure investment strategy and support our contractors during the current COVID 19 national emergency.
- 4.3 It has been important for the Council to continue with its investment plans in order to financially support our contractors; meet our contractual commitments and obligations to a range of organisations, create an effective working environment for businesses to operate as we recover from the current crisis; and to continue with our statutory maintenance and compliance responsibilities whilst the majority of the Council's built assets, such as schools and offices, are temporarily closed. This work, in turn, will play a vital role in the sustaining the local economy and employment in the area.

5. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 5.1 Services across the Council have continued to focus on the development and delivery of key investment projects, and the management of our existing built assets during the current COVID 19 pandemic.
- 5.2 A key part of this work has involved the Council working proactively with contractors, and Registered Social Landlords to ensure projects continue to deliver on site as far as possible. Compliance with social distancing measures has played a major role in the delivery of projects, where contractors have had to adapt their working methods to ensure compliance with guidelines set by Government and the construction industry.
- 5.3 Examples of a number of these projects are given below and demonstrate that the Council has worked with contractors to ensure the projects have continued to develop and be delivered as far as possible.

A more comprehensive list of projects that have continued through the pandemic are set out in Appendix 1. The value of these projects is worth more than £200m and they have sustained more than 200 jobs in addition to securing hundreds more over the life of the projects and through the supply chain.

- 5.4 In addition to the projects listed below considerable officer time has been invested in planning for new infrastructure projects that are still in the design and planning stages such as the A4119 Dualling at Coed Ely, the Cynon Valley Gateway North Link and the Llanharan By-Pass. Storm Dennis created significant additional work for the Structures Team and work has continued to progress on developing options to replace a number of bridges damaged by the storm.
- 5.5 Work has also continued to stabilise Tylorstown Tip after the well-publicised land slide during Storm Dennis. The tip is currently in a stable condition after the Council's engineers and contractor installed temporary surface water drainage systems to remove flow of water from the tip to dry the materials/mountain side. This work was completed by April 2020. Design and investigations are ongoing, and further reports will be brought forward to Cabinet to provide options to restore the Rhondda Fach River to its original level and course.
- 5.6 Further examples of the progress that has been made by the Council over the period of the Covid pandemic are set out below.

Taff Vale/Llys Cadwyn (Contractor: Wilmott Dixon) - Total Project Cost - £38M (Contract sum)

- 5.7 Regular contact has been maintained with the Contractor and with the Tenant of Building A. With the implementation of appropriate site operating procedures to maintain social distancing and minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus, the Contractor has continued to operate with a reduced workforce since the start of the lockdown period. The availability of adequate resources in the form of labour, plant and materials has proved difficult which inevitably has resulted in programme delays. Positively the number of operatives on site returned to full capacity with approximately **85** operatives back on site by mid-May. A revised programme is in place with an anticipated completion date of mid-October.

Llys Cadwyn – Park Bridge (Contractor: Knights Brown) - Total Project Cost - £1.4M (Contract Sum)

- 5.8 Unfortunately the Contractor had no option but to close down the site at the end of March as its supply chain had temporarily shut down

operations. Regular engagement has been maintained with the contractor and the site was remobilised week commencing 11th May with a range of site operating procedures implemented to comply with social distancing requirements and to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus. There are currently **6** operatives on site. Due to the nature of the work this is the maximum number of operatives that can comfortably maintain social distancing whilst still being productive to complete the necessary tasks. Significant progress has subsequently been made on site since mid-May with the final sections of the bridge deck being installed and the final works being just weeks from completion.

Coedely Industrial Estate – New Commercial Unit (Contractor: John Weaver Contractors) - Total Project Cost - £3.9M

- 5.9 John Weaver Contractors have made steady progress since returning to site on 20th April, with new Site Operating Procedures introduced. This has resulted in fewer operatives allowed on site due to social distancing restrictions.
- 5.10 Roof cladding works are completed, with solar PV underway and some external drainage and brick work being undertaken. The Council has worked with the project & site management teams to ensure the site and materials on site, during the suspension of works, were safe and secure. Encouragement and support was given to ensure Government and Construction Industry advice and best practice was followed and full risk assessments carried out, prior to recommencement of works.

**Statutory Compliance in Council buildings (Contractors: Various)
Payments processed for payment - £1.8M (including orders issued to contractors prior to Covid-19 Pandemic)**

- 5.11 During the lockdown period, the majority of Council owned/occupied buildings, including schools, were closed as most staff were advised to work from home. Corporate Maintenance staff worked in conjunction with all Service Groups and local contractors to ensure the buildings maintained compliance in accordance with statutory requirements. During the period, more than 750 orders were issued to local contractors which allowed contractors to continue to operate without having to furlough all their staff.
- 5.12 Essential maintenance continued along with essential inspection and servicing of plant/systems by appointed contractors. Service and inspection programmes were also undertaken to ensure compliance with Legionella and Asbestos legislation.

Pontypridd YMCA (Contractors: Knox & Wells) - Total Project Cost - £4.4M

5.13 Construction started on the YMCA Building in February 2020 and has been primarily focused on demolition works. Despite COVID 19 restrictions, the scheme has made significant progress, with the Contractor adopting working methods to comply with guidelines set by UK Government and the construction industry and in consultation with their CDM advisor. The Council's Highways team has continued to work closely with the YMCA to ensure appropriate traffic management arrangements are in place. During the COVID 19 lockdown period, on average there have been 15 operatives present on site each week, including sub-contractors. Of the supply chain to date, four of the main suppliers have been from within RCT, with local builders merchants and hire companies being utilised on a regular basis.

5.14 In addition to this, Knox & Wells also rent a local empty business premises for site office and welfare facilities. The Council continues to work proactively with the YMCA to monitor and assess the impact of COVID 19 restrictions on the work programme and cost plan.

Mountain Ash Southern Cross Valley Link (Contractor Walters / John Sisk joint venture) - Total Project Cost £20m

5.15 The site has continued to work through the pandemic, although social distancing has reduced the number of staff on site and had an impact on the programme. Delivery of precast concrete units and attenuation tanks have been delayed due to subcontractors/manufacturers being closed. As a result, the contractor is now looking to complete the works in September 2020, a delay of 8-12 weeks.

St Albans Bridge Replacement (Contractor Alun Griffiths Contractors Ltd (AGCL)) - Total Project Cost £2.4m

5.16 The construction of the replacement bridge continues on site after an initial 3 week closure at the beginning of the lockdown period. Whilst there has been some issues with suppliers, work has continued with the project scheduled to be completed in late Autumn 2020.

Castle Ifor Bridge Deck Replacement (Contractor AGCL) - Total Project Cost £500k

5.17 The replacement bridge deck works commenced in May 2019 but due to a flash flooding in late August 2019 the works, apart from removing the debris from the river, has been on hold due to constraints from Natural Resources Wales in respect of working in the river during the winter. The works has now recommenced on site in May 2020 and is scheduled for completion in October 2020.

Ferndale Community School – Pool Hall/Changing Room Refurbishment (Contractor: A&N Lewis Ltd) - Project Cost - £1.2M

- 5.18 A further phase of modernisation of the Ferndale Community School has been completed despite the contractor having to close the site due to the lack of its supply chain. The contractor returned to site in early May to complete the works by adopting new site operating procedures.

Sobel Leisure Centre – Changing Room Refurbishment (Contractor: A&N Lewis Ltd) - Project Cost – £278K

- 5.19 The project start was initially delayed but the Council worked with the contractor to agree a new start date to allow them to introduce revised site operating procedures to carry out the works safely. The project will now complete by the end of July.

Highways Investment Programme – Highways

- 5.20 The resurfacing and reconstruction to the carriageways and footpaths has continued during lockdown, although the emphasis has been on undertaking works that are not in built up areas due to the large amount of residents' vehicles being left in the streets and issues with social distancing. However good progress has been made by the Council's contractors and Streetcare team, in undertaking works.

Disabled Facility Grants - £3.7 million budget for 2020/2021

- 5.21 A number of new process and procedures have been implemented to support the delivery of the housing grants programme during the COVID 19 pandemic. An example of this is the Disabled Facilities Grants team:

- 5.22 The service has:

- Implemented an online process to continue to approve DFG's (whilst all staff are working agile), issuing work to framework contractors, in order to aid hospital discharge or to prevent a client from being admitted to hospital.
- Allowed for PPE costs to be included within the cost of works, supporting contractors on the framework to be able to carry out works safely and no financial cost to themselves.
- Deferred quarter 3 rebate costs to financially support the agency framework contractors during lockdown, as a number of these had to furlough their staff.
- Directly supported local contractors, with 42% of contractors on the framework residing in RCT.

- Introduced an online process to agree unforeseen work on live ongoing Grants through the use of photographs and video links, allowing work to proceed.
- Introduced an online process of valuing and agreeing interim payments, up to the value of 90%, on live ongoing Grants through photographs and video links allowing work to continue, financially support contractors.
- Implemented an online payment process ensuring all payments are made without delay for contractors.
- Received 31 new DFG referrals since lockdown, 6 of the referrals were identified as urgent by Occupational Therapists and therefore have been progressed and work completed by contractors.

Tonyrefail Community School (Contractor: Morgan Sindall) - Total Project Cost - £33.6M (Contract Sum)

- 5.23 The contractor was well prepared and responded effectively to the lockdown to mitigate a number of perceived risks in the very early stages of the pandemic. There have been challenges with supply chains however the contractor continued to source materials locally and from established national companies based in the area. Local and South Wales based subcontractors continue to be employed averaging **23** operatives on site with no loss in productivity even with the social distancing rules in place.

Treorchy Comprehensive School (Contractor: Kier Construction) - Total Project Cost - £12.8M (Contract Sum)

- 5.24 The contractor experienced a significant drop in labour supply in the first week of the lockdown. However, a skeleton staff maintained the operation and by week three, with the introduction of new site operating procedures, the labour supply increased to an average of **18** operatives on site. Materials and labour has been sourced locally where possible and progress on the project continued to achieve completion by the beginning of June.

Hirwaun Primary (Contractor: Morgan Sindall - Total Project Cost - £8.8M (Contract Sum)

- 5.25 The contractor was well prepared and responded well to the lockdown to mitigate a number of perceived risks in the very early stages of the pandemic. There have been numerous challenges with supply chains however the contractor continued to source materials locally from established national companies together with assistance from a local builders merchants based in Hirwaun. In the first three weeks of the lockdown, the staff on site averaged between 8 to 10 operatives daily

however this has now significantly increased and in the last few weeks to an average of **26** operatives which is slightly ahead than was anticipated. Although some specialist supplies such as glazing remain challenging the project remains on programme and continues to be closely monitored by the Council.

Garth Olwg Campus (Contractor: Vinci UK Ltd) -Total Project Cost - £4.3M

- 5.26 The main contractor had procured large amounts of material in order to commence major roof works at the site immediately before the lockdown. With the school closing to pupils the project team and the contractor took advantage and mobilised the local supply chain to provide ample labour supply to the site working with new site operating procedures which has resulted in works rapidly advancing ahead of the current programme. The Council has continued regular inspections of the site to allow the contractor to take advantage of the empty buildings currently on Campus.

Maesyfynnon Extra Care Total Project Cost - £9.15 M, Council Contribution £1.4 M

- 5.27 Linc Cymru Housing continued to work on the construction of the Maesyfynnon Extra Care scheme despite the pandemic following Government guidelines for safe working. The 40 bedroom Extra Care Scheme was completed and handed over to the Council for occupation on May 1st 2020. Adult Services is currently nominating tenants to take up apartments and the allocation and moving in process is currently underway.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality or diversity implications associated with this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This report highlights a number of schemes and grants that are operational across the Council that will play a vital role in supporting the local economy recover from the COVID 19 pandemic. All these schemes and projects are budgeted for.

9. LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

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

10.1 This is an information report on progress in responding to the COVID 19 pandemic. No decisions are being taken in this report.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 This report has set out the actions taken to develop and sustain delivery of a wide range of key strategic regeneration, and housing investment projects during the current COVID 19 national emergency.

12.2 Good progress has been made to enable a number of schemes across the Council to continue to develop which plays a vital role in supporting the local economy recover from the COVID 19 pandemic.

12.3 The next step in the recovery stage from the pandemic is to work in partnership with Welsh Government, the Cardiff Capital Region and the private sector to develop investment programmes that supports the economy out of the projected severe recession, supporting local businesses and town centres and increases job opportunities, in particular youth employment via apprenticeships. Early indications from the UK and Welsh Governments is their focus will be on investing for the future, in particular tackling climate change, creating the infrastructure and investing in new ways of working and living that will reduce our carbon footprint. This will include an investment in housing, and the potential investment in making all homes more energy efficient and less reliant on carbon fuels.

12.4 As a Council we need to work with our partners in the public and private sector to support the UK and Welsh Governments investment strategies. Over the coming weeks and months, further reports will be presented to Cabinet taking into account future Government plans and how the Council can capitalise on these opportunities in the best interests of the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Appendix 1

Long List of Council Infrastructure/Construction Projects that have Continued During the Coronavirus Emergency

Taff Vale/Llys Cadwyn (Contractor: Wilmott Dixon) - Total Project Cost - £38M (Contract sum)

Regular contact has been maintained with the Contractor and with the Tenant of Building A. With the implementation of appropriate site operating procedures to maintain social distancing and minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus, the Contractor has continued to operate with a reduced workforce since the start of the lockdown period. The availability of adequate resources in the form of labour, plant and materials has proved difficult which inevitably has resulted in programme delays. Positively the number of operatives on site returned to full capacity with approximately **85** operatives back on site by mid-May. A revised programme is in place with an anticipated completion date of mid-October.

Llys Cadwyn – Park Bridge (Contractor: Knights Brown) -Total Project Cost - £1.4M (Contract Sum)

Unfortunately the Contractor had no option but to close down the site at the end of March as its supply chain had temporarily shut down operations. Regular engagement has been maintained with the contractor and the site was remobilised week commencing 11th May with a range of site operating procedures implemented to comply with social distancing requirements and to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus. There are currently **6** operatives on site. Due to the nature of the work this is the maximum number of operatives that can comfortably maintain social distancing whilst still being productive to complete the necessary tasks. Significant progress has subsequently been made on site since mid-May with the final sections of the bridge deck being installed and the final works being just weeks from completion.

Coedely Business Unit (Contractor: John Weaver Contractors) - Total Project Cost - £3.9M

John Weaver Contractors have made steady progress since returning to site on 20th April, with new Site Operating Procedures introduced. This has resulted in fewer operatives allowed on site due to social distancing restrictions.

Roof cladding works are completed, with solar PV underway and some external drainage and brick work being undertaken. The Council have worked with the project & site management teams to ensure the site and materials on site, during the suspension of works, was safe and secure. Encouragement and support was given to ensure Government and Construction Industry advice and best practice was followed and full risk assessments carried out, prior to recommencement of works.

Porth Transport Interchange (Contractor: Bond Demolition) - Welsh Government Local Transport Fund; £820,000 allocation for 2019/20; with the same amount secured from City Deal for 2020/21.

Whilst the demolition of Barclays Bank and the Alec Jones Day Centre has largely been completed; the demolition of Porth Farm Surgery – which was purchased earlier this year as part of the project – has temporarily paused. The UK's COVID-19 outbreak has created difficulties within the construction sector's supply chain prompting delays for the demolition contractor, Bond Demolition. However, with support from the Council and the outdoor nature of the work and small number of operatives required, have allowed the contractor to make continued efforts throughout the COVID-19 lockdown to complete the work.

Valleys Regional Park improvements at Dare Valley Country Park (Contractor: Davies Bros.) - Total Project Cost - £1,677,898

The Council has continued to work with the Contractor throughout the pandemic – regular site visits have been undertaken to inspect works and monitor progress. The contractor is self-contained in terms of public interaction and whilst there has been a decrease in labour on site due to social distancing (Approximately 4-6 employees on site per day) and delays in obtaining materials, work is progressing well and nearing completion.

Pontypridd YMCA (Contractors: Knox & Wells) - Total Project Cost - £4.4M

Construction started on the YMCA Building in February 2020 and has been primarily demolition works. Despite COVID 19 restrictions, the scheme has made significant progress, with the Contractor adopting working methods to comply with guidelines set by UK Government and the construction industry and in consultation with their CDM advisor. Highways have continued to work closely with the YMCA to ensure appropriate traffic management arrangements are in place. During COVID 19, on average there have been 15 operatives present on site each week, including sub-contractors. Of the supply chain to date, 4 of the main suppliers used have been from the RCT region, with local merchants and hire companies being utilised on a regular basis.

In addition to this, Knox & Wells also rent a local empty business premises for site office and welfare facilities. The Council continue to work proactively with the YMCA to monitor and assess the impact of COVID 19 restrictions on the work programme and cost plan, which at this stage is minimal.

Scheme outputs:

- Business Premises created or refurbished (sqm) - 1512
- Number of Jobs accommodated - 75
- Enterprises accommodated - 9
- Gross Jobs Created - 8

Bingo Hall, Pontypridd (Contractor: Various) - Total Project costs: £2.2M (acquisition and demolition only)

The Council purchased Pontypridd Bingo Hall in March 2020. Since then, external consultants have progressed all commissioned survey/feasibility work and RCT Officers have continued to prepare tender documentation throughout the period for its demolition. A Project Board has been established and continues to meet via Teams on a fortnightly basis. The implications of social distancing will need to be captured during the tender processes for the Asbestos removal and Demolition contracts.

Redevelopment of Guto Square, Mountain Ash (Contractors: Landmark Surveys Wales, Bradley Associates, Lanes for Drains) - Total Project Cost: currently being established

The project has continued and been unaffected by the Coronavirus Pandemic. Designs have been amended further to incorporate the additional area of land created through the planned acquisition of 39 Oxford St and the Workingman's Club Annex. The acquisition of both properties are progressing well and nearing completion. Remedial works to the Workingman's Club are being developed and Ground Investigation works are continuing, to support the overall scheme design. A range of consultants are being used to deliver this work, including Landmark Surveys Wales, Bradleys Associates and Lanes for Drains. A pre-demolition assessment has been requested for both 39 Oxford St and the Workingman's Club Annex, this is being undertaken by Bradleys Associates. A financial cost plan is currently being developed for the scheme. The scheme is scheduled for completion in November 2020.

Pontypridd Property Improvement Programme (WG TRI Programme) - Total Project Cost: - £300K

The Prosperity and Development service leads on the delivery and co-ordination of Welsh Governments Targeted Invest Programme for the ten South East Wales authorities with a total budget of £10M. For RCT,

Three schemes have commenced since the COVID 19 pandemic. The Council has worked proactively with grant applicants to ensure that approvals were put in place to allow projects to start on site as soon as possible. The Council also allowed a degree of flexibility regarding payment arrangements and worked with applicants to resolve COVID 19 related issues e.g. restrictions that affected the ability of contractors to start on site and delays to the supply chain. All three projects are now progressing well and include:

- **9a Gelliwastad Rd – Contractor: Revive Contract Services** are based in Pontypridd. They have 8 employees, of which 4 are employed on this project. There are 4 subcontractors and 5 suppliers, all within a 15 miles radius of Pontypridd.
- **5 – 6 Ceridwen Terrace – Contractor: GKR** are based in Bedwas. They have 93 employees of which 4 – 15 are employed on this project. There are 5 subcontractors and 5 suppliers, all within a 15 miles radius of Pontypridd.
- **Ceridwen Terrace – Contractor: CADWAL** are based in Church Village. They have 6 employees of which 5 are employed on this project. There are 7 subcontractors and 11 suppliers all within a 15 miles radius of Pontypridd.

Housing Grants

In addition to the Housing development programme, the service has implemented a number of new processes and procedures to support the delivery of its grant programme during the COVID 19 pandemic. The below list provides a summary of this work.

Disabled Facility Grants - £4 million budget for 2020/2021

The team has:

- Implemented an online process to continue to approve DFG's (whilst all staff are working agile), issuing work to framework contractors, in order to aid hospital discharge or to prevent a client from being admitted to hospital.
- Allowed for PPE costs to be included within the cost of works, supporting contractors on the framework to be able to carry out works safely and no financial cost to themselves.
- Deferred quarter 3 rebate costs to financially support the agency framework contractors during lockdown, as a number of these had to furlough their staff.
- Introduced an online process to agree unforeseen work on live ongoing Grants through the use of photographs and video links, allowing work to proceed.
- Introduced an online process of valuing and agreeing interim payments, up to the value of 90%, on live ongoing Grants through

photographs and video links allowing work to continue, financially support contractors.

- Implemented an online payment process ensuring all payments are made without delay for contractors.
- Received 31 new DFG referrals since lockdown, 6 of the referrals were identified as urgent by Occupational Therapists and therefore have been progressed and work completed by contractors.

Empty Home Grants - £4.5million budget for 2020/2021

The Prosperity and Development Service leads on the delivery of the Empty Homes grant for the Valley's Taskforce authorities. In 2019/20, the Council was able to claim £3.1M of funding to bring empty homes back into use across the borough. To support the delivery of the scheme and to prepare for the launch of phase 2 in 2020/21 the service has:

- Implemented an online process to continue to approve EHG's (whilst all staff are working agile).
- Introduced an online process to agree unforeseen work on live ongoing Grants through the use of photographs and video links, allowing work to proceed.
- Introduced an online process of valuing and agreeing interim payments, up to the value of 90%, on live ongoing Grants through photographs and video links allowing work to continue, financially support contractors.
- Implemented an online payment process ensuring all payments are made without delay for contractors.
- There are a number of open Empty Homes Grant applications which have been approved and where the client would be offering work to contractors.

Houses into Homes Loan

To support the delivery of the Houses into Homes Loan scheme we have:

- Continued to issue loan application packs to referrals and those who have directly requested them. Since lockdown 27 application packs have been distributed.
- Continued to receive loan applications. Since lockdown 8 applications have been received.
- Introduced remote assessment of loan applications by requesting photos and video footage of properties.
- Continued to approve applications for Houses into Homes loans. Since lockdown 7 loans have been approved.
- Continued to issue payments to applicants in order for them to carry out the works on the property through contractors.

- Introduced a new process for payment of fees to enable fees to be paid online without delay.

Mountain Ash Southern Cross Valley Link (Contractor Walters / John Sisk joint venture) - Total Project Cost - £20m

The site has continued to work through the pandemic although by the use of social distancing, etc this has affected outputs and the programme. Delivery of precast concrete units and attenuation tanks has been delayed due to sub contractors / manufacturers being closed which is on the critical path. The contractor is now looking to complete the works in September 2020, a delay of 8-12 weeks.

A4419 Dualling Coed (Hospital to Coed Ely)- Total Project Cost £16m

The project is in design stage with the preliminary design completed and detailed design ongoing. Despite the lockdown, the design has continued including meeting a critical stakeholder on site ie DCWW regarding interface with their plant. Land purchase negotiations are ongoing and preparations are currently underway for the Compulsory Purchase Order. Advance ecological mitigation works and sewer diversion works are planned in 2021 with main construction commencing in Spring 2022.

Cynon Gateway North (Aberdare Bypass Extension) - Total Project Cost £30m

The project is currently in preliminary design stage. Geotechnical site investigations were completed prior to lockdown. Ecological surveys have continued during the lockdown which feeds into the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Design work progresses coupled with Early Contractor Involvement which advises on the buildability, programme and cost of the project. A planning application for the project will be submitted late 2020.

Llanharan Bypass - Total Project Cost £16m

The project is currently in preliminary design stage. Geotechnical investigation was completed during the lockdown and ecological surveys continue which will form part of the EIA. Design work progresses with discussions ongoing with Network Rail regarding constructing a highway bridge over the main Cardiff to Swansea railway line. A planning application for the project will be submitted in late 2020.

Tips

The Highways, Engineering and Strategic Projects services have completed all the necessary inspections of Cat C and D tips and are inspecting the A and B tips. The service areas are working closely with Welsh Government and the Coal Authority over a Welsh strategy for database, monitoring, maintenance, etc.

Tylorstown Tip (Contractor : Walters for phase 1-3) - Total Project Cost £10-15m

Tylorstown Tip suffered a significant landslip as a result of Storm Dennis resulting in 60,000 Tonnes of material travelling down the mountainside and filling the river valley below adjacent to the Rhondda Fach leisure centre. The tip is currently in a stable condition. Phase 1 ie installation of temporary surface water drainage systems to remove flow of water from the tip to dry the materials / mountainside was completed by April 2020. Design and investigations are ongoing, utilising an experienced earthworks contractor for the construction of phase 2 and 3 ie the removal of the material from the river valley and the restoration of the river to its original level and course. Currently it is anticipated that these works will commence late June and be complete by end of October. Phase 4 which is the stabilisation of the upper tip area, is being designed and is anticipated for commence on site during Spring 2021.

Highways Investment Programme - Structures

The Highways Investment Programme has continued during the lockdown period with a number of projects on site, completed and in the design process. A number of these are highlighted below with the other projects included within the Appendix.

St Albans Bridge Replacement (Contractor Alun Griffiths Contractors Ltd (AGCL)) - Total Project Cost - £2.4m

The construction of the replacement bridge continues on site after an initial 3 week closure at the beginning of the lockdown period. Whilst there has been some issues with suppliers work has continued with the project scheduled to be complete on site in late Autumn 2020.

Castle Ifor Bridge Deck Replacement (Contractor AGCL) - Total Project Cost - £500k

The replacement bridge deck works commenced in May 2019 but due to flash flooding in late August 2019 the works, apart from removing the debris from the river, has been on hold due to constraints from Natural Resources Wales in respect of working in the river during the

winter. The works has now recommenced on site in May 2020 and is scheduled for completion in October 2020.

Highways Investment Programme – Highways

The resurfacing and reconstruction to the carriageways and footpaths has continued during lockdown, although the emphasis has been on undertaking works that are not in built up areas due to the large amount of residents' vehicles being left in the streets and issues with social distancing. However good progress has been made by the Council's contractors and Streetcare in undertaking works. A full list of works undertaken to date is provided in the Appendix and has included strategic roundabouts on the highway network as well as Stag Square, Treorchy.

Traffic Management and NRSWA Services

During the lockdown period the various statutory utility companies have been in constant liaison and dialogue about the undertaking of "difficult" repair works to their apparatus on strategic traffic sensitive routes. As a result of the low traffic numbers, the utility companies have been able to work at these various sensitive locations under the guidance and control of the Traffic and NRSWA teams.

The Traffic team has continued to deliver its capital programme of £160k during the lockdown period whilst also undertaking evaluations and costings to be supplied to Welsh Government in under two weeks for a bid of over £2m for highway modifications as a result of Covid19 and different modes of transport.

Storm Dennis – Structures

The Structures team has continued to deliver the following during the lockdown period as a result of Storm Dennis in mid February 2020:

- Scour assessments and surveys
- Bridge and retaining wall inspection and assessments
- Culvert surveys and assessments
- Removal of debris from rivers at bridge locations
- Localised repairs to structures
- Identification of repair works
- Commissioning of consultants for works

Some projects to note are:

- Berw Rd bridge – replacement
- Castle Inn bridge – replacement
- Campbell Terrace – unblocking of main culvert and repairs
- Ynysyngharad Park footbridge – specialist repairs

**Statutory Compliance in buildings (Contractors: Various)
Payments processed for payment - £1.8M (incl orders issued to
contractors prior to Covid-19 Pandemic)**

During the lockdown period, the majority of Council owned/occupied buildings were closed as most staff were advised to work from home. Corporate Maintenance staff worked in conjunction with all Service Groups and local contractors to ensure the buildings maintained compliance in accordance with statutory requirements. During the period, more than 750 orders were issued to local contractors which allowed contractors to continue to operate without having to furlough all their staff.

Essential maintenance continued along with essential inspection and servicing of plant/systems by appointed contractors. Service and inspection programmes were also undertaken to ensure compliance with Legionella and Asbestos legislation.

**Ferndale Community School – Pool Hall/Changing Room
Refurbishment (Contractor: A&N Lewis Ltd) - Project Cost - £1.2M**

A further phase of modernisation of the Ferndale Community School has been completed despite the contractor having to close the site due to the lack of its supply chain. The contractor returned to site in early May to complete the works by adopting new site operating procedures.

**Sobel Leisure Centre – Changing Room Refurbishment
(Contractor: A&N Lewis Ltd) - Project Cost – £278K**

The project start was initially delayed but the Council worked with the contractor to agree a new start date to allow them to introduce revised site operating procedures to carry out the works safely. The project will now complete by the end of July.

**Ynysangharad Memorial Park – Repairs following flood damage
(Contractors: Various) - Project Cost – circa £1M**

Extensive damage to numerous buildings due to the unprecedented flooding as a result of storm Dennis. The Council has continued to work with our insurers and their appointed assessors to maintain progress with repairs/reinstatement.

Tenders were produced and local contractors appointed to carry out priority works to the Rangers Hut, Golf Hut and Public Toilets which should all be complete by end of June in readiness for the summer holidays. Additional tenders have been worked on and local contractors will soon be invited to tender for the works to repair/reinstate the Café, Bowls Pavilion, Lido Buildings and Lido pools.

Ty Glyntaf Depot (Contractor – Brecongate Building Solutions) - Project Cost: £97K

This key site also suffered from extensive flood damage as a result of storm Dennis. Despite there being initial issues with supply of materials, the contractor has continued to work throughout the period whilst maintaining a safe 2M physical distance to allow the site to be reinstated allowing front line services to be delivered across the communities.

Tonyrefail Community School (Contractor: Morgan Sindall) - Total Project Cost - £33.6M (Contract Sum)

The contractor was well prepared and responded well to the lockdown to mitigate a number of perceived risks in the very early stages of the pandemic. There have been challenges with supply chains however the contractor continued to source materials locally and from established national companies based in the area. Local and South Wales based subcontractors continue to be employed averaging **23** operatives on site with no loss in productivity even with the social distancing rules in place.

Treorchy Comprehensive School (Contractor: Kier Construction) - Total Project Cost - £12.8M (Contract Sum)

The contractor experienced a significant drop in labour supply in the first week of the lockdown. However, a skeleton staff maintained the operation and by week three, with the introduction of new site operating procedures, the labour supply increased to an average of **18** operatives on site. Materials and labour has been sourced locally where possible and progress on the project continued to achieve completion by the beginning of June.

Hirwaun Primary (Contractor: Morgan Sindall) - Total Project Cost - £8.8M (Contract Sum)

The contractor was well prepared and responded well to the lockdown to mitigate a number of perceived risks in the very early stages of the pandemic. There have been numerous challenges with supply chains however the contractor continued to source materials locally from established national companies together with assistance from a local builders merchants based in Hirwaun. Labour supplies in the first three weeks of the lockdown averaged between 8 to 10 operatives daily however this has now significantly increased and in the last few weeks to an average of **26** operatives which is slightly ahead than was anticipated. Although some specialist supplies such as glazing remain challenging the project remains on programme and continues to be closely monitored by the Council.

Garth Olwg Campus (Contractor: Vinci UK Ltd) - Total Project Cost - £4.3M

The main contractor had procured large amounts of material in order to commence major roof works at the site immediately before the lockdown. With the school closing to pupils the project team and the contractor took advantage and mobilised the local supply chain to provide ample labour supply to the site working with new site operating procedures which has resulted in works rapidly advancing ahead of the current programme. The Council, has continued regular inspections of the site to allow the contractor to take advantage of the empty buildings currently on Campus.

Strategic Housing and Investment

To support the development of housing investment the Prosperity and Development Service has continued to liaise with RSL partners on new potential schemes, discuss scheme designs with private developers and architects, and support with the delivery of current schemes within the Social Housing Grant programme. The below list provides a summary of some of the **16** scheme that have been supported during the COV19 pandemic. The schemes are to be delivered over the next three years, delivering **191** units in total, with a total investment of **£20M**.

Hafod Housing

Lanelay Road, Talbot Green has experienced some delays, overall delays approximately 6 weeks however the site is now fully operational, with contractors on site and following social distancing guidelines.

Aberdare Girls School – scheme has remained operational throughout the pandemic with the contractors remaining on site, although progress was been hampered by social distancing guidelines and a shortage of some materials. Project was due to be handed over in April 2020, this has now been complete and properties will be let in June 2020.

Trivallis

Appletree Avenue, Dinas – scheme was delayed at the beginning of April but works are due to recommence on the 8th June. This delay was due to a lack of availability of sub-contractors, namely external ground workers required to construct roads and retaining walls.

Forge Lane, Pentre – was delayed as of 26th March but reopened on 4th May, where contractors are back on site following social distancing guidelines.

Black Lion, Aberdare – the scheme was delayed for a week as increased Health and Safety measures were put in place in line with Covid-19 guidelines. Works are continuing, contractors are on site following social distancing guidelines and at present there have not been any reported delays.

Pentre Hotel, Pentre – scheme was due to commence at the end of March but due to Covid-19 the main contractor paused operations. With support from the Council the development is due to recommence 15th June.

Crown Avenue, Ynyswen – works are continuing well and have not been stopped, contractors have remained on site following social distancing guidelines.

Cynon Taf Housing

Oxford Building, Mountain Ash – Contractor started onsite in May with support and advice from the RSL and Council. Work is progressing well with the scheme due to be completed by May 21.

PROGRESS – Strategic Projects

Strategic Investments and Projects; Project Management and Design Team

The project management team has continued to work on a variety projects during lockdown. There has been some challenges managing contracts and contractors locking down sites and then re-opening together with supply chain issues. The Team has continued to progress a significant Capital programme both funded from within Strategic Projects and working for other service areas, such as Prosperity and Development. Some of which have been indicated in the foregoing sections. A summary of all the current projects being progressed during lockdown is in Appendix A

Flood Risk Management Team

The Flood Risk Management team has continued to work on both projects and statutory duties. With the added challenge of dealing with the flood risk strategic planning, project development and damage repairs after Storm Dennis. The volume of priority and public correspondence remains high, and particularly difficult to deal with under lockdown conditions. A summary of all the current projects being progressed during lockdown is in Appendix B

The SuDs Approval Body (SAB) has continued to function at full efficiency other than face to face meeting. As a new service it has been set up to be fully digital and this has proved beneficial during lockdown. Site Inspections have only been carried out where absolutely necessary but with developers returning to site demand is growing.

The lead Local Flood Authority Team (LLFA) is liaising with WG and preparing strategic overviews and forward plans for the local Strategy review which after Storm Dennis, will present a timely opportunity. They are also progressing 28nr Flood Investigation Reports into the Storm Dennis Flooding and it is envisaged will be required to write 18 regulatory reports under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 after their completion. This will include main river flooding so are in contact with NRW for their flooding Investigation Reports.

The 2 major projects which were being developed for construction in 2020/21 prior to Storm Dennis have continued to be progressed through Storm Dennis and Lockdown.

Park Lane Flood Alleviation Scheme - Project Value: £500k

The scheme is currently out to tender and will alleviate flooding to both the Park Lane School and properties in the local area.

The project will use sustainable drainage techniques and removal of culverted watercourses to alleviate the risks and reduce the cost of routine inspection and maintenance.

The water will be throttled to create a basin/flood plain therefore reducing the peak flows downstream through Aberdare by as much as 40 – 50%. This water will be used to create a wetland habitat with linkage the Aberdare Park. Envisaged commencement August 2020.

Scheme Outputs:-

- 30 Properties benefiting from increased standard of protection
- Reduced flood risk to Park Lane School.
- Removal of high risk and maintenance culverts.
- Creation of wetland habitat.
- Walking routes/links to Aberdare park.

Cwmbach – phase 2 (Canal Road) Flood Alleviation Scheme - Project Value: £450k

The scheme is currently nearing completion of detailed design and will alleviate flooding to both the commercial premises and properties In the local area.

The project will use sustainable drainage techniques and overland flow routing into an overflow system. Envisaged Commencement September 2020.

Scheme Outputs:-

- 69 Properties benefiting from increased standard of protection
- Creation of overland flow interceptors.
- Overflow pipeline from the overflow interceptors

Maesyfynnon Extra Care Total Project Cost - £9.15 M, Council Contribution £1.4 M

Linc Cymru Housing continued to work on the construction of the Maesyfynnon Extra Care scheme despite the pandemic following Government guidelines for safe working. The 40 bedroom Extra Care Scheme was completed and handed over to the Council for occupation on May 1st 2020. Adult Services is currently nominating tenants to take up apartments and the allocation and moving in process is currently underway.

Pontypridd Extra Care (Former Magistrates Court) – Total Project Cost - £12.73m, Council Contribution £4.143 M

Construction work commenced on the project in July 2019, with the demolition of the former Pontypridd Magistrates Court, with the projected completion in June 2021. The Extra Care facility will offer 60 Beds along with a day care facility for other social care clients. Works have progressed diligently throughout the pandemic and the project is progressing with the concrete section of the substructure frame completed and work progressing on the lightweight steel framework for the above ground floors.

Bryn Pica Eco Park – Estimated Total Project Cost -£12.73m, Council Contribution £4.143 M

Initial clearance and enabling works undergoing and design work progressing through RIBA development stages.

Scheme outputs:

- Development of 4ha of land at Amgen Cymru Site
- Construction of 4 no industrial buildings arranged in 2 number buildings in 2 number pairs with integral office space and welfare.
- Premises created or refurbished- 6,000 square-metres
- Car parking for © 140 vehicles including 14 number EV charging points.
- Internal access roads.
- Biomass heat exchange facility

Design Works have progressed diligently throughout the pandemic and the completion of the RIBA Stage 2 report was presented in May and design progression is continuing with an expected commencement of an earthworks package in November 2020.

Bryn Pica HV Installation – Estimated Total Project Cost -£.35M

Tender package nearing completion.

Scheme outputs:

- Provide High Voltage electrical power and infrastructure to service new MRF facility.
- Containment works for future Eco Park project

Design Works have progressed diligently throughout the pandemic and pre-qualification of tendering contractors compete. Tender package to be issued w/e 12/06/2020 and projected site commencement August 2020 subject to Western Power agreement.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Officer to contact: