



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

#### **COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (Quarter 3)**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)**

**AUTHOR: Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance and Improvement Services (01443) 680609**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and operational perspective, based on the first nine months of this financial year (to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020).

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the continued unprecedented circumstances Council Services are operating within as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

##### **Revenue**

- 2.2 Note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary) including the on-going Welsh Government Covid-19 funding to support service delivery.

##### **Capital**

- 2.3 Note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary).
- 2.4 Note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary).

## **Corporate Plan Priorities**

- 2.5 Note the Quarter 3 progress updates for the Council's agreed Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary).
- 2.6 Note the progress update to enhance the Council's short term and long term response to extreme weather events (Section 6 of the Executive Summary).

## **3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To agree the Council's financial and operational performance position as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 to enable elected Members and other stakeholders to scrutinise the performance of the Council.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 This report provides Members with the third update of the Council's financial and operational performance position for the financial year ending the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
- 4.2 The aim of the report is to bring together the Council's performance into an Executive Summary and make available more detailed information to the reader through electronic links. Information contained in the Executive Summary includes financial data and progress against our Corporate Plan priorities, and exceptions are highlighted within the detailed sections to ensure that elected Members and other readers are able to quickly identify the key issues. The report also sets out a position statement of progress in implementing the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to enhance the Council's short term and long term response to extreme weather events.
- 4.3 As Members will be aware from the first and second quarter Performance Reports for 2020/21, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented and widespread challenges in the delivery of Council Services alongside significant additional cost and income losses that have, to date, been funded by Welsh Government. The third quarter Performance Report continues to be set within this context and further information in this regard is included within the Executive Summary.

## **5.0 QUARTER 3 REPORT**

- 5.1 The Quarter 3 report is attached and comprises:
- **Executive Summary** – setting out, at a glance, the overall performance of the Council as at Quarter 3 (i.e. 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020);

- **Revenue Monitoring** – sections 2a – e setting out the detailed projected financial spend against budget across our Revenue Budget with exceptions highlighted;
- **Capital Monitoring** – sections 3a – e setting out capital spend across our Capital Programme with exceptions highlighted and section 3f covering Prudential Indicators;
- **Organisational Health** – includes information on turnover, sickness absence, organisational health related investment areas and Council strategic risks;
- **Corporate Plan Priorities** – three action plans (Sections 5a – c) setting out progress updates for the priorities of People, Places and Prosperity; and
- **Enhancing the Council's response to extreme weather events** - Section 6 setting out progress made to implement the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 18th December 2020.

## **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council's Performance Report provides an update on financial and operational performance for the first nine months of 2020/21; as a result, no Equality Impact Assessment is deemed required for the purposes of this report.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Following consideration by Cabinet, this Report will be presented to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee for review, challenge and where deemed required, the scrutiny of specific areas in more detail.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

## **10.0 LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

10.1 The Corporate Plan progress updates included within this report align with the priorities as set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 "Making a Difference". With regard to the [Well-being of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) Act 2015](#), at the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 Council meeting, it was agreed that the Corporate Plan priorities would also serve as its Well-being Objectives in line with the Act.

## **11.0 CONCLUSION**

11.1 This report sets out the financial and operational performance of the Council as at Quarter 3 2020/21, that is, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

11.2 The third quarter revenue budget position is projecting a £1.049M overspend, this representing an improved picture compared to quarters 1 and 2 and reflects the continuation of key pressures primarily within Children's and Adult Services. The position is also set in the unprecedented context of Covid-19 and takes into account additional Welsh Government funding received for the first nine months of the year, and that forecasted to be received for the remainder of the year, in respect of additional expenditure incurred and income loss as a result of the pandemic. As part of the Council's robust service and financial management arrangements, work is continuing across all services to contribute to bringing the financial position closer in line with budget; refresh financial forecasts for the full year as updated information becomes available; and engagement with Welsh Government to highlight the importance of providing additional funding to meet on-going permanent cost pressures.

11.3 Capital investment as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 is £57.483M, with projects across the programme continuing to progress during Quarter 3, taking account of Covid-19 restrictions and safety requirements.

11.4 Good progress has been made across the Council's three Corporate Plan priorities of People, Places and Prosperity during quarter 3, with a continued focus on providing essential support to residents and businesses to help counter the significant impact Covid-19 is having on local communities and, alongside this, progressing the delivery of major projects.

11.5 The first progress update on the delivery of recommendations to enhance the Council's response to extreme weather events shows a positive position, with key actions being taken forward that provide a clear direction for the future.

### **Other Information:-**

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

**Contact Officer: Paul Griffiths**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (Quarter 3)**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND DIGITAL SERVICES IN  
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER (CLLR NORRIS)**

**Item: 15**

**Background Papers**

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths

**COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT  
QUARTER 3 2020/21  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Contents**

**Section 1 – INTRODUCTION**

**Section 2 – REVENUE BUDGET**

**Revenue Budget Performance** – more detailed breakdowns are included in the following sections:

- 2a Education and Inclusion Services;
- 2b Community and Children’s Services;
- 2c Chief Executive;
- 2d Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services; and
- 2e Authority Wide Budgets.

**Earmark reserve update** – Section 2f provides a breakdown of expenditure against service areas.

**Section 3 – CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

**Capital programme budget** – more detailed breakdowns are included in the following sections:

- 3a Chief Executive;
- 3b Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services;
- 3c Education and Inclusion Services;
- 3d Community and Children’s Services; and
- 3e Capital Programme Funding.

**Prudential Indicators** – a detailed breakdown is included in Section 3f.

**Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH**

- Turnover;
- Sickness Absence;
- Organisation Health related investment areas; and
- Council Strategic Risks.

**Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN**

**Corporate Plan priority progress updates** – Quarter 3 position statements are included within the following sections:

- 5a – People;
- 5b – Places; and
- 5c – Prosperity.

**Section 6 – ENHANCING THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS**

**Progress update on the implementation of recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to enhance the Council’s response to extreme weather events.**

## **Section 1 – INTRODUCTION**

The Quarter 1 and 2 Performance Reports set out the context Council services were operating within further to the introduction of national lockdown measures in March 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Executive Summary, bringing together and summarising the Council's financial and operational performance position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, continues to be set within the context of Council service delivery operating within a very challenging and unprecedented environment as a result of the on-going impact of Covid-19. This has required the Council, like all local authorities in Wales, to continue to adapt and change the way it provides services, many in partnership with others, to help meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Where appropriate, service specific information has been included within this Executive Summary to provide the reader with a full as picture as possible in this regard. In addition, throughout the Executive Summary electronic links have been included that enable the reader to access more detailed information, as required.

## **Section 2 – REVENUE BUDGET**

### **Revenue Budget Performance**

Service Area	2020/21 – as at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020 (Quarter 3)		
	Full Year Budget £M	Projected Expenditure as at Quarter 3 £M	Variance Over / (Under) £M
<a href="#">Education &amp; Inclusion Services (2a)</a>	191.845	191.676	(0.169)
<a href="#">Community &amp; Children's Services (2b)</a>	159.852	160.981	1.129
<a href="#">Chief Executive (2c)</a>	30.644	30.208	(0.436)
<a href="#">Prosperity, Development &amp; Frontline Services (2d)</a>	55.167	55.753	0.586
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>437.508</b>	<b>438.618</b>	<b>1.110</b>
<a href="#">Authority Wide Budgets (2e)</a>	71.239	71.178	(0.061)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>508.747</b>	<b>509.796</b>	<b>1.049</b>

## Welsh Government Covid-19 funding incorporated within the full year projected position at Quarter 3

The full year revenue budget variance, projected as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, is a £1.049M overspend. This forecasted position assumes that additional costs and income losses will be offset by additional funding being made available by Welsh Government to all local authorities in Wales. Specific financial assistance is being provided to local authorities for additional expenditure incurred as a result of Covid-19 (for example, additional costs incurred in respect of housing / homelessness, free school meal payments, Adult Social Services, staff cover due to absence / shielding and increased demand for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme) and also income loss where there has been a need to temporarily suspend or reduce service provision (for example, Leisure Centres and the provision of school meals).

The Table below sets out the total forecasted full-year additional costs and income losses assumed to be recoverable.

### Full Year Projection of Additional Costs and Income Losses Associated with Covid 19 and Assumed to be Fully Funded by Welsh Government

Service Area	Actual Additional Costs / Income Loss Recovered (Quarters 1 - 3)	Projected Additional Costs / Income Losses (Quarter 4)	Total Full Year Additional Costs / Income Losses (Actual and Projected)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education & Inclusion Services	-9,699	-2,754	-12,453
Community & Children's Services	-15,827	-5,671	-21,498
Chief Executive	-1,840	-685	-2,525
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	-5,124	-566	-5,690
Authority Wide	-3,497	-346	-3,843
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-35,987</b>	<b>-10,022</b>	<b>-46,009</b>

\* Excludes additional costs incurred / projected in respect of Test, Trace and Protect, the funding for which is being made available by Welsh Government.

The forecasted costs and income losses are subject to ongoing review in light of national updates on restrictions and the associated impact on Council Services.

## Revenue budget variances at Quarter 3

### 1. Community and Children's Services

#### ADULT SERVICES

- Long Term Care & Support (£0.593M overspend);
- Commissioned Services (£0.634M overspend);
- Provider Services (£0.391M overspend); and
- Short Term Intervention Services (£0.840M underspend).

#### CHILDREN SERVICES

- Safeguarding & Support (including Children Looked After) (£2.497M overspend);
- Early Intervention (£0.531M underspend);
- Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (£0.214M underspend); and
- Intensive Intervention (£0.946M underspend).

#### TRANSFORMATION

- Group & Transformation Management (£0.057M overspend); and
- Service Improvement (£0.084M underspend).

#### PUBLIC HEALTH AND PROTECTION

- Community Services (£0.247M underspend); and
- Leisure, Parks & Countryside and Community Facilities (£0.104M underspend).

### 2. Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services

#### FRONTLINE SERVICES

- Transportation (£0.150M underspend);
- Facilities Cleaning (£0.093M underspend);
- Waste Services (£0.689M overspend);
- Fleet Management (£0.109M underspend); and
- Group Directorate (£0.053M overspend).

### 3. Chief Executive

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- Human Resources (£0.125M underspend);
- Legal Services (£0.095M underspend);
- Finance & Digital Services (£0.073M underspend); and
- Corporate Estates (£0.097M underspend).

### 4. Authority Wide Budgets

- Capital Financing (£0.250M underspend); and
- Miscellaneous (£0.193M overspend).

## Earmark Reserve Update

- A breakdown of committed expenditure against approved earmark reserves for Service Areas can be viewed at Section 2f by clicking [here](#).

### **Section 3 – CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Council and its contractors / suppliers have continued to build on the work undertaken in quarters 1 and 2 to ensure safe working arrangements and, in doing so, enabled the on-going delivery of capital programme projects during quarter 3.

#### **Capital Programme Budget**

Service Area	2020/21 - as at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020	
	Capital Budget £M	Actual Expenditure £M
<a href="#">Chief Executive (3a)</a>	3.136	1.026
<a href="#">Prosperity, Development &amp; Frontline Services (3b)</a>	76.445	41.651
<a href="#">Education &amp; Inclusion Services (3c)</a>	20.992	12.975
<a href="#">Community &amp; Children's Services (3d)</a>	7.579	1.831
<b>Total</b>	<b>108.152</b>	<b>57.483</b>

#### **Key Capital Variances at Quarter 3**

- Re-profiling of a number of projects to reflect changes in the total cost of schemes and revised delivery timescales.
- Grant approvals introduced into the Capital Programme: Welsh Government (WG) Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways Capital Grant (£0.589M); WG Valleys Taskforce RCT+ Empty Homes Grant (£2.000M); WG Valleys Taskforce Regional (£0.299M); WG Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant (£0.609M); WG 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools (£2.399M); All Wales Play Opportunity Grant (£0.248M); Integrated Care Fund (£0.339M); and WG Circular Economy (£1.526M).

For information on how the Capital Programme is funded see section 3e by clicking [here](#).

#### **Prudential Indicators**

For a detailed breakdown of Prudential Indicators, see section 3f by clicking [here](#).

## Section 4 – ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

- Turnover

Service Area	2020/21		2019/20		2019/20	
	As at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020		As at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2019		As at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020	
	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover	Staff Nos.	% Turnover
<b>Turnover – Council Wide</b>	<b>10,881</b>	<b>5.52</b>	<b>10,555</b>	<b>8.32</b>	<b>10,670</b>	<b>9.85</b>
Community & Children’s Services	2,974	5.01	2,858	6.58	2,883	8.50
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	930	4.84	952	5.36	964	8.40
Education & Inclusion Services	1,257	5.57	1,263	7.13	1,265	8.14
<u>Schools</u>	<u>4,893</u>	<u>6.27</u>	<u>4,785</u>	<u>10.41</u>	<u>4,855</u>	<u>11.64</u>
Primary	3,058	6.05	3,026	8.79	3,066	9.95
Secondary	1,835	6.65	1,759	13.19	1,789	14.53
Chief Executive’s Division	827	3.63	697	7.32	703	8.11

- Sickness Absence

With specific regard to Covid-19 and the recording of sickness absence, where staff have been unavailable for work due to self-isolating; being part of the shielded list; have underlying conditions that places an individual at risk, such as being pregnant; or lives in the same household as someone that needs to be shielded, these occurrences have not been categorised as ‘sickness absence’ and as such are excluded from the analysis below.

Service Area	2020/21		2019/20	
	As at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020		As at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2019	
	%		%	
<b>% days lost to sickness absence – Council Wide</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>4.16</b>	
Community & Children’s Services	5.96	5.53	5.59	
Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services	5.03	4.44	4.74	
Education & Inclusion Services	3.00	3.49	3.70	
<u>Schools</u>	<u>2.78</u>	<u>3.35</u>	<u>3.56</u>	
Primary	3.07	3.57	3.79	
Secondary	2.31	2.97	3.16	
Chief Executive’s Division	2.45	2.35	2.39	

For a more detailed breakdown of Quarter 3 2020/21 sickness absence information, [click here](#).

## **Organisation Health related investment areas**

There will be a continued focus on investing in organisational health related areas, for example, IT infrastructure and invest to save energy efficiency schemes, with projects being delivered operationally within services across the Council.

- **Council Strategic Risks**

The Council's Quarter 3 Strategic Risk Register can be viewed by clicking [here](#), with specific updates included setting out the implications to date of Covid-19 and the work being undertaken / planned to mitigate the impact as much as possible.

As part of the update process, it has not been deemed necessary to revise Strategic Risk Register risk ratings further to the review undertaken during quarter 1. This position will however be kept under on-going review and, where revisions are considered necessary, these will be included in future Strategic Risk Register updates.

## **Section 5 – CORPORATE PLAN**

Corporate Plan priority action plans for 2020/21 were reported to and approved by full Council on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 covering the three priorities of People, Places and Prosperity. A summary of the progress made across the three priorities as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 is set out in Sections 5a – c and electronic links have been included to each approved action plan, providing more detailed information on progress.

### **Corporate Plan Priority Progress Update**

- **PEOPLE** (Section 5a)

#### **PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful**

##### **Summary of progress to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

Assessments continue to take a person-centred approach as far as practicable, although our focus will be on those with greatest need. Under Alert Level 4 restrictions, there has been a need to return to doing more work over the phone and, for a lot of people, we can do everything we need to do in this way. However, as the pandemic continues, we experience growing pressures as more people need care and support, and workloads across Adult Services remain high and caseloads become increasingly more complex. There remains a waiting list of cases to be allocated across Care and Support and in the ACE (Occupational Therapy) Team. Additional external support continues to be commissioned to address increased levels of assessment and review workloads across Care and Support.

We continue to prioritise hospital discharges and the period since the beginning of December 2020 has continued to be demanding, although the position is now starting to stabilise. Care homes are supporting the admission of patients from hospital, wherever possible and if they can provide the appropriate care safely; however, on-going Covid-19 outbreaks and the subsequent Public Health Wales (PHW) Covid free restrictions placed on admissions is limiting care home placements (in particular, nursing and dementia) resulting in some discharges taking longer to complete. From 26th October 2020 to 7th January 2021, Adult Services supported 191 in-patient discharges and 155 Stay Well @ Home discharges. The success of this response is testament to the strength of the established partnership with CTMUHB and our providers.

The Cwrt yr Orsaf development in Pontypridd continues to make progress towards completion in Summer 2021, despite the significant challenges faced by Contractors due to Covid-19. Proposals to create a new 60-unit extra care housing scheme in Porth in line with the Council's strategy to modernise options for older people and deliver extra care housing as part of the redevelopment of the Dan y Mynydd Care Home were agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3rd December 2020.

We continue to work in partnership with housing providers to deliver modern additional supported housing accommodation for vulnerable people. The Crown Avenue (Treorchy) refurbishment was completed in early October 2020 and people will move in from January 2021, a slight delay to ensure the installation of telecare equipment at the scheme. Construction of supported housing accommodation at Oxford Street (Mountain Ash) has also made good progress and is due to be completed in spring 2021. Assessments of new tenants will start in the new year.

The Council along with its regional Health and local authority partners have recently started to work with our commissioned care providers to plan and support the roll out of asymptomatic lateral flow testing to frontline social care staff, along with the roll out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

## **PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful**

The majority of care homes have been subject to PHW Covid free restrictions since 20th December 2020, resulting in limited opportunity to provide outdoors visits since the start of the new Alert Level 4 restrictions. However, where possible, some outdoor “window visits” have taken place in line with risk assessments and PHW and Welsh Government guidance. The Council and care home providers recognise the importance of visiting to residents and their families, and we will continue to review risk assessments and arrangements for visiting in light of the current and any new guidance. In the interim, the Council and care home providers support opportunities, where possible, with virtual visits and calls through various forms of technology to ensure residents remain connected with family members.

Whilst the majority of our day and respite services remain temporarily closed, we have continued to support our most vulnerable people, assessed as critical due to their own or carer’s needs, in their own homes and in the community.

We restarted full operation of the Stay Well@Home 2 service (7 days a week, including out of hours) from 6th July 2020 and this was extended to Merthyr Tydfil from 20th July 2020. Adult Services and our partners are delivering winter plans, with the occurrence of Covid-19 representing an unprecedented position for health and social - Stay Well @Home 2 will be key to reducing unnecessary attendance to hospital, in particular by the Welsh Ambulance Service, by supporting people to remain safely at home.

We reinstated our seven Community Resilience Centres following the introduction of local and national restrictions. From 1st April 2020 to 31st December 2020, a total of 3,393 individual residents have been supported, for example, with shopping, picking up prescriptions, friendly phone calls, dog walking, employment and benefits advice etc.

Performance in tracing cases and their contacts remains very high, this being in the context of a significant surge in cases in December 2020. Staffing capacity for the service has been increased, with staffing resources secured from all three Local Authorities in December to support the change in demand; the Service coped well during this period and ensured appropriate training and completion of workloads. On-going focus is being afforded to ensuring the quality of data within the CRM system and processes are being developed for different settings e.g. care homes and schools, to assist the staff in decision making on any action required.

The Welsh Government funded Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) has been delivered by the Childcare Team within Education and Inclusion Services. Places were allocated based on the submission of a successful application and children were placed with childcare settings that had remained open. The scheme ran from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020, with over 750 children offered placements and using 102 childcare providers. Flying Start childcare resumed in September 2020 and has remained fully operational since. Settings are managing staffing challenges well with minimal impact on availability of provision

We continue to encourage residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing. We introduced online exercise classes via our Leisure For Life App in March 2020 and these continue to be made available. We also introduced some open-air classes, utilising our parks and 3G pitches, to allow customers to exercise in a safe manner outdoors in line with social distancing requirements. Our Sports Development Team also delivered safe, socially distanced exercise opportunities in the summer HUB schools. As at 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020, gym facilities re-opened in line with social distancing and public health guidelines. This was followed by the introduction of indoor fitness classes on 17<sup>th</sup> August and swimming pools from 24<sup>th</sup> August. However, during the firebreak lockdown in October and following the implementation of the Alert Level 4 restrictions on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020, gyms were closed

## **PEOPLE – Are independent, healthy and successful**

and indoor and outdoor classes were cancelled in line with WG restrictions on meeting people outside of your household. In addition, support is also being provided to sports clubs and organisations to access the Sport Wales Be Active Fund and all messages are in line with Welsh Government restrictions e.g. exercising alone or with your household during Level 4 restrictions.

A range of weekly wellbeing classes are provided online as part of our Adult Education programme, including Aromatherapy, Singing for wellbeing and lung health, All About Me and Crafts for Wellbeing. A variety of wellbeing self-help videos have also been provided through our social media platforms, including support for individuals with anxiety. Learners on our courses have also received wellbeing calls from course tutors. An online programme of arts activity and performances has been curated and is available through the theatres' Facebook pages and RCT Theatres' YouTube page

Children's Services continues to work to Welsh Government statutory guidance, subject to risk assessment and physical distancing requirements, adapting methods of service delivery as necessary. This guidance was revised in December 2020 to take account of the Alert Level 4 national coronavirus restrictions. Consequently, Children's Services are now once again focusing activity on the four critical areas of work previously identified: access to services and family support, safeguarding duties, children looked after and youth offending. Priority is being given to safely visiting and hearing the voices of children most at risk (children on the child protection register) and those looked after where there is potential placement breakdown or those where input is critical to maintain them at home. We continue to look after children in both residential and foster care, prioritising children and carers most in need of support. We have commissioned UKICS to increase social work capacity in our Intensive Intervention Services. Child Protection Conferences and Children Looked After reviews are now taking place virtually attended by partners and family members where possible.

Youth Engagement & Participation Service (YEPS) staff remain in secondary schools and the support for learners pathway is still in place to ensure those young people who are struggling to return to school have the support to do/ re-engage with school and learning. Proactive street based youth work provision was established in October, with all YEPS staff re-directed to providing information, advice, guidance and emotional support to young people in communities 5 nights a week. In the 8 weeks between October and the end of December (excluding the 2 week fire-break period) 2,699 contacts were made with young people across the County Borough. The Virtual Youth Offer remains available including virtual youth clubs, live Q&A sessions and live chat sessions involving BAROD and Sexual Health Nurses from the local health board.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

## Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 3

<b>Progress in our Investment Priorities – PEOPLE</b>		
<b>Investment Area</b>	<b>Investment Value<sup>1</sup> £M</b>	<b>Quarter 3 Update</b>
Leisure Centre Changing Rooms	0.088	This investment funding relates to works at Sobell Leisure Centre for changing room refurbishment and was completed in August 2020.
Extracare Housing	6.974	Works at the former Maesyffynnon Home for the Elderly site were completed in early 2020 and the first residents moved into the new facility in May 2020. Works commenced at the Pontypridd site in July 2019 and is progressing well, and are due to complete in 2021. Proposals for the extracare housing scheme in Porth were agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2020 and consideration of development proposals for Treorchy and Mountain Ash schemes are on-going.
Tackling Poverty Fund	0.300	This investment funding is to help address areas where there are high levels of poverty (including fuel poverty) to increase the disposable income of households, for example, by supporting households to reduce energy bills, helping to overcome barriers to find employment.
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.362</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.

o **PLACES** (Section 5b)

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

**Summary of progress to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

Street cleaning and waste services continue with normal working and this has included grass cutting and fly-tipping activities with Covid-19 safety measures incorporated within operational practices. The Enforcement Team continue to provide additional Covid-19 related support e.g. marshalling at Covid-19 test centres and supporting Public Health with Covid-19 compliance measures and enforcement. Community Recycling Centres continued to operate within required guidelines. Over the Christmas/New Year period, recycling rates significantly increased to 69.08% (67.09% last year) with additional resources deployed to support recycling performance, for example, Cleansing & Parks teams undertaking Christmas tree collections.

The Highways Improvement Programme for 2020/21 continued as planned during quarter 3. Completed projects include St Albans bridge replacement, Rhydyfelin culverts refurbishment and Gwawr Street retaining wall. Work continues on repairs as a result of Storm Dennis with good progress made on Tylorstown Tip and Ynysangharad Park footbridge.

Following the return to school in September, our Transportation Service has been managing the safe delivery of the home to school transport provision within required Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidelines.

With regard to air quality monitoring, provisional data indicates a positive decrease in nitrogen dioxide levels particularly in urban areas. It should be noted that it could be some time before the immediate and longer term impacts of Covid-19 travel restrictions are fully understood.

Substance Misuse service users continue to be supported by telephone, virtual and face to face meetings where appropriate. Recovery and Relapse Prevention Groups are facilitated via the Zoom platform and the Barod website now offers a live chat facility to encourage engagement particularly for those who are not yet accessing services. Offices continue to remain open to provide advice, support and naloxone alongside sterile needle exchange equipment.

We continue to support the Syrian Resettlement Programme arranging face to face support where it is required by families. [Hate Crime Awareness week](#) took place in October, via online videos and messaging and face to face engagement. We continue to work closely with the Police to address community tensions and Community Cohesion meetings are undertaken virtually.

During the quarter, a rise in realistic looking media and internet scams has resulted in closer partnership working with the National Trading Standards Team and North Yorkshire Trading Standards to take down media accounts and websites from which such scams were originating. To support residents, we have also increased scam messaging warnings through social media. New partnership working with the Information Commissioner's Officers (ICO) has commenced and data from Truecall Units is now feeding into a multi-local authority programme managed by Carmarthenshire Trading Standards to further improve the prioritisation of support provided to Truecall customers who are subject to scam callers.

Doorstep crime and rogue trader activity is prevalent with case levels being similar to those being reported across the region. We continue to work alongside South Wales Police to tackle this key area and ensure our residents are protected.

The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team have continued to work throughout the pandemic, contacting perpetrators remotely whenever possible. Victims of ASB have been supported and

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

those at high-risk provided with face to face support as required; however, due to on-going restrictions as a result of the pandemic, the main line of communication is by telephone. Our ASB officers have also been involved in multi-agency engagement operations targeted at ASB hotspot areas.

Prior to the December lockdown, we started the process of more engagement work in Pontypridd Town Centre and assisted in developing a Town Centre Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. This will be run by the businesses with support from the Council and the Police.

We continue to invest in our green spaces and increase biodiversity. During November and December, 300 trees were planted in various parks and open spaces, and improvement works continued across our parks and play areas, with the completion date for some projects being re-scheduled for 2021/22 to take account of the on-going impact of the pandemic. We will also recommence our Climate Change Steering Group in the coming months.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

## Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 3

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES		
Investment Area	Investment Value <sup>2</sup> £M	Quarter 3 Update
Highways Infrastructure Repairs	8.624	The additional resources are being used in conjunction with existing resources to deliver a programme of highways infrastructure repairs between 2020/21 and 2022/23.
Play Areas	0.675	There are 28 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2020/21. As at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020, 12 had been completed, 2 were under construction, 9 had been designed, costed and scheduled and 5 are to be designed. It is anticipated that 7 of the schemes will be carried forward and completed in 2021/22 due to the need to prioritisation team resources and contractor restrictions/delays.
Skate Parks/Multi Use Games Areas	0.184	There are 4 schemes which form the planned programme of works for 2020/21 and include rebuilding and line marking. The on-going Covid-19 restrictions has impacted on contractor availability with 2 schemes under construction and 2 to be designed. It is anticipated that the 4 schemes will be carried forward and completed in 2021/22.
Cynon Gateway South – Mountain Ash Cross Valley Link	4.750	On Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> October the link road between the A4059 and B4275 Miskin Road was opened.
Structures: St Albans Bridge and Brook Street Footbridge	2.574	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Alban's Bridge – the bridge was opened on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020 with some reinstatement works scheduled for quarter 4, for example, panel replacement; and</li> <li>• Brook St. Footbridge – the estimated start date for works is summer 2021 and discussions are on-going with Transport for Wales in respect of the work to be undertaken.</li> </ul>
Structures	2.791	<p>The investment funding has been allocated to support structure projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed schemes – Williamstown Footbridge, Station Street bridge (Treherbert), Castell Ifor (Hopkinstown), Rhydyfelin Culverts, Gwawr Street (Aberaman - repairs to walls) and Phase 1 of B4273 Ynysybwl/Glyncoch Retaining Walls; and</li> <li>• New scheme – Bodringallt bridge (Ystrad) - where works are due to start in mid 2021.</li> </ul>
Parks Structures	1.335	The investment funding has been allocated to support various footbridge repairs and replacements within Parks:

<sup>2</sup> Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.

**Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES**

Investment Area	Investment Value <sup>2</sup> £M	Quarter 3 Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works completed - Station Street River Wall (Treherbert) and Bridge replacement of Nant Lonydd Bridge (Upper Boat);</li> <li>• Contracting process in progress - Bridge deck and parapet replacement of Maesyfelin Footbridge (Pontyclun); and</li> <li>• Various inspections and surveys continue to be undertaken as advance preparation for future schemes.</li> </ul>
Parks and Green Spaces	1.000	This investment funding is supporting drainage, pavilion and infrastructure improvements to various parks sites, with 85 schemes planned for 2020/21.
Cemeteries	0.088	<p>This investment funding has been allocated to deliver works at 4 cemetery locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works completed - Maes Yr Arian, Mountain Ash (replace entrance gate and fence) and Byn Yr Gaer, Hirwaun (repair of damaged palisade);</li> <li>• Trealaw - drainage works underway; and</li> <li>• Glyntaff Cemetery - additional roadworks, waste removal, additional top car park, introduction of security measures, materials and decoration of South Chapel and public conveniences and supply and erect timber fence. The majority of works are complete and public convenience work is ongoing.</li> </ul>
Llanharan Bypass	2.000	This investment funding is supporting various stages of development, preliminary design, ground investigations and ecology investigations which were completed during quarter 3. The next stage programmed will be pre-Planning Application Consultation that will be undertaken in the first half of 2021.
A4119 Dualling (Stinkpot Hill)	6.000	This investment funding is supporting the dualling of this section of the highway. Preliminary designs have been completed and Cabinet agreed to progress with a number of key elements of the scheme on 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2019 and also 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2020. Progress to date includes: submission of a planning application for an active travel bridge at the north of the scheme and submission of the Compulsory Purchase Order for the land required for the scheme. Detailed design is on-going.
Community Hubs	0.401	<p>This investment funding relates to supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Porth Plaza – works were completed on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020; and</li> <li>• Treorchy – procurement process underway for works to be undertaken to improve the proposed site of Treorchy Community Hub at Treorchy Library (cladding and new windows).</li> </ul>

<b>Progress in our Investment Priorities – PLACES</b>		
<b>Investment Area</b>	<b>Investment Value<sup>2</sup> £M</b>	<b>Quarter 3 Update</b>
Gelli/Treorchy Link Road	0.400	This investment funding relates to investigatory works for a solution which will help alleviate congestion at Stag Square. Feasibility and preliminary design options are ongoing.
Cynon Gateway (North), Aberdare Bypass	2.000	This investment funding relates to the preliminary design for a bypass continuation from A4059 Aberdare to join the A465 Heads Of the Valleys road. During the quarter, preliminary design was completed and pre-Planning Application Consultation has taken place. The feedback received as part of the consultation is being evaluated and will be taken into account as part of considering next steps e.g. submission of a Planning Application.
Bryn Pica Eco Park	1.400	This investment funding is to support enabling works, planning and ecology for the development of an Eco Park at the Waste Management Facility. The RIBA 3 report has been approved and work to progress the design development of RIBA Stage 4 is progressing. High voltage infrastructure works to serve the Eco Park continue with the delivery of the substation due in quarter 4.
Dinas Community Recycling Centre	0.250	This investment funding relates to the provision of a new office building and improvements on the site of Dinas Community Recycling Centre following the demolition of the previous site building. The new office building and service connections have been rescheduled due to Covid-19 impacting on the availability of contractors; these works are anticipated to be progressed during quarter 4.
Land Drainage	0.750	This investment funding is supporting drainage and culvert network works. The ongoing programme includes works at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abercynon (Plantation Road) – works complete;</li> <li>• Porth Relief Road – works substantially complete with further surfacing works being undertaken;</li> <li>• Cwmbach - advance works started in September 2020 and the main scheme is scheduled to start in quarter 4;</li> <li>• Nant yr Ffrwd – surveys completed; and</li> <li>• Property Flood Resistance Programme – 360+ properties offered interim expandable barriers. To date, over 120 agreements returned and surveys to commence in quarter 4.</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.222</b>	

o **PROSPERITY** (Section 5c)

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

**Summary of progress to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

Renewed grant offers for businesses in light of Covid 19 and earlier flood events are now being delivered, including the first grants awarded under the new Covid business grant. Since September the refocussed Enterprise Investment Fund has supported 30 businesses with grant awards totalling £165k, and 4 businesses in Pontypridd town centre have benefited from Flood Resilience Grants. Plans are also being developed in partnership with Welsh Government's South East Wales Regional Team to deliver a package of focussed support for manufacturing businesses in RCT.

Construction has completed at the £3.9m Coed Ely business unit, which was handed over to the Council on 15<sup>th</sup> January, and considerable interest has already been received from potential tenants. Construction for 20 modern business units in Robertstown is now well underway.

Key town centre schemes are under development which will help improve pedestrian access and social distancing, including the Guto Square scheme in Mountain Ash where works will start in quarter 4. In Pontypridd, Transport for Wales have begun their tenancy at Llys Cadwyn and the new footbridge to the park has been completed. Work is also progressing on redevelopment of the YMCA building and Bingo Hall site. Property improvement schemes in town centres are also progressing well, including the Black Lion development which is scheduled for completion this spring 2021. Draft recommendations for improvements to town centre resilience are currently under consideration.

Longer term developments continue to promote RCT as a tourism destination when restrictions allow, including a review of the accommodation sector. Construction of new attractions at Zip World and Dare Valley Country Park are ongoing and a significant National Lottery fund grant awarded in December will allow further improvements at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. We continue to engage with local tourism businesses, and encourage people to 'stay safe, visit later' through media campaigns.

Work continues on the Local Development Plan review, with the call for candidate sites currently open and work underway on scoping the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal.

Early years childcare settings are being supported to remain open safely in line with covid measures through the provision of updated guidance. Schools continue to be offered support on distance, digital and blended learning, including specific guidance to support pupils with statements of special educational needs. Effective use of grant funding is supporting strategic actions for wellbeing and a helpline for professionals, pupils and families has been maintained.

Significant progress is being made on the second wave of school investments in Band B, with Phase 1 of Hirwaun Primary School completed and design in progress for YG Rhydywaun and YGG Aberdar. Following a successful legal challenge, remaining Band B projects will now be progressed.

Engagement numbers for virtual employment support have increased, with Communities for Work+ supporting 212 people into employment between April and December 2020. A Routes to Employment training course is now available online and the Welsh Government / Digital Communities chromebooks loan scheme is being implemented in RCT. In addition, the Council recruited a further 21 graduates in October 2020 and a further 17 apprentices are due to commence work in January 2021.

The full action plan can be viewed by [clicking here](#)

## Investment Priority Progress Update – Quarter 3

Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY		
Investment Area	Investment Value <sup>3</sup> £M	Quarter 3 Update
Empty Property Grant	1.500	At present, all empty property grant applications are processed via the Welsh Government funded Valley Taskforce Scheme and this approach will continue until the Welsh Government scheme closes on 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021.
Schools	0.836	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schemes on-going include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cymmer Primary – demolition of the canteen and erection of fencing was completed in August 2020. Carpark works to be completed during summer 2021;</li> <li>○ Ferndale Community School – works completed for the main swimming pool hall, construction of new retaining wall and entrance path. New signage to be finalised and installed (delayed due to Covid-19);</li> <li>○ Gelli Primary - internal refurbishment, two classroom extension, additional external works, fencing, new kitchen windows completed in quarter 2 and resurfacing of driveway and line marking completed in quarter 3; and</li> <li>○ Llanharan Primary – works to remodel/refurbish foundation phase classrooms, extend yard, alter/fence-in carpark completed in quarter 2 and 2 classroom extension (including toilets and associated external works) completed in quarter 3.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Transport Infrastructure	2.500	<p>This investment funding is supporting a wider programme of highways capital works including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway Network Improvement completed on the A4059 (near Cwmbach / Aberaman) to improve traffic flow at a roundabout / extending the two-lane approach;</li> <li>• Pedestrian crossings completed in Trealaw, Penrhiwceiber and Mountain Ash to improve road safety and promote active travel;</li> <li>• Design work has commenced at further pedestrian crossing locations including Tonyrefail, Groesfaen and Llanharan (to improve road safety and promote active travel);</li> <li>• A4058 Asda Tonypandy junction - design and development ongoing to improve junction capacity and traffic flow; and</li> <li>• A4059 / Bowls Club junction, feasibility study commenced to investigate improving the junction to improve traffic flow along the A4059.</li> </ul>
Tonyrefail Roundabout	0.500	This investment funding relates to Tonyrefail roundabout for feasibility and design to improve the congestion and compliment

<sup>3</sup> Investment Value – relates to LIVE projects / works only that have been allocated additional investment funding.

<b>Progress in our Investment Priorities – PROSPERITY</b>		
<b>Investment Area</b>	<b>Investment Value<sup>3</sup> £M</b>	<b>Quarter 3 Update</b>
		the strategic development at Coed Ely. Works on-going include preliminary design of the main junction together with Active Travel improvements. Further ground investigation work and drainage surveys have been carried out in quarter 3, and design work is continuing.
Llys Cadwyn Development	2.024	Work continued on-site during the period to complete the remaining public realm and highways works and to finalise the fit-out works for Transport for Wales at 3 Llys Cadwyn (with practical completion of the project delivered in October 2020).
Park and Ride Programme	1.000	This investment funding is supporting the development work needed to create additional 'park and ride' car parking spaces at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pontyclun - feasibility design has been carried out and preliminary design is due to commence; and</li> <li>• Porth – phase 3 feasibility design is complete and preliminary design is underway.</li> </ul>
Strategic Regeneration Investment	0.200	This funding has been approved for the Guto Square development. The redevelopment of Guto Square in Mountain Ash will provide a bigger and improved area for public use in the heart of the town centre for community events and business uses, and also additional car parking spaces for shoppers and visitors to the town. It will comprise improvements to the existing area and also to a larger area through the Compulsory Purchase of the adjacent derelict parcel of land and acquisition of adjacent disused properties which will provide an improved interface with the Mountain Ash Workingmen's Club. The project is now at the demolition stage, which is due to commence in January 2021, and will then be followed by the construction phase.
Robertstown and Coed Ely ERDF Match Funding	4.200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robertstown – with the principal contractor in place, progress includes: ground improvement works and foundations have been completed on specific plots; culvert diversion work is underway; and preparatory work is progressing to enable site levelling works and steel frame installation from quarter 4 onwards; and</li> <li>• Coed Ely - progress includes: the Building, including all internal and external works, are substantially complete and is being cleaned; and Building Control and Fire Officer inspections are scheduled for January 2021.</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.760</b>	

**Section 6 – ENHANCING THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS**

The 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 Cabinet meeting agreed a series of recommendations to enhance the Council’s short and long term response to extreme weather events and which limit the impact of flooding on those communities most at risk.

The progress made by Council Services to implement the recommendations can be viewed [here](#) and will be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

\*\*\*\*\*