

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015-16

**FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

15th JUNE 2015

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Agenda Item 3
The Council's draft Corporate Performance Report 2015/16

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the draft version of the Council's Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16 in accordance with Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

2.1. Consider the conclusions drawn by each Scrutiny Working Group following their review of the 2014/15 draft performance evaluations and 2015/16 draft priority plans;

2.2. Based on the Scrutiny Working Group conclusions, form a judgement on the extent to which the draft Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16 (set out as Appendix 1):

2.2.1 Provides a fair and balanced assessment of performance for 2014/15;

2.2.2 Sets out what the Council aims to achieve in 2015/16.

2.3 Approve a final draft version of the Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16, subject to appropriate amendments, for reporting to Council on 24th June 2015.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 requires all local authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. As part of discharging this legal duty, local authorities are required to:

- Publish improvement priorities and plans for achieving them as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year to which they relate. The Welsh Government and the Wales Audit Office have provided helpful interpretation

of the legislation in that unless there are significant extenuating circumstances, 'as soon as is reasonably practicable' will be interpreted as no later than 30th June;

- Make a public assessment of their performance for each financial year by no later than 31st October following the end of the financial year to which the information relates. In the case of Rhondda Cynon Taf, 'assessments of performance' are called 'performance evaluations'.

3.2. For the 2014/15 financial year, the Council at its meeting on 25th June 2014 approved seven priorities and has reported up dates on progress for each as part of quarterly Performance Reports during the year. The approved priorities were:

- Public health and protection;
- Education;
- Children and family centred services;
- Maintaining people's independence;
- Improving our communities¹;
- Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and green²; and
- Making best use of our budget³.

3.3. To help ensure the Council effectively discharges its legal duty, Scrutiny Working Groups were established in 2014 to review and challenge evaluations of performance and priority plans as part of developing pre-scrutiny arrangements. Cabinet will note that at this time the review arrangements were a two step process: priority plans reviewed in April / May for the financial year ahead and performance evaluations (assessing performance for the previous financial year) reviewed in October.

3.4. Following consideration of the above process by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15th October 2014, a number of points were highlighted by Members to help further strengthen existing arrangements. The primary area deemed in need of improvement was 'timing' in that the performance evaluations and priority plans were not considered together.

3.5. To address this, Lead Officers evaluated the performance of 2014/15 priority areas and at the same time drafted priority plans for 2015/16 with the aim of enabling a more complete picture of performance to be presented. These combined up dates were reported to Scrutiny Working Groups in April and May 2015 where Members were asked to form judgements on the extent to which:

3.5.1 The 2014/15 draft performance evaluation(s):

- **Provide a balanced and fair assessment of performance?**
 - Are evaluative i.e. do the evaluations set out the impact the Council's work has had and also where impacts did not materialise as intended?

¹ Improving our Communities – this priority was titled Regenerating our communities in 2013/14

² Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and green – this priority was titled Streetcare services and the natural environment in 2013/14

³ Making best use of our budget – this priority was titled Medium Term Service Planning in 2013/14

- Link with the relevant draft 2015/16 priority plan where appropriate i.e. do key findings / themes from the evaluation feature in the 2015/16 priority plan where it would be reasonable to expect them to?

3.5.2 The 2015/16 draft priority plan(s) has understandable outcomes supported by actions and performance indicators that will enable progress and impact to be measured and scrutinised?

4. REVIEW AND CHALLENGE BY SCRUTINY WORKING GROUPS

4.1. Five Scrutiny Working Groups were established to review the draft performance evaluations and priority plans, as part of the Council’s pre-scrutiny arrangements. A summary of the main conclusions drawn by each Scrutiny Working Group are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Main conclusions drawn by Scrutiny Working Groups

Scrutiny Working Group	Priority Area	Draft 2014/15 performance evaluation – is it fair and balanced?	Draft 2015/16 priority plan – does it support effective scrutiny to take place in 2015/16?
Adult Services	Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently	<p>Further work required to ensure a fair and balanced evaluation is presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The full picture not included of how the Council supports all clients i.e. no reference made to those clients supported in care homes; • The need to further explore how the impact of elements of the Service’s work can be better gauged e.g. the impact that quality assurance arrangements have; • Clearer links needed between the 2014/15 evaluation and 2015/16 priority plan. 	<p>Opportunity to improve the content of the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More challenging targets needed in some areas e.g. clients supported in care homes; • Completion dates needed for all actions; • Other aspects of the Service’s work included i.e. carer’s assessments, where performance was amongst the worst in Wales in 2014/15, and delayed transfers of care.

Scrutiny Working Group	Priority Area	Draft 2014/15 performance evaluation – is it fair and balanced?	Draft 2015/16 priority plan – does it support effective scrutiny to take place in 2015/16?
Joint Education and Children's Services	Two priorities: 'A top quality Education for all' and 'Keeping all children and young people safe'	<p>'A top quality education for all' – a fair and balanced assessment overall, albeit, the need to include a short introduction at the front of the evaluation to set out the progress made by the Council in recent years.</p> <p>'Keeping all children and young people safe' – no overall conclusion made by the Scrutiny Working Group due to the need for more evaluative information on performance to be included.</p>	<p>'A top quality education for all' – opportunity to make the plan more focussed by streamlining the number of performance indicators.</p> <p>'Keeping all children and young people safe' – further development of the action plan required to enable effective scrutiny of progress during the year.</p>
Medium Term Service Planning – Overview and Scrutiny	Medium Term Service Planning	<p>Further information required to set out the full picture of the Council's work in this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which 2014/15 savings contributed to the budget gap for this financial year; • More clarity on the medium term financial outlook and how the Council plans to address this; • More information around the extent of the Council's workforce planning arrangements. 	<p>Medium Term Service Planning will remain the single most important programme of work within the Council with up dates being provided to Cabinet and Members during the year, and this built into all areas of the Council's work. It is considered that a priority action plan for 2015/16 setting out the Medium Term Service Planning framework that is already well embedded will add little value to the Council's existing arrangements. Therefore, it is proposed that the Medium Term Service Planning priority area, for the legal purposes of the Local Government Measure, no longer applies.</p>
Social and Physical Regeneration	Improving our communities	<p>A fair and balanced evaluation overall. However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis should be included on the positive achievements during the year, for example, the 	<p>Opportunity to streamline the content of the plan to enable scrutiny to be focussed on the most important areas during 2015/16.</p>

Scrutiny Working Group	Priority Area	Draft 2014/15 performance evaluation – is it fair and balanced?	Draft 2015/16 priority plan – does it support effective scrutiny to take place in 2015/16?
		support provided to businesses; • Further narrative needed that provides clearer links between the 2014/15 evaluation and the 2015/16 priority plan.	
‘Streetcare Services’ and ‘Public Health and Protection’	Two priorities: ‘Keeping RCT clean and green’ and ‘Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour’	‘Keeping RCT clean and green’ – overall, a fair and balanced evaluation. ‘Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour’ - overall, a fair and balanced evaluation.	‘Keeping RCT clean and green’ – opportunity to further improve the understanding of the progress / impact of the work included in the action plan by use of case studies as part of in-year reporting. ‘Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour’ – the content of the action plan would support effective scrutiny to take place in 2015/16.

4.3 The pre-scrutiny arrangements have identified a number of areas for improvement as referred to in Table 1. These have been taken account of with the aim of ensuring the 2014/15 performance evaluations are fair and balanced, and the priority plans clearly set out the Council’s ambitions and what it aims to achieve in the year ahead.

4.4 In addition, based on the performance evaluations, the following priorities for 2015/16 are proposed (as defined by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009):

- Public health and protection;
- Education;
- Children and family centred services;
- Maintaining people’s independence;
- Improving our communities;
- Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and green.

4.5 For ease of reference, Table 2 below indicates the appropriate appendix reference to the detailed information used as part of the pre-scrutiny process.

Appendix References - Pre-scrutiny information

Priority Area	Scrutiny Working Group Meeting Minutes	Draft 2014/15 Performance Evaluation	Comparative Data – 2014/15	Draft 2015/16 Priority Plan
Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently	Appendix 2a	Appendix 2b	Appendix 2c	Appendix 2d
A top quality Education for all	Appendix 3a	Appendix 3b	Appendix 3c	Appendix 3d
Keeping all children and young people safe	Appendix 4a	Appendix 4b	Appendix 4c	Appendix 4d
Medium Term Service Planning	Appendix 5a	Appendix 5b	Appendix 5c	
Improving our communities	Appendix 6a	Appendix 6b	Appendix 6c	Appendix 6d
Keeping RCT clean and green	Appendix 7a	Appendix 7b	Appendix 7c	Appendix 7d
Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour	Appendix 8a	Appendix 8b	Appendix 8c	Appendix 8d

5. THE DRAFT CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2015/16

- 5.1 The performance evaluations and priority plans have provided the core evidence to enable Council officers to compile a first draft Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16. The document aims to set out in an easily understandable way how the Council has performed against its priorities in 2014/15 and what it plans to achieve in 2015/16, and is included at Appendix 1. In this way, the Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16 would represent the vehicle to enable the Council to meet its legal duty under Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and equally important a key document to communicate to external stakeholders the Council's ambitions and plans for the future.
- 5.2 The Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider the draft Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16 alongside the conclusions drawn by each Scrutiny Working Group and form a judgement on the extent to which it:
- Provides a fair and balanced assessment of performance for 2014/15;
 - Sets out what the Council it aims to achieve in 2015/16.

- 5.3 The judgement formed by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee will be incorporated into the final draft version of the Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16, that will be reported to Council on 24th June 2015.
- 5.4 For Members' information, the complete suite of information will be reported to the 24th June 2015 Council meeting and following a version being agreed, it will be made available on the Council's internet and intranet sites by the 30th June 2015. The Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16 will also be produced bilingually, copies made available at public facing Council buildings and a summarised version produced to encourage a wide a readership as possible.
- 5.5. Lastly, further to completion of the process, opportunity should be taken by Members and officers to reflect on the approach applied this year with the aim of considering how arrangements can be further strengthened into the future.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 All councils in Wales have a legal duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to publish improvement priorities and plans for achieving them as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year to which they relate, and also to make a public assessment of their performance for each financial year.
- 6.2 It is proposed that Rhondda Cynon Taf discharges this responsibility through the compilation of a Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16. The content of the report has been subject to the Council's pre-scrutiny arrangements and has been up dated in line with the feedback received through this process, where deemed appropriate.
- 6.3 It is the role of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee to form a judgement on the extent to which the Corporate Performance Report for 2015/16 provides a fair and balanced assessment of performance for 2014/15 and also the extent to which it sets out what the Council aims to achieve in 2015/16. The judgement of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee will be incorporated into the final draft version of the document reported to Council on 24th June 2015.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council DRAFT Corporate Performance Report 2015/16

This document is available in other languages and formats on request.

This document contains the Council's priorities for 2015/16 and performance of 2014/15 priorities and should be considered as the Council's first and second stage reporting prepared under Part 1, of the Local Government Measure 2009 – Wales Programme for Improvement



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How we performed in 2014-15 and set our Improvement Priorities for 2015/16

This is our first Corporate Performance Report which brings together a look back at last year's performance and then goes on to set out our priorities in 2015-16. We have previously published the information in two separate documents at different time of the year to meet our legal duty but in listening to feedback, we felt that people would be better able to get a more complete, balanced and timely picture of our performance by following a continuous flow of information.

Our Corporate Performance Report aims to tell you the story of how the Council performed during 2014-15 and also how we have used this information to help us set our priorities for 2015-16. We hope that the information it contains about our past performance and future plans will help you better understand the work we do and why we do it, and encourage you to give us your views to help us get better at what we do.

This changed approach will continue to meet our legal duty each year under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to publish both a forward looking improvement plan setting out plans to improve by 30 June, as well as an assessment of performance for the previous year by 31 October.

We try to ensure that all of the things we do make a positive contribution to the longer term plan for the County Borough that we agreed with our partners in April 2013. We are working with these partners, South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Health Board, Interlink (the County Voluntary Council) and other organisations to deliver changes that will meet the needs of communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. These are set out in a document called "Delivering Change". www.rctcbc.gov.uk/singleplan

Delivering 2014-15 Priorities:

In June 2014 the Council approved seven priorities for 2014/15 www.rctcbc.gov.uk/CorporatePlan-2014to2015Report (insert link for 2014 Council Report). These were:

Safety

1. Protecting people from harm and tackling anti social behaviour
2. Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and 'green'

Health

3. Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently

4. Keeping all children and young people safe

Prosperity

5. Providing a top quality education - Every School a great School

6. Improving our communities

7. Making the best use of our budget

In the last year we have been working hard both as a Council and with our partners to deliver the plans we set out. Where work will take longer than a year to complete it has been reviewed and if necessary will be carried on. Progress in each of the priorities has been scrutinised by Councillors every three months in reports that are available for everyone to see at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/councilperformance

Now we are at the end of the reporting year we can look back to see whether we achieved what we set out and more importantly, what difference did it make. This document contains a section which summarises each of the detailed evaluation that we have prepared for all the priorities. Each of the sections gives you our assessment of our work during 2014/15. Not only have we looked at our own information, we have used feedback from people that use our services and also used data and information that compares us with other Welsh Councils.

We also looked at how our work helped to contribute to the wider aims of our partnership plan 'Delivering Change' (www.rctcbc.gov.uk/singleplan) because much of the work we needed to do involved working with our partners. All of our Council priorities contribute towards the bigger picture of working towards a safer, healthier and more prosperous Rhondda Cynon Taf

As result of this and other work we have done, the Council was awarded £2.5m as a Performance Incentive Grant by the Welsh Government. The grant was awarded in 2015 as a result of our performance in 2013-14 as part of our 2013-16 Outcome Agreement. Link to relevant report.

How did we set our Priorities for 2015-16

Most of the priorities we set last year will take longer than one year to tackle properly and so despite generally making positive progress, these will continue into 2015/16. This is also what Councillors and officers have been told by most people during meetings with residents in various public meetings, in surveys, in focus group meetings and by talking to people as part of our every day business. As well as looking at what you told us, we also looked at feedback from our regulators, the challenging financial climate we were facing and the progress we had made last year. We also considered the changes that we have to make in our work that are outside our control, e.g. changes to our Social Care arrangements because of the Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, as well as what would be of long-term benefit to the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf. But we also know that we need to get better at some of the things we do, continue to try new ideas and keep services going with less money and fewer staff.

We deliver many services by working with our partners. We know that this is even more important at a time when all public organisations are under pressure to make difficult decisions to reduce the amount they spend on services. It is important that whatever we do whether it is alone or with or through others, the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf get the best possible outcomes.

Taking all this into account, at its meeting on 24 June 2015 it will be recommended to Council to agree to six priorities that will make the biggest difference to the lives of people who live and work in Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2015/16:

1. *Protecting people from harm and tackling anti social behaviour*
2. *Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and 'green'*
3. *Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently*
4. *Keeping all children and young people safe*
5. *Providing a top quality education - Every School a great School*
6. *Improving our communities*

In setting these priorities the Council considered that one of last year's priorities 'Making the best use of our budget' was so central to the other priorities as well as the rest of our work, it would make more sense to include any relevant financial implications in each of the priority areas. For this reason there is no separate forward plan for Medium Term Service Planning. However, we have included a new section in this plan - *Meeting the Financial Challenge* which sets out how we are tackling the financial challenges that the Council continues to face.

For each of the six agreed priorities we have produced a detailed plan setting out what we want to do, and by when, during 2015-16. For each of our priorities, we describe how we will make a real difference to the lives of people that live and work in Rhondda Cynon Taf and set ourselves targets. We have also taken account of any work we need to follow on from last year.

As these are your priorities, we have made sure that we have the money and people in place and can afford to complete the work we have set out. Where we can, we have also bid for funding from the Welsh Government and the European Union.

How will you know how we are doing?

By tracking our detailed action plans

As we have in previous years, for each of our priorities we have set out a plan of what we want to do by when, and we have set ourselves targets for performance. These plans have been put together by officers and then challenged and agreed by your Councillors to make sure that they focus on making a real difference to people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. These plans are detailed and will allow us to report progress clearly and show you what we've achieved at the end of the year.

Many of the improvements we want to make this year will again involve working together with our partners and will continue to take longer than one year to make a difference. Where this is the case, we will review whether they are still relevant at the end of this year.

If they are, we will include them in our plans for next year so that you can continue to follow and comment on our progress.

Our progress reports

Throughout the year, the plans will be regularly monitored by Councillors and progress reports will be available for you to see for yourselves on our website in September and November 2015, and then February and July 2016. These reports on our performance will show where we are not on target and what we are going to do about it. They will also show where we have performed better than expected.

The priorities in this plan are not the only areas we will be focussing on over the next year and we will be working hard to make sure that local people get good outcomes from their services even if the Council isn't providing them. At the end of the year, in March 2016, we will review progress against our priorities and further areas of activity and set out our findings and your views in our next Combined Performance in June 2016.

How we communicate with you :

We are committed to improve the way we communicate with you and to be open about what we do. We also seek and welcome your views and feedback on the quality of our services and any changes we are considering.

Last year we responded to residents who told us we could do better in our communications. To do this we have taken a number of steps e.g. more public drop in sessions with Councillors and officers, improving our website, greater use of social media and making complicated information easier to understand so that people are better able to respond to our surveys.

We have improved our consultations and as part of a wide ranging approach to consulting with as many people as possible in a number of different ways we now

- hold Leader events with Councillors and Officers so that people can talk to them face to face
- hold live twitter sessions with the Leader and Lead Officers
- hold drop in sessions for all service change proposals
- provide easy read information for young people on service change proposals
- posted a You tube video setting out our new approach in RCT Together

We think we are getting better at involving our resident but we know there is still more to do to find better ways to ask you about what we do and whether it is making a difference.

In the meantime, there are lots of ways you can contact us to give us your views, and they are set out for you at the back of this report.

What does our Independent Auditor say about our progress?

In the most recent report in July 2014, the Council's Independent Auditor, the Wales Audit Office, said that we had responded well to the recommendations in its previous report and that:

- We are *"driving improvement in education and social services but still face a significant challenge in meeting national targets for waste recycling."*
- We are *"improving the scrutiny and reporting of performance although there is scope to improve the way we evaluate the progress it is making towards achieving its improvement priorities."*
- *"The Council's strategic financial planning arrangements remained sound but improved communication and engagement with citizens is needed around the scale of the Council's improvement ambitions and the impact of service changes in its priority areas."*

What this means is that we need to continue to make progress in Education and Social Services and pick up the pace for recycling, which remain within our priorities. It also shows that in setting our priorities, we have good planning and monitoring arrangements to enable our priorities to be delivered. But, although we are being clearer about how we tell people about our progress and the difference we make, we still need to continue to improve. We also need to make sure that people have enough timely information about our plans to change services as a result of budget cuts. We think that since the Auditor's report was published we are continuing to move in the right direction but we welcome your views on whether you think we are on the right track by e mailing Improvement@rctcbc.gov.uk or by any of the ways set out on page ***** .

We are encouraged by the comments from the Auditor but also recognise we need to do better. You will see how we are already addressing this in each of the sections below. You can see the Auditor's full report from the Wales Audit Office at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/WAO-Air2014. The Auditor's next report is due in July 2015.

Our performance in 2014/15

For each of our priorities, we have produced detailed 'Performance Evaluations' setting out our progress during 2014/15, which you can find at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/AllPerformanceEvaluations2014to15. We have summarised these evaluations so that you can see them all more easily and they are set in the following pages, together with what we plan to achieve in 2015-16.

These evaluations contain some information that we have developed to show our progress and some is information that we also provide to the Welsh Government and the Local Government Data Unit Wales (DUW). Every year, all councils in Wales provide the Welsh Government and DUW with data that these national bodies say best shows the progress of important services. We use some of this national data in our priority plans and compare our performance with others. You can see the data we provided to Welsh Government for 2014/15 here [link to table with complete list of NSIs/PAMs when complete](#)

In summary, of the national 42 indicators and measures, where we can compare our 2014/15 data with the most recent all Wales comparisons for 2013/14:

- We were among the best in Wales for 10 of 42 indicators, which was better than last year when we were among the best in Wales for 7 indicators.

- 27 measures showed that performance has improved, although we were still amongst the worst in Wales for 3 measures
- 1 indicator showed that performance was the same and stayed among the best in Wales and
- We were amongst the worst in Wales for 7 of our indicators which is better than last year when we were among the worst in Wales for 14 measures
- Performance in 14 of our measures showed that performance dropped, and 4 measures fell among the worst in Wales.

Comparing our performance against our 2014/15 targets,

- 28 indicators met our targets, although performance of 3 measures was among the worst in Wales
- 5 indicators were within 5% of our target although our performance was still above the average for Wales
- 7 indicators missed the target, 4 of which were amongst the worst in Wales

Using information about our performance in 2014/15 and how we compare with others we have again set ourselves performance targets for 2015/16. Some of these targets drive improvement, some aim to keep the same level of service or even reduce it if we have less money to spend.

However, data is not the only measure of the services we provide, nor does it tell the whole story, but it can help. Comparing our performance with other councils can raise more questions than answers. This is positive as it can help us to better understand what we do, learn from better practice as well as provide us with an indication on how well we are performing. If we can see that our performance is not improving over time and remains below the Welsh Average without good reason, we can then focus on what we need to do to improve.

The Welsh Government uses national data to check our progress against national priorities and the DUW helps councils to organise data so that councils can compare their performance with each other. DUW produces comparative data every September and the Welsh Government the following February. The most recent publications that report 2013/14 data and comparisons can be seen at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/LGDUperformancebulletin2013to2014 for the Local Government publication, www.rctcbc.gov.uk/WGLAperformance2013to2014

reference to http://www.mylocalcouncil.info/Data.aspx?id=_00PF&lang=en-GB-

Safety

Protecting people from harm and tackling anti-social behaviour. Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and 'Green'

Protecting people from harm and tackling anti-social behaviour.

At the start of 2014/15, we set out a plan to improve the safety of our communities and protect people from harm. By monitoring our performance, getting feedback from you and understanding our legal powers, we have decided that this needs to continue to be a priority for 2015/16. This section gives you some information on what we have done over the last year and our plans going forward. Visit www.rctcbc.gov.uk/councilpriorities-publichealthandprotection2015to16 to find out more and let us know what you think.

Why did we choose this priority?

73% of responses to our survey felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

Overall, Rhondda Cynon Taf is a safe place to live with crime rates falling in recent years. But from listening to you, we know that some people don't *feel* safe in their homes or in their communities. This priority is about helping communities to be safer places by using our licensing and public protection powers to manage the late night economy and holding the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and other offences to account.

It is also about supporting and protecting people, particularly our most vulnerable residents, from harm and exploitation. We try to do this through providing support services, such as for substance and alcohol misuse and for victims of crime. We also use our enforcement powers to make certain that the homes people live in meet a required standard, businesses are effectively regulated and rogue traders are stopped.

In our 2014/15 Plan, we said we would ensure:

- **Fewer people are the victims of anti-social behaviour.**
- **Fewer people are the victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.**
- **Fewer people misuse alcohol and drugs.**
- **More properties that were vacant will become occupied.**
- **The promotion of good practice in public houses and food businesses.**

The detailed plan we put in place and the progress we have made can be found here. Having considered all of the information available to us, our progress has been generally positive but we know we have more work to do.

How well did we do?

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
Fewer people are victims of anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of vulnerable / repeat victims we work with will no longer experience anti- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We did better than we expected, with 82% of the victims we work with no longer experiencing anti- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to see 80% of vulnerable / repeat victims no longer experiencing

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
	<p>social behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of people we work with that commit anti-social behaviour will no longer be committing this activity. 	<p>social behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We slightly missed our target, but still found that 73% of people we work with no longer committed anti-social behaviour - that was 1,655 people! 	<p>anti-social behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have set a target that 75% of people we work with will no longer commit anti-social behaviour.
<p>Fewer people are the victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of people we work with will no longer experience abuse. 85% of people we work with will see an improvement in their quality of life. 	<p>We did not meet our high targets for either of these measures, but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 68% of people we worked with no longer experience abuse. 74% of people we worked with saw an improvement in their quality of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We hope that 85% of clients this year will report feeling safer.
<p>Fewer people misuse alcohol and drugs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59% of people we work with will tell us their substance misuse has reduced. 56% of people we work with will see an improvement in their quality of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63% of people we worked with reported a reduction in their substance misuse. We did better than expected, with 71% of people seeing an improvement in their quality of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have set ourselves the target that 67% of people we work with will report a reduction in their substance misuse.
<p>More properties that were vacant will become occupied.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3% of vacant properties (around 75 properties) will be returned to occupation through the support we provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We were above target, with 114 vacant properties brought back into use with our support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Again, we hope that around 75 properties will be brought back into use this year that have been vacant for 6 months or more.
<p>Promote standards of good practice in public houses and food businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of public houses will be inspected by us on time. 85% of food businesses inspected by us will be judged to be broadly compliant with the law. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 100% of our high risk public houses were inspected on time. 90% of our food businesses were also inspected and found to be broadly compliant with the law. 	<p>Our plan has become more focussed this year, so due to our high performance, we have not set targets in this area of work. This will continue as core Council business.</p>

How did we deliver a reduction in anti-social behaviour?

By working with offenders to help them stop offending and, through supporting repeat and vulnerable victims, put in place preventative measures.

On average, South Wales Police had 603 anti-social behaviour complaints per month last year. The number of offenders referred to our specialist anti-social behaviour unit increased, but to work with offenders to stop them offending, the staff try to help people to see the results of their actions; such as through home visits, warning letters and behaviour contracts. The team also refer some offenders to specialist services to help tackle root causes of their behaviour, such as mental health or substance misuse issues. In some cases, people are referred to the Mediation Service provided by Gweddol, which helps members of the community to solve long-standing disputes in a practical way.

We have a dedicated victim officer who works with high risk / vulnerable victims. This helps us to put in place a tailored action plan and, working in partnership with South Wales Police, put in place protective measures such as increased Police patrols, CCTV and frequent contact. In 82% of cases, victims have told us that they are no longer experiencing ASB and feel safer as a result of our support.

- *'Info provided was great. Numerous visits from the ASB Victim officer, within 1 month the issue was resolved'. (Resident)*
- *'We were very happy with service, reassured all the way through, progressed quickly when ASB Team got involved'. (Residents)*

We have worked hard to improve people's feelings of safety, particularly within town centres; and we can only reduce the anti-social behaviour that we are aware of. We have looked at complaints to the Police, reports from the community and Elected Members, and intelligence from our partner agencies to understand when and where anti-social behaviour takes place. As a result, teams work within targeted areas at key times e.g. on Friday nights or at certain times of the year, like school holidays and Halloween.

During last Summer's *Operation Streetwise* campaign, the team worked with 1,082 young people to give advice and address any issues. A total of 77 referrals for anti-social behaviour took place, as well as 217 units of alcohol being seized.

This approach has helped us to find out that many young people, aged 18-25, are first time offenders and we could help them to avoid reoffending. During 2015/16, we plan to work with our partners to specifically reduce offending and re-offending through working with young people and females (through the Women's Pathfinder Programme), as well as continuing our work through the anti-social behaviour unit that tackles all offenders and works to support victims. We want 75% of the offenders that we work with in 2015/16 no longer committing this crime.

How did we deliver a reduction in domestic abuse and sexual violence?

By supporting victims and challenging perpetrators.

The Oasis Centre in Pontypridd opened in 2012 and provides a 'one-stop-shop' for those affected by domestic violence. Over 4,000 referrals were made to the centre last year with 66% of those being new referrals. High-risk victims are offered support by the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and there are various other services involved that can offer help, such as Victim Support and Women's Aid. As a result of the support provided by IDVAs, 78% of people said that they felt safer and 68% reported the abuse had stopped.

We have received a 'White Ribbon Accreditation' for our action plan on tackling violence against women and girls. During November 2014, an event was held to mark 'White Ribbon Day' attended by survivors of domestic abuse and partner agencies including Hafan Cymru, the Housing Advice Centre and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. In addition, as a result of the action plan, a 'Domestic Violence Workplace Policy' has been created. We have more work to do in 2015/16 to support the action plan and promote a zero tolerance to domestic violence.

We are also working with perpetrators of abuse. Our clients have told us that there should be whole family support (not just for the victim) and that perpetrators should receive services that help them, rather than just custodial sentences. With this in mind, we introduced a 'Voluntary Perpetrator Programme', which aims to support men to change their behaviour and attitudes, ensuring the safety of any women and children they are in a relationship with, and supporting the wellbeing of all concerned. We will shortly be evaluating this programme and considering how we provide effective support to perpetrators in changing their behaviour in future.

How did we deliver a reduction in drug and alcohol misuse?

By continuing to work with our partner agencies like the voluntary sector, Cwm Taf Health Board, South Wales Police and the National Probation Service.

Over 1,600 people started treatment for drug and alcohol misuse last year. We have done well in providing 86% of users with treatment within 20 days of a referral. This is higher than the average across Wales of 85%. Support services for people with substance misuse problems are provided by a number of different agencies and arranged by an 'Area Planning Board'. In 63% of cases last year, clients reported a reduction in their misuse of alcohol or drugs. We are aiming to improve performance during 2015/16, with 67% of clients reporting a reduction in their misuse of alcohol or drugs.

Case Study– Cwm Taf Children and Young People’s Service (2015)

L was referred to the Children and Young People’s Service for support with her use of Cannabis, Alcohol and Mephedrone. An assessment identified that L had accessed services over four years and had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. L also had anxiety and depression.

L engaged well with the Children and Young People's Service and had support for her substance use, i.e. Motivational interviewing, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, goal setting and relapse prevention. L was supported to visit her GP for assistance with her anxiety and depression and access “New Pathways” Counselling Service. Initially, this resulted in an increase in substance use. L also became alcohol dependent and suffered minor liver damage.

This meant L needed increased support from her key worker, who went with her to appointments and referred her to a the Integrated Substance Misuse Service, which resulted in an inpatient detox.

Following this support, L remained abstinent for three months during which time she re-engaged with New Pathways and commenced prescribed medication for her anxiety and depression. Her relationships with family and friends also improved.

L now practices controlled drinking on special occasions. She is hoping to go to college in September to study mechanics and is currently waiting for voluntary opportunities at an animal sanctuary L's case was closed in March 2015, treatment complete and substance free.

During 2013/14, we asked service users what they thought of the needle exchange services. Their ideas included late night opening and fewer needles in pre-packaged kits in order to reduce drug-related litter. Over the last year, we have put these changes in place with revised opening hours,

including one late night opening until 8pm in two of our needle exchange centres. Needles are now provided in kits of three or ten needles per pack. We have also increased the information and advice given to anyone using needles.

We have changed our services to meet financial pressures across our organisations. This has focussed on how service users with complex substance misuse issues are given the right support. This has helped us to come up with a new delivery model for reducing the harms associated with substance misuse, which we will put in place during 2015/16. In order to help us improve further, two service users have been appointed to the 'Area Planning Board' to provide direct feedback.

How did we help more vacant properties come back into use?

By providing advice, support, funds and enforcement actions.

The total number of long-term empty properties in the County increased last year from 3,133 to 3,381 in 2014/15. This is one of the highest in Wales. But, this year, 114 properties were brought back into use, improving the appearance of communities and avoiding vandalism. Last year, 11 properties were brought back into use as a result of Welsh Government 'Houses into Homes' loan scheme. Since the scheme was launched in 2012, £1.19million has been approved and paid. Through different ways of working, we hope to bring 75 properties back into use this year.

Investing in housing improves people's health and wellbeing, for example, by reducing hazards in the home and providing adaptations to help people live independently for longer. As well as bringing empty homes back into use, we have delivered energy insulation measures to over 400 homes. We have worked with landlords, particularly those who own homes in multiple occupancy, to make sure they are properly licensed and fit to standard. Tenants have benefited from 237 Category 1 and 2 hazards (like damp, trip hazards) being resolved in the last year.

We have gathered intelligence over the year, which has helped us to see the benefits of targeted housing action. We launched the 'Housing and Health Action Areas' scheme in February 2015 in Tylorstown, in partnership with Cwm Taf Health Board. This aims to improve health and wellbeing through housing improvements and encouraging healthy lifestyles. We have already had 160 residents sign up for a survey of their home in the area. We will be using this way of working in 2015/16 to plan other pieces of work across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Last year, the Council was successful in attracting Welsh Government *Vibrant & Viable Places* funding for the Pontypridd settlement area. This will help to deliver more energy improvement measures, to over 400 households, and we will be completing this work over 2015/16.

How did we promote good practice in public houses and food businesses?

By focusing on high and medium risk licensed premises to ensure they are compliant with licensing laws.

Last year, 100% of our high risk licensed premises were inspected. We have given training on responsible management and good practice, targeting owners with problems of underage drinking, nuisance, crime and disorder. We have also encouraged good practice through our 'Best Bar None Awards', with 40 premises being awarded in 2014/15.

Trading Standards have carried out 50 test purchases to check that alcohol and other age restricted items are not being sold to minors. This resulted in three people being served a fine and prosecution cases being made against two others. Test purchases for tobacco also resulted in one illegal sale, which the team successfully prosecuted.

Our Trading Standards team has worked across Cwm Taf (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf) since 2013/14. The service continues to deal with doorstep crime, the shadow economy and rogue traders; during the year, for example, we have dealt with over 83 incidents of doorstep crime and prosecuted 11 traders in the shadow economy. We have also raised awareness with over 200 elderly people about the dangers of doorstep crime and all reported that they felt better prepared afterwards.

We ensure that the County Borough has a fleet of taxis that safely meets the needs of our communities and whose drivers are subject to stringent vetting. Last year, we revised the Taxi Licensing Policy to improve the services provided to passengers. We did not complete an evaluation of the new BTEC Taxi Driver qualification, as planned, but work around this is planned for 2015/16.

We have made every effort to improve the standards of hygiene and management practices at food premises across Rhondda Cynon Taf. When the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme was introduced, 50% of our 1,930 premises were 'broadly compliant'. As a result of a focused training and enforcement in uncooperative businesses, this figure has steadily risen year on year. During 2013/14, 88% of these food premises were 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene legislation. Last year this rose to 90%.

Although business start-ups are positive, they are often underfunded and have inexperienced and poorly trained staff, which can be a high risk to consumers. We aim to inspect new food businesses within 28 days of opening and we set up a system to ensure early feedback. At the start of 2014/15 we were inspecting 28% of new businesses within 28 days of opening. We have improved and this has almost doubled to 55% at the end of 2014/15.

What does this mean for 2015/16?

Protecting people from harm continues to be a priority for us. Through looking at what we have achieved over the last few years within these services, we have realised the benefits of using information and data to target our services in a more effective way. Some of our most successful ideas have been targeted at specific areas or groups of the population, such as our work to tackle anti-social behaviour in town centres or targeting training towards businesses that are struggling with food hygiene or management.

Therefore, to make sure the most vulnerable members of our communities are supported and that offenders are challenged, we plan to:

- **Ensure vulnerable people in our communities are supported by us using intelligence led interventions.** This will include:
 - A greater emphasis on helping people early or stopping problems from happening in the first place, delivering services where they will have the greatest impact.
 - Reviewing services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence in line with Welsh Government law and work with the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner.
 - Working in a targeted way to reduce reoffending, in certain areas and with particular groups of people.

And to tackle disadvantage in communities, we plan to work in partnership to:

- **Focus activities and actions on providing targeted support, addressing the specific needs of our communities.** This will include:

- Developing and delivering the Housing and Health Action Area Action Plan for Tylorstown and deliver the Housing Schemes within the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme for Pontypridd.
- Working closely with the Police & Crime Commissioner and partners to tackle anti social behaviour in specific communities.
- Improving services aimed at bringing empty properties back into use.

To see the full plan for 2015/16, please visit

DRAFT

Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and green.

At the start of 2014/15, we set out a plan to keep the County Borough clean, make the best use of our natural resources and encourage people to produce less waste and recycle more. You have told us that keeping the County Borough clean and tidy is important to you. Aside from helping Rhondda Cynon Taf to be a safe and healthy place to live, this is a priority because Welsh Government set us challenging targets around sending less waste to landfill and recycling more.

'Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and green' continues to be a priority in 2015/16 and this section gives you some information on what we have done over the last year and our plans going forward. Visit www.rctcbc.gov.uk/councilpriorities-cleanandgreen2015to16 to find out more and let us know what you think.

Why did we choose this priority?

52% of responses to our survey felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

To continue our work to make Rhondda Cynon Taf a better place to live today and for future generations, it is important that we look after our surroundings and produce as little waste as possible. We work hard to keep our streets clean; our challenge was to maintain standards of cleanliness so that we compare well with other councils across Wales.

As well as helping the environment, we wanted to improve recycling rates because the Welsh Government has set us a target to recycle 58% of the municipal waste¹ we collect by March 2016. Failure to meet this target will result in the Council having to pay a financial penalty.

In 2013/14, we did not meet our own recycling target of 52% - recycling only 49.3% of municipal waste we collected. This was the lowest recycling rate across Wales. One of the reasons for this was the sudden loss of an external company that recycled items that we were unable to. This unforeseen change meant we had to send more waste to landfill.

We also needed to have an eye to the future to make sure we keep the costs of recycling our waste down. To help us do this, we started two projects to build plants that recycle food waste and deal with the waste that cannot be recycled.

We recognise that our roads are the Council's single biggest asset; with residents, businesses and visitors alike all relying on them to go about their daily lives. We aimed to improve the condition of many roads and last year we continued to target money into this area.

Putting together everything we knew about the challenges that the Council has to meet, we put together a plan in 2014/15 to '**keep Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and green**' that focused our work in four main areas:

- **Deliver clean streets.**
- **Improve recycling rates helped by more targeting of areas with low recycling rates.**
- **Maintain the condition of our roads.**
- **Improve flood prevention.**

The detailed plan we put in place and progress can be found here. Having considered the information available to us including our progress, complaints and feedback, we can see that overall

¹ Waste collected directly from households, through civic amenity sites, from litter bins or through street cleaning

our progress in this priority has been positive but we have narrowly missed our recycling target which is the most important measure within this plan. We, therefore, need to keep focussing on encouraging people to recycle and finding modern and cost-efficient ways of getting rid of our waste in 2015/16.

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
Deliver clean streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95.8% of our streets inspected will be of a high or acceptable level of cleanliness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We did better than expected with 99.75% of our streets inspected being of a high or acceptable standard in 2014/15, making our performance one of the best in Wales according to 2013/14 data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are aiming for 95% of our streets inspected to be a high or acceptable level of cleanliness. We have targeted lower than our performance because we have less money to spend and fewer staff.
Improve recycling rates helped by more targeting of areas with low recycling rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the % of waste we recycle at least 55% in 2014/15, which was more than the all Wales average Reduce the amount of waste that we send to landfill to 45%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We didn't do as well as we planned, narrowly missing our target with only 54.08% of our waste recycled and placing our performance below the 2013/14 Wales average of 54.33%. However, signs for improvement in 2015/16 are more encouraging. We did better than we expected, with only 35.01% of our waste sent to landfill and making our performance better than the 2013/14 Wales average of 37.72%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our target, set by Welsh Government, for 2015/16 is 58% of our waste recycled. Our target, set by Welsh Government, for 2015/16 is for 42% of waste to be sent to landfill.
Maintain the condition of our roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% of all roads will be in an overall poor condition, better than the all Wales average for 2012/13 of 13.4%. This is slightly worse than our performance last year, where the position was 9.9%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9.4% of our streets were in an overall poor condition – exceeding our target of 10% and making our performance better than the 2013/14 Wales average of 13.2%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are targeting that 10% or less of our roads will be in an overall poor condition.
Improve flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 375 homes / businesses will have a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We secured £2.5million in Welsh Government, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding was specific to 2014/15, so we will not

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
prevention	reduced risk of flooding as a result of flood prevention schemes. The areas benefitting will be Nant Cae Dudwg (Cilfynydd); Nant Gwawr (Aberaman); Nant Yr Fedw (Ynysboeth); and Bwllfa Road (Cwmdare).	European and Council funding to focus our work on reducing the risk of flooding. This meant we did better than we planned with 412 homes/businesses in the areas described having a reduced risk of flooding as a result of flood prevention	be including this measure of success in our priority plan for 2015/16. However, we will continue to provide services related to flood risk management and manage flooding risks as part of our regular Council business.

How did we deliver clean streets?

By making sure that we balanced the need to keep the County Borough clean with the increasing financial pressures that all councils in Wales are facing.

We undertook a range of service changes and reduce the costs associated with our street cleansing service, whilst keeping our streets and highways at an acceptable level of cleanliness compared to the rest of Wales. An independent survey carried out by 'Keep Wales Tidy' in November 2014 found that 97.6% of streets inspected were of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness - above the Wales average of 96.6% and is the same as our performance last year. The commitment and dedication of the cleansing staff has meant we have maintained a high performance.

But, feedback has been mixed with residents telling us:

'I don't see street cleaners anymore...' Resident R.M.

'Lot of litter in Ponty town centre, especially after the weekend... The Council doesn't come to clean it up fast enough or regularly enough... they do it every now and again though' Resident J.B.

We recognise the importance of keeping our town centres clean, especially after periods of heavy use and we now have dedicated street care operatives in Pontypridd and Aberdare who clean the town centres before 9am to make sure cleanliness standards are maintained.

By tackling owners about dog fouling. During their inspections, 'Keep Wales Tidy' also found that there has been a significant improvement in the streets affected by dog fouling since. This is an issue that our residents have been concerned about and for many years, we have targeted dog fouling by installing 821 dog fouling bins, raising awareness, encouraging people to pick up after their dogs and also by penalising those people who continue to allow their dogs to foul our streets. In 2014/15, this included issuing 7 fixed penalty notices. It is, therefore, particularly pleasing that 'Keep Wales Tidy' found such a significant improvement.

Examples of feedback from residents include:

'Most individuals clear up after their dogs' Resident R.M., Rhondda

However, we must be mindful that dog fouling continues to be a problem in some areas. Another resident fed back:

'Dog mess is the biggest issue in the area that I live – there's a bin in the area and signs around to make people aware of the dog mess bins and that they will be fined but they fail to put the mess in the bins and there are never any wardens around to fine people.' Resident J.B., Pontypridd

By dealing with envirocrimes. In 2014/15, we cleared 3,644 of the 3,729 reported fly tipping incidents within 5 working days. This was less than our 2013/14 performance but even with the financial pressures affecting the way we deliver the service, we are pleased that we would still be above the 2013/14 all Wales average. We also removed 205 reported incidents of graffiti within 5 working days and 117 incidents of abusive graffiti within a working day (100%).

'This area is generally clean and there is rarely any fly tipping. The community should take responsibility for their local environment with the assistance of the community council.'
Resident A.A.

In summer 2014, we joined forces with the Welsh Government and 'Fly-tipping Action Wales' to crack down on fly tipping. The Council's Enforcement and Awareness Officers are equipped with the latest technology and use a smart phone to log, photograph and plot fly-tipping incidents onto a GPS mapping system in real time. This pinpoints fly-tipping 'hotspots' in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Other councils taking part are Carmarthenshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Denbighshire and Cardiff.

We also worked with 'Keep Wales Tidy' and local businesses in the County Borough. This included a litter pick on the Taff Trail near Rhydyfelin with the McDonalds 'tidy team'. The teams collected over 20 bags of litter! Activities like this are taking place throughout the year across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

How did we improve recycling rates?

By targeting areas of low participation and raising awareness we continue to encourage residents to participate in reuse and recycling initiatives.

We secured funding from 'Waste Awareness Wales' to carry out the 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign, to encourage residents to waste less and recycle any unavoidable food waste. We have found that targeting our awareness raising at areas where not many people recycle has very positive results.

These campaigns last for four weeks and begin with letter drops to all households telling them that the Awareness Team will be working in the area. This is followed by intensive door knocking and weekly recycling participation checks. After the third week, the Awareness Team are given a list of properties where there has been no sign of recycling and they follow up more door knocking with residents who are not recycling. At any point, residents can contact the Awareness Team directly if they require recycling bags, food waste bins, nappy bins or further information on the Council's recycling schemes.

Case Study – Recycling Participation Campaigns - Some results in 2014/15
Penywaun - 21st March 2014 – 11th April 2014
 Dry recycling participation increased from 52.7% in week 1 to 70.0% in week 4
 85.9% of residents recycled at least once in the 4 week period.
 Food waste participation increased from 27.7% in week 1 to 37.2% in week 4
 49.2% of residents participated in food waste recycling scheme in the 4 week period.

Cilfynydd - 26th May 2014 – 20th June 2014
 Dry recycling participation increased from 48.4% in week 1 to 80.3% in week 4

87.5% of residents recycled at least once in the 4 week period.
 Food waste participation increased from 17.6% in week 1 to 46.1% in week 4
 49.1% of residents participating in the food waste recycling scheme in the 4 week period.

Rhydyfelin (Phase 1) - 4th August 2014 – 29th August 2014

Dry recycling participation increased from 62.6% in week 1 to 85.1% in week 4
 95.1% of residents recycling at least once in the 4 week period.
 Food waste participation increased from 29.5% in week 1 to 52.0% in week 4
 57.7% of residents participating in the food waste recycling scheme in the 4 week period.

We have also visited supermarkets with our recycling trailer and spoken to around 500 residents about their recycling habits and how they feel about changes to collections. Of the people that completed our questionnaire, everyone said that they already recycled - 98% recycled every week. 94% found the Council's current recycling schemes easy but 43% said they weren't willing to separate some of their recycling into the various material types at home, and 40% said they would either reduce or stop recycling altogether.

Other feedback we received from residents who were interested in taking part in a focus group about recycling included:

'If you look at other councils, RCT are very good at recycling. 'We put very little into black bags now – once a fortnight if that' Resident L.C.

'Can I say though that I am very happy with my waste collections especially the ability to get rid of the garden waste that I can't compost.' Resident A.A.

'RCT don't show enough of what has been recycled for people to realise its worth. We need more advertising, more education, leaflets through doors to get the message out there – show what is being recycled. We need to educate people – younger people are being brought up to recycle and look after their area' Resident L.C.

'More pressure should be put on the retail sector to use biodegradable packaging. What about a grading system for shops and businesses that take recycling seriously .perhaps like the five star grades for food outlets' Resident A.A.

'Green Glyncoch' started in 2009, with the aim of turning Glyncoch into a 'Zero Waste Area' where at least 95% of residents recycle both their dry recyclables and their food waste and everyone respects their environment. By working with residents, partner agencies and volunteers, recycling levels have increased greatly over the past five years from 46% to 95.5% of residents recycling dry waste and 43% to 69.7% recycling their food waste. Residents have also supported activities such as litter-picking and good dog ownership schemes. Whilst this project has had its challenges, the scheme is now beginning to deliver successes with high recycling participation in the village.

We have also continued to promote recycling with our younger residents in schools by introducing the Christmas Card Recycling Challenge in January 2015. Thirty three schools took part and together collected over 323 stone (4,532.16 lbs) of Christmas cards - that's equivalent to the weight of 77 average 8 year old pupils!

We re-opened the 'Go Green Baby' disposable nappy recycling scheme to new applicants in September 2014 and the demand exceeded 4,500 in its first few months. To improve the service,

we bought four new nappy vans, which are clearly branded and able to hygienically collect disposable nappies and incontinence pads around the County Borough. We are now able to send 20 tonnes of nappies for recycling every week and have collected and recycled 1,500 tonnes of nappies since the scheme was launched in 2013.

Our “Too Many Black Bags, Recycle or Face a Fine!” campaign also encourages recycling www.rctcbc.gov.uk/toomanyblackbags. From Autumn 2014, we asked that residents in the Rhondda minimised the black bags they put out for collection. As a result of the changes, black bag waste in the Rhondda has reduced by over 30%. The scheme was rolled out to the Cynon area in November 2014 and the Taff Ely area in January 2015.

In order to increase the amount of waste being recycled, we said we would develop two waste treatment plants with Merthyr Tydfil Council and others. These are large projects, with complicated bidding processes. Biogen (UK) Ltd has designed, built and will operate the new food waste-to-energy plant at Bryn Pica, Aberdare. The construction was completed in December 2014 and the plant is on schedule to be operational by June 2015. The new facility has the capacity to convert 22,500 tonnes of food waste into green electricity and also produce a fertiliser for farmland. Based on current food waste recycling rates across the three councils involved, this project will generate one mega-watt of green electricity, sufficient to power 1,500 homes. We hope to award the contract for the other treatment plant in September 2015.

We are pleased that as a result of these efforts, we continue to send less municipal waste to landfill. We are among the best in Wales at recycling dry material (paper, plastics and metals) at a rate of 42.23%. However, we are one of the worst in Wales when it comes to recycling green materials, with only 11.28% of material like food waste and grass cuttings being recycled.

When you put together dry and green waste, we have recycled 54.08% or 59,744 tonnes of municipal waste, narrowly missing our local target of 55%. Our performance is below the current all Wales average of 54.33%. This means that, although we have recycled more than last year (49.31%), we still have to make significant improvements to meet the Welsh Government target of recycling at least 58% of municipal waste in 2015/16. If we do not, this puts us at risk of a significant fine, estimated to be around £1million.

More positively, with the work we are continuing and the new plans in place, we are confident that we can meet this target. We can evidence this through the most recent information for February 2015, where the data was 62.3%. This suggests that the actions that we have and continue to taken are starting to have a greater impact in 2015/16.

How well did we keep our highways maintained?

By continuing to improve our highways infrastructure through a programme of investment, making sure our structures were sound and modernising our street lighting network.

We have resurfaced 68 streets and 65 footways as part of a £30 million investment. This included traditional and environmentally-friendly preventative treatments, which are quicker, more cost effective and restore the skid resistance of road surfaces and seal it to prevent deterioration. Traditional surfacing materials have also been used at on roads in worse conditions, such as the A4061 Rhigos Mountain Road. We have also improved safety by renewing 300 metres of barriers on the Maerdy and Rhigos mountain roads.

We know that this investment is contributing to improving the condition of our roads - the percentage of our roads in overall poor condition has fallen from 9.94% in 2013/14 to 9.35% in 2014/15, above the 2013/14 Welsh average of 13.2%.

We completed the £1 million refurbishment to the Victoria Bridge in Pontypridd, which crosses the River Taff next to Pontypridd's iconic William Edwards Bridge. The bridge is one of the main routes that link the Rhondda Valleys to the A470, and needed essential strengthening repairs to ensure the long-term stability of the 148-year-old structure.

We also completed a £260k scheme to replace the substandard bridge deck which carries traffic over the river at Blaenrhondda. We tried to minimise disruption with work undertaken in two halves so that the only vehicular access to Blaenrhondda was maintained whilst these critical works were undertaken.

We operate and maintain 28,500 lights in residential and non-residential areas. Last year, as part of well-publicised service changes to reduce spending, we introduced part night (midnight to 5am) switch off of all streetlights in non-residential areas and the part night (midnight to 5am) switch off of alternate (every other) streetlight in residential areas. We also replaced street lighting columns that were due to be replaced in 80 streets across the Council with new columns that are fitted with energy efficient LED lanterns. This will generate savings on energy costs (£300k in a full year) and reduce carbon emissions. Initial consultation with residents revealed broad support for this savings initiative, but since they were introduced a number of concerns have been raised including about personal safety and security. However, these have generally been limited by the fact that few people are actually out walking the streets after midnight.

How did we increase protection from flooding, improve road safety awareness and training for our residents within our most vulnerable groups?

By introducing four flood alleviation schemes, making our roads safer and encouraging people to walk and cycle where possible.

Floods can have a devastating impact on our communities. Last year, we secured £2.5M flood alleviation funding within our own budget, European and Welsh Government funding to work in Nant Cae Dudwg, Cilfynydd, Nant Gwawr, Aberaman, the Nant y Fedw, Abercynon, and Bwlfa Road, Cwmdare. In total, 412 homes or businesses have had their risk of flooding reduced in these areas. As funding was specific to 2014/15, we will not be including flood alleviation in our priority plan for 2015/16. However, we will continue to look for opportunities with partners to reduce the risk of flooding, provide services related to flood risk management and manage risks as part of our regular Council business.

We improved pedestrian safety at the A4058 Broadway/Sardis Road junction thanks to £250,000 funding from Welsh Government. A new pedestrian crossing outside the Probation Office/Wetherspoons makes it safer for pedestrians to cross lanes of traffic and navigate a traffic island. As part of the scheme, new street lighting and new signs will be put up. We have also introduced traffic management schemes in Rhydyfelin and Maerdy.

We are encouraging more people to take public transport, walk or cycle when travelling. Positively, Local Transport Funding of £250k was granted by Welsh Government to improve public transport infrastructure in the Rhondda Fawr. These improvements will help people to get around sustainably and assist the one in three households that do not have access to a car.

Older drivers are involved in 1 in 10 road accidents and we provide refresher training to allow mature drivers to safely retain their independence and boost their confidence. 1 in 5 young drivers are involved in a crash in the first year of passing their test and around 27 young drivers are killed or seriously injured on UK roads every week. We act as the lead authority for 8 councils in the region in coordinating and managing the Pass Plus Cymru initiative which provides new drivers with enhanced skills. We have continued to deliver our successful road safety initiatives aimed at all ages. These range from 'Kerbcraft', aimed at primary school age children to 'Megadrive', for 6th form pupils. We have trained 930 pupils in safe cycling and 413 school children in 'Kerbcraft'.

We have also tried to resolve parking pressures for residents in Pontypridd, Treforest and Aberdare. In May 2014, we consulted with residents and business owners to gauge support for a proposed residents parking scheme in the area. Last year, we consulted on revised proposals and the final schemes will be introduced during 2015. We will be taking enforcement action to ensure residents, visitors and businesses are compliant.

What does this mean for 2015/16?

It's a positive sign that we are making improvements in this priority. As part of the General Budget Strategy consultation, 55% of you told us that we had made sufficient improvement in keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and 'green'. But, we know that we have challenging targets to meet this year as part of Welsh Government's commitment to improve the environment in Wales. We also want to keep our road networks working well, keeping people safe and boosting the economy. This is why 'Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and 'green'' is still a priority in 2015/16. We plan to:

- **Increase recycling rates to 58% by March 2016.** This will include:
 - Targeting areas of low recycling to encourage people to recycle and improve our performance. We have seen the value of four week intensive exercises in communities to improve recycling and we plan to target more areas this year. We also want to showcase areas that are doing really well and set a good example.
 - Raising awareness, using interesting and engaging schemes that residents of all ages enjoy taking part in, like the Christmas Card Scheme and 'Love where you Live' awards.
 - Developing treatment plants for our waste to keep costs down and have modernised waste disposal.
- **Make sure streets are clean all year round.** This will include:
 - We have seen the benefits of targeting our teams, using new technology and feedback from you to make sure 'hotspot' areas for fly-tipping, litter and graffiti are dealt with quickly. We will continue to target our teams at these areas.
- **Make sure our highways network is well maintained and well managed.** This will include:
 - A number of planned, large projects to make certain our roads are safe and stand the test of time.
 - Delivering improvements to ease traffic congestion, enabling people to travel more quickly and boosting the economy.

Health

Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently
 Keeping all children and young people safe

Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently

At the start of 2014/15, we set out a plan to support vulnerable adults and older people to live independently. Many people in Rhondda Cynon Taf face daily barriers to independence because of long term illness, disability, becoming elderly or frail, or recovering from illness or injury. Independent living doesn't mean that people after live alone and do everything for themselves, it is about choice and enabling people to remove barriers and take part in everyday social life. This, in turn, can prevent people from needing specialist care from Social Services or the NHS.

We have a growing population to support and the new laws around Social Services and Wellbeing mean we have to do things differently. Therefore, 'Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently' remains a priority for the Council and its partners in 2015/16. This section gives you some information on what we have done over the last year and our plans for next year. Visit [insert link](#) to find out more and let us know what you think.

Why did we choose this priority?

73% of responses to our survey felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

The last Census in 2011 showed that the biggest growing population group is people over the age of 65. Because people are living longer, the number of people with ill health and age related diseases, such as dementia, is likely to rise. Last year, we reported that nearly 1 in 3 people already have a life limiting condition. If we then consider those adults who are vulnerable for other reasons, there is an increasing need for help from the Council's Social Services.

People have told us that they want to remain independent for as long as possible. The ageing population is growing and there are a high number of people that need our help because of health reasons, this has put pressure on services on a national scale. We can no longer meet everyone's needs. Locally, if we don't change the way that services are provided, we will struggle to keep people independent and safe, meaning costs will increase.

Sometimes, the services we provide don't help people to achieve their independence. This is part of a new law we needed to prepare for - the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This new law will change the way Social Services are delivered, by giving people more independence, a stronger voice and more control. It also means that we need to focus more on preventing problems from occurring and helping people at an earlier stage, to avoid more serious problems needing specialist services down the line.

We wanted to look at how all Council Services could work better together to make sure that the wellbeing of people can be protected and improved. This would also include those caring for others. We had feedback from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate that acknowledged the progress we are making in areas such as closer working the Health Board, the 'Butterfly' project for dementia care and the positive developments arising from the implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. But the inspectorate also notes that people were waiting too long for adaptations to their homes. You can see the report here (CSSIW) <http://cssiw.org.uk/our-reports/local-authority-report/2014/rhondda-cynon-taf-performance-report/?lang=en>

Putting together everything we knew about the challenges that the Council had to meet, our plan in 2014/15 to '**Support vulnerable adults and older people to live independently**' focused work in two main areas:

- **Safeguarding vulnerable adults.**
- **Helping people to live independently.**

The plan we put in place and the progress we have made can be found here. Having considered information available to us, we can see that we have performed well against our targets and there have been some areas of excellent practice, having a positive impact on adults in the County Borough. But, we recognise the challenge ahead and by listening to adults living with disability, mental health issues, older adults and carers, we know our services need modernising and we need to work better with our partners to enable people to live independently.

What did we aim to do to show we were making a difference?

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
Safeguard vulnerable adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96.1% of adult protection referrals completed will result in the risk being managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have achieved more than planned and risk has been managed in more than 99.5% of adult protection referrals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have set a target of 96.1%, as we wish to maintain improvement.
Help people to live independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65% of care packages completed will result in the person requiring no on-going services from the Council (at the point the package is completed). • 92% of people that underwent a period of reablement² felt that we helped them to remain independent (This maintains the same service level that was achieved in 2013/14 based on the people who returned questionnaires) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have achieved more than we planned with 74.73% of the care packages we put in place resulting in people not needing longer term care, exceeding our target of 65% • The target for this measure was increased from 92% to 95% in the early part of the year and although we met the original target we missed our higher target as 94.40% of short term reablement clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are making some changes to the service, which may mean more people need on-going support so have targeted that 66% of care packages completed will require no on-going services. • We have maintained our target for 95% of people that received the service and helped them to remain independent.

² Reablement is a time limited service designed to increase an individual's independence

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
		felt we helped them to remain independent	

How did we safeguard vulnerable adults?

By working effectively with our partner organisations.

We have worked hard to put in place a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH. What this means is that people from all of the organisations that need to work together to protect children, adults and older people, are in one place. Based in Pontypridd Police Station, social care professionals, health, probation and the police all work together more closely, share information more quickly and help to keep people safe.

It is too soon to say how this new service is directly affecting our vulnerable adult residents but early signs show that we are able to respond more quickly to concerns and also put in place joint solutions more quickly.

MASH - how working better together delivers better help

Through the work of the MASH Mrs X had access to the right support at the right time and the certainty and assurance that she was safe.

Mrs X is in her 70s, and married to Mr X for over 50 years. They have an adult daughter, who lives locally but has not been in contact for a number of years. However, Mrs X recently contacted her daughter because, following an initial visit to A&E, she was admitted to hospital for the treatment of injuries, including multiple fractures to her hands and ribs. Mrs X had disclosed to hospital staff that she had been assaulted by her husband. Mrs X's daughter subsequently maintained that both she, as a child, and her mother had experienced regular violence at the hands of Mr X, but that Mrs X always refused to seek help or leave him.

A&E staff contacted the police, who attended A&E to take an account of what happened. Mr X was arrested and then bailed with a condition to have no contact with Mrs X pending further enquiries. The arresting officers completed a Public Protection Notification (PPN) and submitted this to police colleagues in the **MASH**, who were able to review the information on the PPN and quickly access information on Mrs X's medical condition from health services and engage with the Safeguarding Liaison Officer.

Mrs X stayed with her daughter following discharge from hospital. However, she learned that Mr X had also been admitted to hospital. In his absence, she returned to the marital home, supported by her daughter. Mrs X's case was referred to a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, as a result of which she was contacted by the Safeguarding Liaison Officer. Mrs X indicated that she was struggling with personal care tasks as a result of her injuries, and was also referred for Reablement services. Mrs X's needs were assessed by the Council's Single Point of Access Team and services to support her were put in place that day. *Further discussion took place between police, the Safeguarding Liaison Officer and RCT's Adult Protection Officer to agree that the safeguarding actions that had been taken so far had been sufficient.*

Mr X was diagnosed with early dementia whilst in hospital. When he was medically fit to be discharged, he had nowhere to live as Mrs X was now living in the marital home and he remained subject to police bail conditions that stated he was to have no contact with Mrs X. The Short-Term Intervention team undertook a needs assessment for Mr X to determine whether he had any care and support needs.

We had planned a new Safeguarding website but haven't made as much progress as we intended. We have now agreed hosting arrangements and a Cwm Taf website that will cover both Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr will go live during 2015/16.

We have not made as much progress as we anticipated in for quality assuring our own work and that of other service providers where we use them. This is partly because we have focused on working with health colleagues and putting partnerships arrangements in place to provide more joined up services. The work we have completed highlighted that we need to assess and review the needs of people in a more timely way and also remove unnecessary administration that we carry out and we will be continuing with this work in 2015/16.

More positively, the number of formal complaints we have is low. In our most recent Annual Complaints Report for 2013/14, we showed that of the 6,428 clients dealt with by Adult social services, we received only 70 formal complaints. We make sure that we resolve and respond to complaints from service users and when things go wrong, we listen and learn so that we can improve what we do.

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/communitychildrensservicescrutinycommittee/2014/11/04/communitychildrensservicescrutinycommittee04-nov-2014.aspx>

By making sure that carers get the help they need.

The most recent estimates tell us that 1 in 10 of our residents is already a carer, which is higher than the average for Wales. Carers need help and support in order to help others. We identify people as carers when they first make contact with us and make sure that they are directed to the right information and support. We also produce a carers' newsletter on a wide range of services, events, support and third sector organisations that can help.

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/relateddocuments/publications/communitycare/carers/carersnewsletter/carersnewsspring2015.pdf>

So that people who work for the Council know and understand how important carers are, over 1,000 staff have undergone training and awareness raising to help them better understand the caring role and we are supporting over 2,300 carers through our dedicated Carers Project, which provides information and training including finding out more about Dementia, Carers' First Aid, looking after money and many other events.

Are you a carer? Have a look at information about the Carers project and get in touch <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/relateddocuments/publications/communitycare/carers/carerssupportprojectfactsheet.pdf>

However, we need to get better at offering a formal assessment to our carers, as last year we were one of the worst Councils in Wales to do this. We are making improvements, but the current data would suggest that it is likely that we will remain among the worst again this year. The Social Services Inspectors raised this in its most recent inspection report <http://cssiw.org.uk/our-reports/local-authority-report/2014/rhondda-cynon-taf-performance-report/?lang=en>. However,

we think the data may not accurately reflect what we do. We want to get this right as quickly as possible, so that we can be clear about what needs to be done to improve the lives of carers in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and this has been included as part of our plan for 2015/16.

By introducing a 'Butterfly' approach for Dementia Care.

Our 'Butterfly' approach for Dementia Care continues to improve the way residents with dementia are cared for. We have three care homes in Clydach Court, Trealaw and Dan y Mynydd (Porth) that specialise in Dementia Care as part of the '**Butterfly**' project. Friends and family of those living in these care homes have seen a noticeable difference in the outlook and behaviour of their loved-ones, which allows them to explore themselves, their lifestyles and their pasts in a gentle, soothing environment.

Case study:

"it's like a happy family - I love it here! I've seen the difference as my dad was here before the Butterfly project was started when people were bored. Now its a joy to visit. I never worry at all when I walk out the door and look forward to coming back!"

Daughter of a man living in Dan y Mynydd

Following monitoring visits by Dementia Care Matters last June, Dan y Mynydd kept its level 1, top, status for its care. However, Clydach Court was downgraded to level 3, meaning observers saw 'good dementia care with many positive elements' which although not as good as level 1, is still positive. The reason for difference in the care was management and staffing changes and we are working to ensure that Clydach Court is back up to level 1 this summer.

We also introduced the 'Butterfly' way of working to Cae Glas home for the elderly. Although it is too soon to check our progress in detail, early signs are encouraging. In January 2015, we were pleased that two privately run Care Homes i.e. Rhondda Care Home, Ystrad and Ty Pentwyn Care Home in Treorchy decided to implement the 'Butterfly' approach using grant funding. These homes will be supported by the Council's Contracts and Commissioning Team and they will also be subject to unannounced visits and rigorous monitoring by Dementia Care Matters.

How did we help people live independently?

Last year we were one of the best Councils in Wales for supporting older people over 65 in the community, at 106.9 per thousand population. Our performance this year has dipped, although it is still above the current Welsh average. We are looking at the reasons for this, but it may have been affected by our success in reducing waiting lists for aids and adaptations. Also, the reablement service is helping more people stay independent. By reducing waiting times, people are being seen more quickly and not waiting a long time for an assessment for aids and equipment. When they get the equipment, they no longer need this support in the community.

However, at 97.84%, we were one of the best in Wales at supporting clients aged 18-64 in the community; and if we continue at this level of performance, we will remain in the top quartile in Wales. We were also one of the worst for the rate of older people over 65 that we support in care homes and this something we are focusing on in next year's

We have improved the way we organise getting aids and adaptations in place for people that need them.

This has helped more people to live in the community without our help. More people are also able to get Disabled Facilities Grants more quickly as we have shortened the time it takes to deliver grants for adults from last year by 27 days to 201 days, which is above the current Wales average.

Customer Comments arising from work carried out through Disabled Facilities Grants:

- **External works to improve access to a house in Pontypridd:**
"I am extremely grateful for all the work carried out. It has made my day to day living so much easier."
"The people who helped with the decisions and the building Contractors were very professional and polite."
- **Internal works to bathroom in Nantgarw to accommodate new seated shower:**
"Absolutely delighted with all the work done!" "
My quality of life has been improved."
"All people involved were marvellous! I am so grateful for everything you have done for me."

By dealing with requests for help in one place.

Rhondda Cynon Taf residents have a Single Point of Access to the reablement and intermediate care services provided by the Council, which means that, already, people are directed to appropriate services in a co-ordinated and timely way. Work is continuing to create a single service with health partners for all reablement and intermediate care, which will mean that referrals for both community health and social care can be accessed from a single point. This has taken longer than we planned because we need to be clear about how a joint service can be set up properly and how it compares to what we already provide. As a result of these ongoing discussions, work will be carried forward into 2015/16.

By getting people back on their feet through services, such as our Reablement Service.

The service lasts for about 6 weeks and helps people to regain their independence, so that they have less need for ongoing care. For the third year running, fewer people that completed the reablement programme needed any ongoing services when it ended; we exceeded the target we set ourselves. Between April and March 2015, we asked over 1,600 people that received a service whether they felt we had helped them to remain living independently at home and 94% of the 232 responses said that we had. At 94.45% this is more than last year but slightly less than we anticipated we would achieve this year.

We had positive feedback on our Reablement service:

- *"The service received from all ladies was excellent. I couldn't have survived without it."*
- *"Thanks to everyone concerned I can now manage on my own."*
- *"Without this support I don't think I would have been able to recover so quickly and then maintain my independence."*

However, people also told us when things didn't go so well:

"care received was excellent but there was a lack of communication between hospital discharge and services being set up"

Feedback like this reminds us that we need to continue to work hard to improve communication between health and social care services.

We have three 'Step up, Step down' beds in Rhondda Cynon Taf in Parc Newydd, Garth Olwg and Tegfan. These beds provide people with temporary help when they are discharged from hospital or as a result of the need for full time care, which means that people have the time they need to help their recovery and get them back on their feet so they can return home. We said in 2014/15 that we may need more of these beds, but have since found that alongside other options of temporary support, there is not the demand for additional beds and we did not continue with this action.

By introducing TELECARE. We are checking that the way we deliver Telecare meets the changing needs of our residents; the findings will be available shortly. The number of clients that are using Telecare to help them stay at home is falling and, at 394, is now less than 2013/14. We are currently looking at ways that we can simplify the Telecare arrangements and promote the service.

An example of how Telecare can help people stay independent:

Mrs D is an 80 year old lady who lives alone in a terraced property. She lives and sleeps downstairs. There are Telecare heat alarm systems in place in her home.

Mrs D suffer from dementia and currently receives 3 calls per day as part of her car package and she also attends a day centre 3 times a week. There is substantial support from her family who call daily and spend several hours there, also a neighbour calls in regularly. Concerns were raised about Mrs D's activities at night, around whether she distressed and pacing in her own home.

'Just checking' system was installed at Mrs D's home and monitored over a four week period. The information provided by the system was easily accessible online and indicated that Mrs D was going to bed at a regular time following carer's intervention. It also showed that for the majority of time Mrs D remained in bed until the following morning when the carer arrived. Over the four weeks it was established that Mrs D was mainly settled at night and there was little activity.

As a result of this information and following discussions with the family and other professionals, it was agreed that there was no evidence that Mrs D was distressed and risks were minimised. Family have peace of mind that Mrs D is safe and well at night, so she is able to still live at home and a long term placement has been averted.

By giving people the freedom to manage their own arrangements and pay their carers themselves through direct payments.

To do this, they need to have the right information and confidence. In the last twelve months we have learned lessons from a pilot that was aimed at people who would meet the criteria for a direct payment, but have difficulty in managing money. An example of a complaint from one family is that they needed more information about our expectation that they make sure Personal Assistants receive police checks. The pilot was managed by a service user organisation, 'Dewis Centre for Independent Living', which helped a small number of people to access a Direct Payment service. This pilot proved successful and also with help, there is less risk that service users get into debt. The involvement of Dewis Centre has now been incorporated into our Direct Payments policy.

As a result of reviewing what we did, we have made it easier for people to give us their views about the benefits and barriers to using the system, and have plans to survey people who are receiving Direct Payments or have a Managed Account in 2015/16. We are currently slightly above the target we set ourselves and last year's performance with 359 out of 2,758 clients choosing their own

service providers (13.02%). The work to continue this is not in our plan for next year, as it will continue within day to day service planning.

How Direct Payments has helped L to maintain her independence:

L has a neurological disorder which she has had for approximately fifteen years. At the time of her diagnosis, her daughter was a toddler and her husband was working full time in a job which involved spending time away from home overnight. A small Direct Payment helped Lucy to spend time safely with her daughter and enable her husband to carry on working, knowing she had support. She was also able to retain control over her own decisions and use the Direct Payments to provide her with flexibility when arranging her care.

Over the years, L's health has deteriorated slowly and she is now dependent on others for all her care needs. Her Direct Payment has increased over the years to accommodate changes to her health and to enable her to employ people who had come to know her well and who understood her illness. She was able to ensure that she had continuity of her own care and also had confidence that people coming into the home were familiar to her child.

Unfortunately, L's illness is now at a level that means her husband has had to reduce his working hours to help to care for her. The Direct Payment continues to assist her to meet her care needs and the presence of her small team of personal assistants, supplemented by the Independent Living Fund, means her husband is able to spend quality time with his daughter, carry on working and still be satisfied that L is receiving good quality care from people who are very familiar with her needs. This has helped L remain with her family in her own home, maintain her independence and avoid the need for residential care.

By working to provide more specialist housing.

We are continuing with our plans for a new purpose built 42 unit extra care housing facility in Talbot Green. The work will now be completed in Spring 2016, slightly later than October 2015 as planned. We also wanted to make sure that the arrangements we put in place to meet the demand for specialist housing meets the requirements of the new Social Care and Wellbeing (Wales) Act so we will make sure that this remains a priority for 2015/16. We are also working on a new way of providing housing support with a new provider later this year. In looking at the needs of our communities, we are also developing three bariatric friendly housing units for people with significant health or disability needs.

Following new arrangements we put in place for the Adaptation and Community Equipment service, we have been able to reduce waiting lists for aids and adaptations in people's homes from 444 -144 days (Feb 2015) and help people more quickly.

By working with others to assess the needs of our older residents living in their own homes, residential care or hospital to get the information from professionals so that can live fulfilled lives.

The Welsh Government has set out what it expects of Councils and Health Boards in working together to meet the needs of older people with complex needs, which you can see at <http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/140319integrationen.pdf> . We have set out how we and our partners in Merthyr Tydfil and the Cwm Taf University Health Board in a statement of intent which you can find

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/relateddocuments/publications/communitycare/olderpeople/statementofintentintegratedcaresummarydocument.pdf>

This statement sets out how we will join up our services, focus on preventing problems from getting worse, helping people to help themselves and making sure the people get the help they need in right place at the right time and by the right person.

This is a huge task but we have already taken steps to make sure that everyone over 65 that needs care when leaving hospital is assessed in the same way and we will continue to join up more of our services next year.

What the regulators have told us

In the most recent report published in October 2014, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) told us that they could see we were making progress in changing the way we deliver adult services, and that our work will help to meet the requirements of the law. They also saw that we have been working together with Cwm Taf Health Board and Merthyr Tydfil Council to make the most of resources. Despite our progress we have to do more to make the changes needed more quickly. You can see the Regulators' full report at - <http://cssiw.org.uk/docs/cssiw/report/141031rcten.pdf>

What does this mean for 2015/16?

As our resources reduce, we need to make the best possible use of what we have and focus on those people that can most benefit from our help. Our services are going through a modernisation programme that focuses on working with our partners in the Health Board, Merthyr Tydfil Council and the voluntary sector to support older people, vulnerable people and their carers to have the choice and say in their care arrangements.

We need to change the way we respond to the needs of our community, and help the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf to find the solutions themselves. This includes taking steps to focus on services that will prevent problems from getting worse. This will continue in 2015/16 and beyond as part of the new Social Care and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, which is why it will remain in this priority plan.

Our plan for 2015/16 focuses on:

- **Safeguard adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable, ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect and are protected from avoidable harm.** This will include:
 - Building on the success of the MASH and making sure there are strong arrangements in place to safeguard adults, according to our legal requirements.
- **Giving adults and older people who need support greater choice and control, within available resources, through prevention and greater integration of health and social services.** This will include:
 - Continuing our work on the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act so that we make sure our duties are delivered jointly with the Health Board.
 - Providing services that help people to safely regain and keep their independence.
 - Empowering people to have great choice and control, focussing on preventing long term illness.

- Redesigning and modernising our services, including the Learning Disability Service, to support people to be independent and manage our resources.

To see the full plan for 2015/16, please visit

DRAFT

Keeping all children and young people safe.

At the start of 2014/15, we set out a plan to safeguard children and young people in our County Borough. The Council has a legal duty to protect people from harm; and we are committed, along with our partner agencies, to help all children and young people achieve their full potential. This continues to be a priority for us in 2015/16.

This section tells you how we have worked hard to meet this commitment over the last year and what we plan to do in 2015/16. Visit [insert link](#) to find out more and let us know what you think.

Why did we choose this priority?

59% of responses to our survey felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

Keeping the children and young people of Rhondda Cynon Taf safe from harm is a responsibility we take very seriously. The Council spends more on adult's and children's social care, per head, than any other Local Authority in Wales because of the deprivation we face in this area and the need to support different groups of the population. Even though we have continued to work hard to help families in need, the demand for our services have continued to grow over the last year with ***** children referred to us as needing help compared to 3,441 in 2013/14. *** children were on the Child Protection Register in 2014/15, compared to 471 in 2013/14.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a public organisation in Wales with responsibility for independently reviewing the performance of Children's Services in each local authority. We took into account the latest CSSIW evaluation available at the time of setting our plan for 2014/15. The inspectorate said that the service had a "good track record to taking an innovative approach" to improvement and that the service had areas of good practice, including social workers working with families facing problems early so that problems can be prevented if possible, or don't get any worse.

CSSIW also found areas for improvement. This included the high number of children on the child protection register, our care and the associated cost, children not being allocated a qualified social worker and assessments not being completed quickly enough. We recognise that these services represent one of the biggest financial and service risks to the Council, which is why we keep a focus on it as a priority.

In our 2014/15 Plan, we said we would focus on:

- **Providing children and their families with the support they need as early as possible to help prevent problems getting worse.**
- **Improving our decision making for children that are in our care.**

The detailed plan we put in place and the progress we have made can be found [here](#). Having considered all of the information available to us, we can see that our performance has been mixed. We have made some improvements and acted more quickly to solve service issues.

We are working towards more modern services in line with the new law, the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act, and strengthening our services to help prevent problems from happening in the first place within families and their communities.

How well did we do?

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
<p>Children and their families are provided with the support they need as early as possible to help prevent problems getting worse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of children on the child protection register will increase by around 20%, from 471 to 565. This is a worsening picture, based on anticipated increased demand. • The number of children becoming looked after will be maintained at around 218. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 447 (PROVISIONAL INFORMATION) children were on the CPR as at 31/3/2015, better than the 565 target we set. Whilst an improving position, it continues to represent one of the highest recorded number of children on the CPR when compared to other councils in Wales • 227 (PROVISIONAL INFORMATION) children became looked after during 2014/15, worse than the 218 target we set and represents one of the highest recorded number of children becoming looked after when compared to other councils in Wales. 	<p>To be up dated</p>
<p>Improve our decision making for those children that are in our care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of initial assessments will involve a social worker seeing the child. • 65% of initial assessments of children's needs will be carried out within 7 working days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73.94% (PROVISIONAL INFORMATION) of initial assessments involved a social worker seeing the child, better than the 70% target set. Whilst an improving position it continues to represent bottom quartile performance when compared to 2013/14 all Wales performance results • 59.47% (PROVISIONAL INFORMATION) were completed in 7 working days, this being worse than the 65% target set. Whilst an improving 	<p>To be up dated</p>

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61% of looked after children placed with in-house and more cost effective foster carers. 	<p>position it continues to represent bottom quartile performance when compared to 2013/14 all Wales performance results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63.5% (PROVISIONAL INFORMATION) of children in foster care as at 31/03/15 were placed with in-house foster carers, better than the 61% target set. No all Wales performance comparison is available for this area. 	

How did we provide children and their families with the support they need as early as possible to help prevent problems getting worse?

By working with partners and communities to provide help early to families.

To tackle the growing demand for services and enable families to access support, we had to change our services to focus on helping children, young people and families earlier and avoid the need for more services through problems getting worse. Our 'Early Intervention and Prevention' strategy has guided a wider remodelling of Children's Services, bringing services for very young children (Early Years) under the same leadership as the wider Early Intervention and Prevention service. We will be strengthening this service in 2015/16.

We have been working to strengthen the Team Around the Family model (or 'TAF') over the year, by working with our partners to simplify the assessment process. TAF was rolled out in 2013/14 as a way of co-ordinating support and services to families, hopefully preventing the need for statutory services. An evaluation at the end of 2013/14 found some weaknesses in the way it was being adopted, so we have made some changes. A revised model based on three hubs of working (Rhondda, Cynon and Taf) will be rolled out from April 2015.

Case Study - The benefits of joint working following assessment.

Two young carers were referred who were caring for their Mum. She was waiting for a heart and double lung transplant and was very weak. She couldn't walk to the front door, couldn't get upstairs and often needed to use her oxygen tank. Mum was relying on her daughters to do everything for her. They were carrying her upstairs, taking it in turns to stay awake at night to ensure she was breathing, helping her to wash and dress and doing the household chores, all while trying to attend school. The family weren't aware that they could have any support and were wary of people coming into the home. School staff had become aware that things were difficult at home but weren't aware of the extent of caring being carried out.

The assessment worker gradually built a relationship with the family and supported Mum through an assessment of her needs. Since then, a stair lift has been installed, Telecare has provided sensors and monitors, direct payments have been set up so that Mum has a PA to help her and the girls are receiving the emotional support they need.

During 2013/14, CSSIW inspected safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours on a national level. The inspection showed we were doing some things well - the focus of the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board on risky behaviours; the Council's investment in training for staff in sexual exploitation and sexually harmful behaviour; and the positive work being undertaken by staff in the Local Authority and the third sector to help children and young people understand their lives, such as the Miskin Project.

However, the inspection highlighted locally, and on a national level, where we need to improve. This includes a gap in appropriate services for children and young people suffering with emotional and psychological health and development needs and no clear pathway for young people leaving care to universal adult services. We had recognised these areas for improvement and volunteered as a pioneer authority in the Welsh Government's 'When I'm ready' scheme. This allows care leavers to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18. When the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act comes into force on 1 April 2016, local authorities in Wales will have new duties towards young people in foster care who wish to continue living with their foster parents once they turn 18.

How did we improve our decision making for children and young people in our care?

By changing the way services operate to meet increasing demands.

Children and young people who are looked after by their local authority, rather than their parents, are amongst the most vulnerable groups in our society. As corporate parents, it is our responsibility to keep them safe, make sure their experiences in care are positive, and look to the future, in creating a successful pathway that allows them to improve their overall wellbeing and life chances. We must approach this parenting role with as much commitment as any family would and ensure that our looked after children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

CSSIW provided us with a Performance Evaluation Report (2013/14) in October 2014, having last inspected parts of Children's Services during May 2013. The inspectorate's overall assessment was that progress has been made in a number of areas but some areas still require attention. In particular, CSSIW found that some areas of improvement identified in the 2012/13 evaluation remain, such as performance around some aspects of assessment and ensuring looked after children have an allocated social worker. However, the Council has effectively acted upon other areas for improvement, such as ensuring all children on the child protection register have an allocated social worker and improving communication between frontline teams to clarify their roles around preventative services.

The Council is particularly praised by CSSIW for its mature partnership relationship with Cwm Taf University Health Board and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. We have set up a joint Youth Offending Service, Integrated Family Support Team and joint safeguarding structures across the Cwm Taf region. Also, working with three Local Authorities, we will have a regional adoption service during 2015-16. These effective partner relationships have also contributed to the development of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

MASH was launched by the First Minister, Carwyn Jones AM, in May 2015. The joint system, and officers working at the 'Hub' in Pontypridd, will allow for much faster and more effective safe sharing of information to safeguard vulnerable children and adults. It involves the joint working of many partner agencies across the Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf area, including South Wales Police, both Councils, National Probation Service and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company. The MASH is one of only a handful across Wales and the UK.

"I'm delighted to open the new MASH which will make a real difference in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults in the Cwm Taf region. A truly joined up approach, MASH will provide a valuable service to make sure those at risk get access to the help and support they need.

"For the Council and its partners, the official launch of the Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is a significant milestone in our ongoing work to protect vulnerable children and adults."

First Minister, Carwyn Jones AM

Many of our service areas have felt the pressures of providing services for an increasing number of children, young people and families, with less staff. One significant way that we have tried to improve our performance is through a new service model. We worked with the Institute of Public Care to put together services that will improve our decision making and assessment for children in care. This was approved in February 2015.

We said we would agree a model for services for young people aged 16 years and over, that achieves the best possible outcomes for young people involved.

In 2014, CSSIW found that two thirds (68.4%) of care leavers that are in education, employment or training at age 19 are very likely to still be in contact with us. CSSIW praised the improvement in 2013/14 of 16 year olds in the care system getting qualifications and the improved secondary school attendance for looked after children; this is slightly above the Wales average. Work on the 16 plus service has been completed and will be implemented as part of the wider Children's Services remodelling.

To keep providing suitable and cost effective placements for looked after children, we said we would establish an adoption service that covered a larger area. We have worked hard to set up the 'Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative' and, despite some problems with recruiting staff, this service will start in 2015/16. This collaborative is one of five that forms the National Adoption Service, as part of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act. We hope it will increase the placement opportunities for children and young people in the care system.

We have recognised growing numbers of relative foster carers and the need to provide them (and mainstream carers) with support. We are confident that we will increase the number of in house foster carers over the next two years, and we exceeded our target of 95% of mainstream Foster Carers approved last year when all 100% were approved. We also have one of the lowest percentages in Wales of children who have had three or more placements during the year (only 6.4% compared to an average of 8.3% across Wales). Clearly, we want to minimise this figure as much as possible to avoid disruption for children.

We continue to make changes behind the scenes, such as through our Looked After Children Action Group, which aims to safely bring down the number of children looked after and provide suitable placements for those leaving care. The new Safe Arrangements for the Care of Children have been introduced in January 2015, which we hope will ensure robust decision making.

What does this mean for 2015/16?

The performance evaluation for 2014/15 told us that:

- Demand for Children's Services remained high in terms of the number of referrals dealt with and the number of initial and core assessments completed; this position had an adverse affect on the speed at which performance results improved. More effective arrangements to manage demand and need will therefore be fundamental to the successful future operation of the service;
- There are early signs that preventative work is starting to make a positive difference in terms of reducing the number of looked after children and also reducing the number of children on the Child Protection Register; albeit, the numbers in both areas remain high. Further work is therefore needed to coordinate preventative and early intervention services for families in the greatest need more effectively;
- The service over-spent its revenue budget during the year primarily as a result of demand pressures and a rising number of high cost residential places. There is therefore a need to accelerate the creation of more cost effective placements to support the service to live within its means into the future.

To address the above, some of the key areas the 2015/16 action plan will need to focus on are:

- Implementation of the MASH to help ensure that referrals are allocated to the appropriate service, as earlier as possible, to more effectively manage demand and need;
- Implementation of the revised operating model for Children's Services that will provide heightened focus on prevention and earlier intervention, including making better use of the TAF Service;
- The creation of more cost effective placements, such as adoptive parents; and
- Implementation of the recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office in respect of safeguarding policies and procedures.

The impact of this work will aim to support fewer referrals to Children's Services; more children remaining with their families where safe to do so; an improvement in key performance indicators particularly in terms of timeliness of assessments and more social worker involvement in assessments; and a reduction in cost pressures within the service.

Prosperity

Providing a top quality education - Every School a great School
Improving our communities

Providing a top quality Education - "*Every School a great School*".

At the start of 2014/15, we set out a plan to improve the prosperity of our communities by providing young people with a top quality education. A good educational experience, with high quality role models, a curriculum that prepares young people for life and for employment and schools that encourage the community to engage in learning are ways that education can transform a young person's future. We recognise how important education is in creating a safer, healthier and more prosperous County Borough, and this continues to be a priority for us in 2015/16. This section gives you some information on what we have done over the last year and our plans going forward. Visit [insert link](#) to find out more and let us know what you think.

Why did we choose this priority?

96% of responses to our survey felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

We have started to see some really encouraging changes in results, with our performance improving in all stages faster than the Welsh average. However, there are still too many children in Rhondda Cynon Taf who struggle with reading, writing and communication, too many young people who leave school lacking skills and confidence in these areas and too many that are not prepared for work or further education. We are among the worst in Wales when it comes to achievement and attendance.

Our Education Service was inspected in 2012 by Estyn, the inspectorate for Wales. At the time, inspectors graded the service and our prospects for improvement as "adequate". Since the inspection, we have focused on a limited number of priorities, such as improving literacy, numeracy and attendance and the way schools are helped to improve. Over the course of 2013 and 2014, the inspectors have regularly checked and challenged our progress and given us positive feedback. In August 2014, the Council was removed from the category of requiring Estyn monitoring. You can see the report containing the letter and the Inspectors' more detailed findings by visiting: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EstynReport2014

In 2014/15, we put together a plan to continue our work to meet the challenges we face. We said we would focus on:

- **Building great school leadership.**
- **Providing high quality teaching and learning.**
- **Overcoming barriers to learning.**
- **Honestly assessing our current performance, where we are good and where we need to do better.**
- **Encouraging the wider community to engage in learning.**
- **Improving school accommodation and building new schools.**

We set ourselves ambitious targets and aimed for improvement, even though we knew that if achieved, our performance would still be below the Welsh average, we wanted to succeed. The detailed plan we put in place and progress can be found [here](#).

We are striving to continue to improve educational standards for all children, with a particular focus on vulnerable children, to help each young person fulfil their potential and make every school a 'great' school.

How well did we do?

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
<p>Make sure our Schools set high standards and are well managed .</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estyn find that at least 90% of our schools have good leadership (was 72.7%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We missed our ambitious target of 90% with 71.2% of our schools over the last three years have been graded at least 'good' by Estyn for leadership. However this is still above the all Wales average of 69.1% <i>Where leadership was judged 'adequate' or 'unsatisfactory' more rigorous monitoring has taken place to ensure activities to promote improvements are quickly adopted.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We want more of our schools to be graded at least good for leadership and we have set a target of 72.6%
<p>Provide high quality teaching</p>	<p>Continue to reduce the gap in results between pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the all Wales average.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring at least half of all Rhondda Cynon Taf pupils achieve 5 GCSE passes at (grades A* to C). Estyn find that at least 70% of our schools are good or better (was 51.5% says). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are reducing the gap between our results and the Welsh average with more than half of our pupils (50.5%) aged 16, achieving the Level 2 Threshold including in English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics grade A*–C for the first time ever, exceeding our target of 50%. Over the last 3 years, 54.2% of our schools have been graded at least 'good' by Estyn at the time of inspection. We improved on last year but missed our ambitious target of 70% and are below the all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After such positive progress last year, we want more of our pupils to achieve the Level 2 threshold and we have set a target of 55% for the academic year 2014/15. This is slightly less than the Welsh average, but above our current position among the worst in Wales. We want to improve on last year with more of our schools graded at least 'good' at the time of inspection and have set a target of 56.5%.

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
		Wales average of 62.5%.	
Work with others in the community to help families to learn together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90% of families told us that they benefitted from attending the Family Learning Programme³. 	The funding that the Council received for the Family Learning Programme has been withdrawn and we have been unable to get the information for this from families involved.	
Make sure more of our children attend school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve pupil attendance at primary school from 93.4% in the 2012/13 academic year to 94.2% in the 2013/14 academic year. Improve pupil attendance at secondary school from 92.0% in the 2012/13 academic year to 93.2% in the 2013/14 academic year. 	Pleasingly both Primary and Secondary school attendance improved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary school attendance reached 94.5%, and exceeded our target of 94.2%; and Secondary school attendance also improved and we met our target of 93.2%. 	We are aiming to continue improvements in attendance in both primary and secondary schools. We have set a target of 94.9% for primary schools and 93.7% attendance in secondary schools.
Renew and improve our school buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the percentage of primary schools with 25% or more surplus places (30 or more) – 37.8% last year to 32.4% this year. Reduce the percentage of secondary schools with 25% or more surplus places – from 57.9% last year to 41.2% this year. 	<i>Data not available until June</i>	
Take every opportunity to improve by learning from what we do	Estyn find that at least 90% of our schools are likely to improve (was 76%).	We didn't meet our ambitious target of 90% with 72.9% of our schools over the last three years being graded at least 'good' by Estyn for prospects for improvement – However, this is above the all Wales average of 68.9%.	We want to improve on last year with more of our schools likely to improve and have set a target of 74.2%.

³ This programme is where schools identify pupils or families they think might benefit from learning together. Courses are run through the Community Learning Programme.

Success in education is achieved by taking steps to improve leadership, teaching and learning and the school. Rhondda Cynon Taf’s educational results will not be transformed overnight, but we have shown that with a small number of priorities and the continuing commitment of staff in our schools to deliver them, educational performance will continue to improve at all key stages.

How did we build great school leadership?

By continuing with our work with the Central South Consortium, schools and Governors so that we work together to provide the best possible chance to all our pupils so that they can reach their full potential.

The Central South Consortium is a group of 5 authorities working together to improve schools across the region. We have set standards across all parts of Education and then provided support and challenge to check that they are being met. This has included 'school-to-school' support, where schools with similar priorities work together to improve.

We can identify schools that need extra support by using the Welsh Government school categorisation model which is based on data together with our wider, but more local knowledge of schools. We put in place the help needed, but we also take action when school improvement, including leadership and management are too slow.

We have strengthened arrangements for appointing headteachers and senior leaders so that expectations are clear about the need to focus on raising standards. We have put in place training for existing headteachers, teachers and school governors so that we can improve teaching and learning across the board.

Case study: Excellent leadership

St John Baptist High School was recently inspected by Estyn and invited to prepare a written case study to describe the practices in the school which result in excellent standards. They said that there is *“consistent high level of expectation by the entire community of the school”* (Estyn 2014)

Improving leadership will remain a key priority in 2015/16, as effective leadership and governance is at the heart of school improvement.

How did we make sure our schools provide high quality teaching and learning?

By attracting new talent and providing incentives for teachers to improve their skills and further their development.

We have recruited and retained teachers through the ‘Teach First’ scheme, finding high quality staff to fill posts in core subjects where there are national shortages. We have also strengthened the skills of existing teachers through our Outstanding Teacher programme. Last year, Treorchy Comprehensive School became an accredited centre for the delivery of the programme, showing that we have first-class practice in our schools here in Rhondda Cynon Taf. We have also made good use of technology to improve teaching by providing access to the ‘Hwb’ virtual learning environment in 129 schools.

Around 59% of pupils achieve a reading score that is average or above for their age. We have worked to improve this through our focused approach to improving communication skills, reading and writing. Teachers have supported young people through the 'Catchup' and 'Cumbria Reading Intervention' programmes, which helped to improve pupils reading age by an average of 20 months. We also provided temporary support to schools for children that were shown as needing extra help

in reading by a national test. By implementing the Communication & Literacy Inclusive Classrooms (CLIC) project, we were able to identify and help children to improve their speech, language and communication difficulties.

Improving communication and numeracy skills is important for our whole communities, as skilled and capable individuals create economic success. We are working with our partners, including Communities First, to help families to become more engaged in education and to support the young people themselves to do well in school. We have worked with 93 adults since April 2014, who between them have achieved 42 literacy and 57 numeracy accredited qualifications.

We believe our efforts to improve teaching and learning are having an impact, with pupils achieving improvements in their results at key stage 2 (aged 11) and key stage 3 (aged 14). But, still too many children are not making sufficient progress at key stage 3, so this remains a focus for us in the year ahead.

Good progress has been achieved at key stage 4, with results improving against the previous year. This has been achieved by assessing pupils in a better way so that we can target and offer support to those who need it. More pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or equivalent (84.6%) last year, better than the all Wales average (82.3%) and for the first time performance for the indicator including English or Welsh and maths passed the 50% mark.

Despite the progress made, we remain as one of the worst 22 local authorities in Wales. If we are to continue to close the gap against the all Wales average, we have to continue work to maximise pupils' performance in key stage 2 and 3 to see greater improvements in key stage 4. Therefore, improving teaching and learning will remain a priority in our 2015/16 improvement plan.

Case study: Improving Together

The 'school-to-school' work that is led by headteachers across our region has resulted in Y Pant, Treorchy and Cardinal Newman secondary schools becoming 'hubs' or specialist schools. These schools have generated the capacity to give their time in helping other schools to deliver programmes to improve teaching and learning. A number of our primary schools have also recently applied to become 'hub' schools to improve the quality of Welsh language and Foundation Phase outcomes.

Cardinal Newman Catholic Comprehensive is a 'hub' school and has an offer of teaching and leadership programmes that focus on improving pedagogy and leadership skills that they share with other schools. Y Pant Comprehensive School and Treorchy Comprehensive School are also 'hub' schools offering specialised programmes.

A 'Pathfinder' partnership has flourished between Tonyrefail Comprehensive School and Willows High School in Cardiff, where the schools shared areas of work that is regarded as excellent practice. Both schools achieved their highest ever Key Stage 4 results in the summer of 2014. The headteachers of both schools were asked to present on the benefits of their collaboration at a recent Welsh Government conference.

How did we work in partnership to improve the wellbeing of our young people and help them to overcome barriers to learning?

By supporting young people to feel valued in school, have a positive attitude to learning and their wellbeing.

With attendance being one of our priorities it was pleasing that last year, every one of our schools improved their attendance figures. We have improved the quality and frequency of the data we collect on attendance so we were better able to identify problems and provide more targeted solutions. We raised the awareness of the importance of school using our 'Super Attender Challenge' campaign, intervened early when pupils were late or absent through first response or 'meet and greet' visits, and as a last resort, we put in place 85 prosecutions against parents or carers.

Case study: Improving attendance together

In autumn 2013, attendance at Ynysboeth Community School was 91.8% and was ranked 106 out of 110 RCT schools. By using different ways to tackle the problem, attendance improved to 95.8%, and by autumn 2014, the school, was ranked 17 out of 105.

Despite our improvements, attendance in our primary and secondary schools is still below the Welsh average and remains a priority. Together with our schools, we will continue our work to change expectations of pupils and parents, and maintain our campaign to improve attendance.

Children and young people need to be in school to learn and last year there were fewer fixed term exclusions in our secondary schools, but more in primary schools. Overall, there were fewer exclusions than in 2012/13, and the average number of days lost through an exclusion reduced to 2 days oppose to 4 days, as in the previous year. We are also tackling bullying, which can be a cause of disengagement in schools. Since 2012/13 there have been 35% fewer bullying incidents in secondary schools and a 22% reduction in primary schools.

Our best schools take steps to help and monitor pupils that start school with low levels of communication and social skills. We have programmes in place, like CLIC and SEAL⁴, which help pupils to develop their social and emotional skills. The Families and Schools Together programme also aims to help families develop trust and confidence, improving family learning and home-school relationships.

By identifying and supporting those young people who are experiencing difficulties at transitional times in their life, we have helped 205 young people back into education, employment or training; signposted another 70 young people to further training, and helped a further 58 to get work. Over the last three years, of the 59 schools inspected by Estyn, 45 were graded at least 'good' and 14 as 'adequate' for Wellbeing. Our newly developed 'Wellbeing and Behaviour Strategy' will hopefully help even more schools in 2015/16 to identify pupils that need support and strengthen their ability to learn.

⁴ SEAL - is a comprehensive, whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools

Case study: Reaching out

One of our learners on the 'Your Future First' programme said "I was supported in many ways during the programme. I was supported with my feelings, my future, my life and loads more. The course made me happier and more confident".

This young person is now studying youth work and has secured part-time employment as a trainee youth worker.

Learners who have additional needs, are in the care system or affected by poverty often have to overcome many barriers to learning. The attainment results of these groups has been improving and this year, all of the children in the care of the Local Authority left education with an approved qualification. We are changing our special needs classes in mainstream schools to accommodate an increase in the number of pupils with complex needs. As part of our three year plan to change Behaviour Support services, we have set up specialist provision for young people over 16 years old with severe or profound Autistic Spectrum Disorder and complex learning needs. This has meant that some of our most vulnerable learners are able to receive education within Rhondda Cynon Taf, which has also saved around £450K. We have also changed Learning Support Classes to better meet the needs of our children and young people.

How did we take every opportunity to improve by learning from what we do?

We are collecting and using more robust information and data, tracking pupil progress, attendance, behaviour and overall school performance.

We use this to see where we need to support or take other action to make sure that improvements are made to provide better teaching and learning across all our schools. Governing bodies are also improving the way they use and interpret data so that they can improve teaching and learning in their schools. Primary and secondary schools are also sharing information so that they can better support pupils when they change schools. Councillors have more confidence in the information that they receive and as a result are better able to hold schools and council officers more effectively to account.

We are sharing our school data reports with the CSC's data unit so that they can use these to inform their annual performance reviews. We have also used data more effectively to improve the way we work with our partners and to make sure we get the most out of our money.

How did we encourage the wider community to engage in learning?

By co-ordinating our work with the Youth Engagement & Participation Service and working with our partners to help parents, carers and the wider community get involved in learning.

Families and Schools Together (FAST) helps children through family learning and developing better home-school relationships with the aim of children having stronger life chances.

Partnership working in Miskin Primary School

- As a result of the FAST project, parents reported that they had fewer difficulties with their children and more support from other families. Also, parents felt more confident in helping their children. As a result of the success of the original FAST project, a second project was started in January 2014.

- Within an academic year, more pupils achieved better results for Personal and Social Development at end of Foundation Phase. The school believes this to be, at least in part, as a result of the FAST project.
- There is now an active Parent and Teachers' Association within the school and parents regularly attend events and training sessions, including weekly family learning sessions
- As a direct result of FAST, two families have been supported by Team Around the Family and have stepped down from the interventions and support they needed.
- Credit Union is now established and run by community volunteers within the school, with many pupils saving weekly.
- School attendance has improved by 2%. Responses to a pupil survey by Estyn in its recent inspection stated that 100% of pupils feel safe; feel that the school deals well with any bullying; know who to talk to if they are worried or upset and that they are doing well in school. FAST has contributed to the positive ethos of the school.

How did we improve school accommodation and build new schools?

Our modernisation programme means that we have continued to remove surplus school places and align school catchment areas so that we can manage demand better.

We have removed over 810 surplus school places with 600 more to be removed when Aberdare Community School is opened at the end of the year. To achieve this we have realigned 6 schools⁵ and completed major works at 5 schools⁶. We have worked to realign the catchment area for Y Pant Comprehensive School, and at the same time, tackle the surplus places at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive; this will result in 200 fewer surplus places over the next five years. Similarly, primary school catchment areas in Llanharan, Brynna, Dolau and Bryncae have been reorganised as there were too many pupils subscribing at Dolau Primary School while there were spaces at Llanharan Primary School.

To provide the best possible places for children to learn, we have spent £4.753M⁷ to improve school buildings and facilities across RCT including a new school hall at Trerobart Primary School and improved access to Parclewis Primary school, together with classroom adaptations and works to make a safe route to the school. Also, in the former Glanffrwd Infant School we have created a new satellite Autistic Centre for secondary school aged pupils. Work has already started work on new projects, which includes major extensions at Llwynyrwn and Treorchy Primary schools and a £24M investment for a replacement school for Y Pant Comprehensive.

Our commitment to improving schools as part of the 21st Century Schools programme is long-term and continues to be a key priority for 2015/16 and beyond.

Going forward into 2015/16 (2014/15 Academic Year)

Despite our progress, we still have a lot to do which is why providing a top quality education and making every school a 'great' school is still one of our priorities. In 2015/16, we aim to continue to improve educational standards for all children in our schools, particularly vulnerable groups, so that every child achieves their potential.

⁵ Glantaf Infants, Ynyswen Infants, Glanffrwd Infants, Aberdare High, Aberdare Girls and Blaengawwr.

⁶ Treorchy Primary (Phase One), Williamstown Primary, Ysgol Yr Eos, Parc Primary and Trerobart Primary.

⁷ This actual figure will not be finalised until the end of April 2015. The figure above is the projected outturn figure.

To make sure that we provide a top quality education and make every school a 'great' school in 2015/16, we plan to:

- **Build great school leadership.** This will include:
 - Helping schools to support and learn from each other. We have seen the successes of school-to-school support this year and want to expand this over the academic year.
 - Continuing to work in partnership with the Consortium to help schools to improve; providing challenge and support where needed.
 - Make sure our School Governors have the training and information they need to make decisions.

- **Ensure high quality teaching and learning.** This will include:
 - Being clear about what is expected in the classroom to provide excellent lessons.
 - Making sure that reading and writing help to provide good foundations for learning.
 - Supporting secondary schools to meet the demands of the new GCSE and GCE exams.
 - Helping our most able year 12 pupils gain entry to Oxbridge and other top universities.

- **Promote wellbeing and engagement of all learners.** This will include:
 - Helping schools to support young people to overcome the difficulties they face that stop them learning.
 - Using information better and getting involved early so that we can help young people who are in danger of not being in education employment or training.
 - Making sure that pupils that are eligible for free school meals are helped to have the same learning opportunities as other pupils.

- **Provide schools that are fit for the 21st Century.** This will include:
 - Completing the school modernisation projects we are working on e.g. in Aberdare School and Treorchy Primary and making progress on others e.g. Y Pant.
 - Meeting the demand for Welsh Language education and expanding provision for primary aged pupils with additional learning needs.

We have also seen other service changes within Education. The recently agreed changes to Nursery education will be monitored so that we can check the effect on standards as pupils move through the Foundation Phase of learning. Changes to the School Music Service will be introduced from September 2015 and we will monitor the progress of these and value for money. We have also taken steps to make sure that we continue to comply with the Welsh Public Library Standards following the closure or transfer to the community of some libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Improving our communities.

At the start of 2014/15, we set out a plan to improve the prosperity of our communities by supporting people to gain employment and enabling the development of business and towns to create jobs. We have looked at our performance and the information we have about skills, employment and the economy of the area and 'Improving our Communities' remains a priority for 2015/16. This section gives you some information on what we have done over the last year and our plans for next year. Visit [insert link](#) to find out more and let us know what you think.

Why did we choose this priority?

73% of responses to our survey felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

Rhondda Cynon Taf has some of the most deprived communities in Wales. In some areas, unemployment is high with nearly a quarter of households being 'workless', meaning the adults that live there do not work. The percentage of people that claim benefits here is also higher than the average across Wales, and 5.3% of our 18-24 year olds claim Job Seekers' Allowance.

But, Rhondda Cynon Taf is also a County Borough of opportunity, with many new businesses starting up each year and a growing housing market in some areas. We cannot influence national and global economic challenges, but we can do our best to make the most of these opportunities. This priority is about supporting people to gain skills and employment, encouraging businesses locally, improving our town centres and bidding for European funding to make more positive changes to the County Borough; all of which help to create more jobs and homes.

In our 2014/15 Plan, we said we would focus on:

- **Supporting people to gain employment and take up training.**
- **Helping people to better understand their finances.**
- **Reducing homelessness.**
- **Continuing to develop Aberdare and Pontypridd town centres.**
- **Supporting businesses to create jobs.**

The detailed plan we put in place and the progress we have made can be found [here](#). Having considered all of the information available to us, we can see that our performance overall is improving and our work is having a positive impact on the local people and businesses we support. However, the number of people unemployed and/or claiming out of work benefits remain higher than the Welsh average.

We therefore need to re-shape some of the services we provide to further improve the economic opportunities for local people and businesses.

How well did we do?

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
Supporting people to gain employment and take up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 288 people enter work following support from work / enterprise clubs, maintaining the same 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We did much better than we expected, with 620 people starting work after being supported by our work / enterprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are aiming for 521 people to begin work following support. • We hope that 1,472

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
training.	<p>level as last year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1,465 accredited qualifications gained by people attending community learning programmes, maintaining the same level as last year. 	<p>clubs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,090 accredited qualifications were gained by people through community learning programmes, which is way above our target. 	<p>accredited qualifications will be achieved by April 2016.</p>
Helping people to better understand their finances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 49% of people we work with will have a better understanding of their finances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We beat our target, with 71% of people having a better understanding of their finances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have changed our focus within services for next year, so until we know how delivery works in practice, our target is modest at 53%.
Reducing homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent 88% of potentially homeless families becoming homeless for at least six months. The average number of days all homeless families with children will spend in Bed and Breakfast accommodation will be 15 days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively, we prevented 95% of potentially homeless families from becoming homeless; and The average number of days homeless families with children spent in Bed and Breakfast accommodation was only 4.67 days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new homelessness laws might affect our services, so we have targeted that 92% of potentially homeless families will be prevented from becoming homeless; and The average number of days families spend in B&Bs are targeted as 8 days.
Continuing to develop Aberdare and Pontypridd town centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the completion of at least 36 property enhancements across Aberdare and Pontypridd town centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We met our target, with 36 grants awarded to date that will support property enhancements in both town centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have looked at our planned work and the likely demand for the year and targeted 40 property enhancements across these towns.
Support businesses and create jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 jobs will be created in local businesses through grants provided by the Council and by Welsh Government. 30 jobs will be created by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We did much better than expected, with 116 jobs created in local businesses and 77 jobs created by companies that deliver major contracts on behalf of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We want at least 60 jobs to be created in local businesses and another *** jobs created by companies that deliver major

What we aimed to do	What did we aim to achieve in 2014/15?	How did we do?	What do we aim to achieve in 2015/16?
	companies that are chosen to deliver major contracts on behalf of the Council.	Council.	contracts with the Council.

How did we support people to gain employment and take up education or training?

By working with our partners to deliver many different skills and training opportunities, as well as our own schemes, which encourage people to gain work experience and improve job prospects.

Our focus over the last year has been on supporting people to get employment by improving their skills and qualifications. Around 12.7% of adults in the County Borough have no qualifications, which is higher than the average across Wales of 10% of adults (December 2014 figures). We have continued to support people within their own communities to learn new skills, through programmes like 'Communities First'.

'Communities First' works with local people, community organisations, businesses and other key agencies to tackle the long-term causes and effects of poverty. The skills development opportunities provided by 'Communities First' have led to local people achieving over 2,000 accredited qualifications in skills including Information Technology; Sign Language; Counselling; Help with CV writing and introductory courses for specific careers e.g. Food Hygiene and First Aid.

Case Study

Mother of three, A, attended the Upper Cynon Communities First course on 'Hospitality' in 2014, hoping that this would be good for her CV and help her to apply for a part-time bar job. A was initially very shy, but by the end of the training she worked part time as a volunteer in the bar so that she could gain practical experience and soon became employed part time. A was liked and valued by customers and staff, and within a few months, she got a full time Bar Manager job at the local Rugby & Football Club.

A says: "I am so grateful for the opportunity provided by Communities First.....for without it I would neither have had the confidence or the ability to be able to apply for such an important and life changing position".

Not only did A take a big step back into employment, but working gave her the confidence to take up driving lessons, which she had always wanted to do to support her young family.

Over 1,000 people attended 'Job Fayres' held in some of our Communities First areas last year, giving them a chance to speak to employers such as Argos, the Armed Forces, EE, Remploy, Rocialle and Western Power to get advice on their chosen career path. From these very successful events, 40 people were offered work, 2 people were offered an apprenticeship, 30 people were offered training opportunities and 6 people were offered volunteering work.

We also continue to offer young people different ways of getting work experience and improving their skills within the Council. These include our own Apprenticeship Scheme; a training programme aimed at young people leaving care called a 'Step in the Right Direction' and 'Jobs Growth Wales' (a Welsh Government programme) placements.

We employed 17 new apprenticeships in September supporting and training young people to gain experience and qualifications. The scheme is successful, with 91% of the apprentices starting 2012/13 now in work or further education

'Since starting my apprenticeship it has opened a whole array of opportunities and first-time experiences for myself. I chose an apprentice as a way to learn new skills along with improving on the very little skills I possessed and also earning a wage the same time. Since then I have been given the most up-to-date technical training both in house and external; I have gained a Foundation Degree from the University of Glamorgan, I have worked along numerous experienced colleagues and members of staff throughout the authority and most important it has aided me in gaining a full time job within Rhondda Cynon Taf Council'.

(Feedback from one apprentice on the scheme)

During the first six months of this year, we received 27 applications for the 'Step in the Right Direction' programme. Seven people were successful and have moved into their chosen work placements within the Council.

Because of these schemes are successful we now offer more opportunities for young people to get involved. For example, we are working with ELITE Supported Employment Agency Ltd to provide 13 weeks paid work experience programmes at Vision products for adults with learning disabilities.

We intend to recruit more young people to the Apprenticeship Scheme and 'Step in the Right Direction' programme this year. We also want to work with our partners to support young people before they look for work and do more to target the young people most likely to not be in education, training or employment when they leave school.

How did we help people to better understand their finances?

By providing advice and support on the financial choices people have, aiming to improve people's 'money management' at an earlier stage in their lives.

We said in last year's plan that we would review the services that give people advice and information, but this has not yet been done because it is a bigger piece of work than originally thought. We will continue to work on this and will join it with the work we are doing on the new law around Social Services & Wellbeing.

But, we have continued to provide advice and support through funding the Rhondda Cynon Taf Citizens Advice Bureau and Age Connects Morgannwg. Last year, the Bureau helped over 2,500 people and helped to bring in almost £1million in total additional income for some of our poorest households. Around 500 social care service-users also had advice from our Welfare Rights Team on the benefits that they can claim.

We have looked at the ongoing impact of the UK Government welfare reforms to make sure we target services at those most affected. We were also going to write a 'Financial Inclusion Strategy', but now plan to do this during 2015/16, as part of our work to tackle poverty.

425 people had training to help them manage their money and weekly budgets from 'Communities First' and 71% of those who were trained told us they feel more able to manage their finances.

How did we reduce homelessness?

By providing services that try to support people as quickly as possible and working to make sure housing is suitable for the needs of individuals and families.

There were more households in difficulty this year compared to last with 558 household presenting as homeless compared to 473 in 2013/14. The increasing numbers of households in difficulties affects how quickly homeless presentations are decided and how long families spend in temporary accommodation. Despite this increase, we have continued to prevent homelessness for at least six months in 95% of cases.

Over the last few years, we have seen more young people presenting as homeless and we know there is a lack of suitable housing for them in the area. So, this year, we have worked towards providing facilities for this group but some of our planned projects have been delayed due to funding. We are working with the charities, 'United Welsh' and 'Adref', to open emergency accommodation for young people aged between 16 and 24 at 'The Grange' in Pontypridd during 2015. This emergency accommodation will provide young people with a room, and also help them with a number of lifestyle skills around their safety and health. We have also had agreement for a similar scheme in Abercynon, which we also aim to open during 2015.

The Housing (Wales) Act in 2014 made positive changes to laws around homelessness. Councils can now access privately rented housing to help prevent people becoming homeless. We have employed an additional member of staff to deal directly with private landlords to increase the supply of decent properties. We have also worked with private landlords to develop shared housing in the Taf area for single people aged under 35. But the changes arising from this new law may affect our performance, so some of our targets are set slightly lower than we performed in 2014/15.

Through helping people that are homeless, we are recognising the difficulties they face. This year, we are looking at practical ways to help prevent homelessness, such as a fund which, in some circumstances, could help people to keep their home if they are in prison or it could delay an eviction date. We are also looking at ways to develop ways to prevent homelessness in local communities.

How did we develop town centres in Rhondda Cynon Taf?

We continued to work in both Pontypridd and Aberdare town centres to create vibrant town centres.

As you may have noticed, our town centres are going through some big changes. From Summer 2015, the Grade-II listed Lido in Pontypridd will open once again to the public. This is a multi-million pound project, with £3million coming from European funding and Welsh Government, £2.3million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a £900,000 contribution from the Council and £100,000 from Cadw. When completed, the Lido will be great tourist attraction and facility for local people to enjoy.

Many of the original features of the Lido are being recreated. Part of the funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund provided workshops to inspire and educate people on traditional working practice like lime pointing, plastering and dry stone walling. The community provided memories of the Lido as it was and, as a result, local school children worked with an artist to create a 1920s inspired-artwork that covers the protective hoardings of the site. The construction of the new facility has also provided of employment and training opportunities for local people.

Last year, nearly £6million was secured through Welsh Government's *Vibrant & Viable Places* funding to enhance the Pontypridd area. Although there was a delay in funding coming through, work has begun with 174sqm of commercial floorspace created or refurbished and 35 homes with improved energy efficiency. The Council also secured an extra £500K from Welsh Government to purchase the Taff Vale site.

We are working behind the scenes to improve the vibrancy of our town centres. For example, we are introducing planning guidance that aims to make the process easier and gives guidance on renovating old buildings in a way that's sympathetic to the locality. We are also looking at Business Improvement Districts, which is a way of raising funds through business rates for businesses to improve and promote their area by marketing their business, creating loyalty schemes or improving the appearance of the community, for example with street furniture and planting.

We have worked alongside the Council's Events Team, Town Council and traders in Pontypridd to put on events and promote the town centre to students, tourists and local people.

Pontypridd Christmas Event

"The event and footfall was amazing and as market traders we made the effort this year to stay open later to support the event. A big thank you to the organisers - very professional organisation and seamless communication - the effect of stepping out onto Taff Street brought a smile to your face both as a trader and a member of the Pontypridd community"

Indoor Market Traders, Pontypridd Indoor Market

We have also listened to traders to understand their concerns. For instance, some felt that the traffic restrictions on Pontypridd town centre had an effect on trade during the afternoon. We introduced a trial scheme, 'Through after Three', which allows motorists to drive through the centre from 3pm - an hour earlier than before. We hope the trial will boost trade during the late afternoon.

In Aberdare, we have continued with our 'Townscape' Programmes, which aims to improve the condition of business premises, bringing spaces back into use and supporting businesses to grow. 36 businesses in Aberdare and Pontypridd were offered grants for these purposes. We will carry out surveys this year with visitors to Aberdare and Pontypridd to gauge feedback and make improvements where needed.

Footfall figures (2013/14) show an increase in Pontypridd of 19.3%, which is testament to the work we have been doing and bucks the general trend across the UK. There was a slight decrease in footfall in Aberdare (-3.4%). This is similar to the picture across Wales, where footfall decreased by 3.1%. However, early data for 2015 shows an increase of 2.5% in Aberdare.

We have continued to support businesses in all of our town centres, for example by development of a new mobile 'Tonypandy Town Centre App' which allows businesses to promote themselves and attract visitors using offers and deals. This seems to be working well, so we are hoping to do the same in Aberdare and Porth this year.

How did we support business and create jobs?

By working with partners to give financial and practical support to businesses, where this will boost the economy and create jobs.

We are making it easier to set up businesses by bringing in a 'blanket' planning permission for an area. This Local Development Order will cut the 'red tape' involved in planning, save time and provide planning permission upfront. The Treforest Industrial Estate is our first chosen area for this work because of its crucial location to Cardiff City Region and excellent transport links.

We also set up a levy for all new developments, which will be used to fund new schools or transport links. This will have long term benefits for the economy of the area.

The Council continued to support businesses through targeted grants. Outside the areas of Aberdare and Pontypridd, 82 businesses were given grants, which created 116 new jobs and safeguarded an estimated 1,214 jobs.

Case Study - With Love...Flowers & Gifts

A new florist has opened in Llantrisant with support from the Council's Business Support Grant, a

flexible grant scheme aimed at assisting new and existing small-medium sized businesses to develop their growth potential.

L obtained funding which, along with her own savings, enabled her to open her florist 'With Love.....Flowers & Gifts'. This has brought a previously empty property back into use and created employment.

L said: "I'm so very excited to open my own business in my home town and am grateful to the support of the local authority in providing grant funding towards the venture. The response and support from people in Llantrisant has been overwhelming and it's great to bring an empty property back into use. As a town, the traders work in partnership to attract more people to visit Llantrisant and enjoy the wide variety of shops, restaurants, pubs and facilities here. During this period of austerity, it's important to work together for the greater good of the entire community and I hope my shop contributes in some way to its ongoing success."

We recognise the opportunities from working with others across South East Wales and wider area. A recent joint review showed that there are five priority areas for business growth across the region; ICT being one of them. As a result, we are focussing on this sector during 2015/16 to support ICT businesses to expand and maximise the opportunities of Superfast Broadband being rolled out across the area.

The Council itself has an impact on the local economy by buying goods and services for the community. Last year, 74.5% of bids/tenders to the Council were submitted by local business. Contracts were awarded to 141 companies, of which 111 (78.7%) were from Cardiff, Newport and Swansea postcodes, which include Rhondda Cynon Taf. We value our local businesses and will do even more during 2015/16 to help them apply for small scale contracts with the Council.

We continue to support the Rhondda Cynon Taf Business Club and the latest data for 2013 shows that there were 785 new business start-ups and only 480 business closures. This is a turnaround from the year before, when we had more businesses closing over the year than opening. The average percentage of business start-ups in Rhondda Cynon Taf (15.1%) is more than both the Wales (12.6%) and UK (14.1%) average.

In our plan, we also said we would be prepared for the Council to take advantage of the new round of European funding that was due to start in 2014. This was very delayed, because the European Commission took some time to approve the programmes of funding. But, we have worked with others across South East Wales and the Welsh European Funding Office to try to develop opportunities, which will continue into 2015/16.

What does this mean for 2015/16?

Improving our communities is still a priority for us in 2015/16, but we recognise that the goals are long term and we do not always see quick changes. A number of the areas in our 2014/15 plan are still under development or are part of longer term projects and we want to continue to focus on Improving our communities in order to bring about longer term, sustainable changes. Therefore, we plan to:

- **Increase opportunities for young people and working age adults to enter employment, education and training.** This will include:
 - Increasing community based learning. We have seen the success of our skills development programmes this year, with local people gaining new skills and growing in confidence.
 - Specifically, increase opportunities for young people to engage in education, training or employment because the number of young people unemployed remains high in

the County Borough and we want to break the cycle of unemployment as early as possible.

- Work with other authorities across South East Wales to make the most of European funding for 2014-20. This will introduce or continue projects that help people get into work.
- **Help people to better understand their financial choices and improve how people manage money.** This will include:
 - Working with our partner organisations to give people advice and information to people in need of help. We need to make sure we provide good quality information and advice for people to make their own choices, as part of the new laws on Social Services and health.
 - Focus on tackling poverty, exclusion and inequality.
 - Help people who will be impacted by the welfare reforms. The introduction of Universal Credit will be a change to how people receive their benefits. We want to support people to make sure they are prepared to cope with the change.
- **Reduce homelessness and provide services that meet the housing needs of individuals and families.** This will include:
 - Increasing the supply of suitable accommodation. We aim to base our services on the information we have about people presenting as homeless, which we know are single young adults at the moment.
 - In line with new laws on homelessness and housing, introduce other ways to prevent people becoming homeless.
- **Sustain town centres, which contribute to economy of the borough.** This will include:
 - Working in our town centres to create economic development, improve appearance and foster the creation of jobs. This will have a positive effect on the surrounding areas.
 - Continue our successful projects in Aberdare and Pontypridd, including the programme of Welsh Government funding for Pontypridd, which will deliver many benefits.
 - Although footfall has increased in Pontypridd, it has fallen in some other towns. We will support other town centres and traders to encourage visitors and improve trade.
- **Encourage investment to strengthen the economy and create jobs.** This will include:
 - Supporting property development and business creation by introducing planning guidance across Rhondda Cynon Taf and through measures like the Local Development Order in Treforest, which will make it easier for planning permission to go through.
 - Work regionally to understand the opportunities we have in South East Wales to boost the economy. This will include using the results of a report on business priority areas to support growth sectors, like ICT.
 - Build on our successes of supporting business and the great start-up figures for the area by making sure small businesses are prepared to apply for Council contracts, continuing with our grant schemes and offering support and advice to traders.

To see the full plan for 2015/16, please visit

Making the best use of our budget

Why was this a priority in 2014/15?

- The revenue budget gap for the 2014/15 financial year was £14.4M rising to an estimated gap over the next 4 years of £63.4M (as per the report to Council on 26th February 2014). To meet this unprecedented position, an on-going programme of work was necessary to identify service efficiency, change and cut proposals over the short, medium and long term;
- Due to approximately 60% of the Council's net revenue budget (i.e. total budget less income budgeted to be received) comprising of staff costs, it was considered highly probable that a significant proportion of future budget savings would come from workforce related areas. The need for effective workforce planning arrangements was considered fundamental to enable the size of the workforce to be reduced in a managed way and at the same time continue to retain highly skilled employees;
- With a significant portfolio of land and property, it was considered important to continue to ensure their efficient and effective use through energy efficiency schemes and developing the capability to generate green energy. In addition, with a range of likely service changes and cuts being proposed, and if agreed by Cabinet implemented during 2014/15, a number of properties would become surplus to requirements; as a result, opportunities would need to be provided to external groups to operate replacement services;
- Following the first full year of working toward the Single Integrated Plan outcomes (Safety, Health and Prosperity) throughout 2013/14, it was deemed necessary to 'look back' and consider what progress had been made to inform future planning;
- The Council, along with the Wales Audit Office, identified during 2013/14 that further work was needed in a number of areas to further strengthen governance arrangements. In particular this was in respect of establishing a strategic risk register and reporting and monitoring risks, and also improving the quality of Corporate Planning arrangements.

Evaluation of performance for 2014/15

The overall picture

Our evaluation tell us that overall the Council's medium term service planning arrangements were robust; however, the scale of the financial challenges ahead will mean the speed of change will need to be accelerated to enable balanced budgets to be set and delivered in the future. We have come to this conclusion because the arrangements:

- Have consistently supported the setting and delivery of balanced budgets over a number of years, and also the forecasting of medium term financial projections that calculated the level of budget savings the Council needed to find; however the on-going scale of year on year savings over the next 3 years will mean the pace of change will need to be further accelerated;
- Have helped the efficient management of resources in terms of the workforce and buildings generally well; however, further work is needed to improve staff absence levels;

- Have played a central role in the coordination and delivery of a long term plan for the County Borough, with our partners, that enabled Council services and outcomes to be prioritised;
- Have supported improvements to governance arrangements; however, opportunities remain for improvement to the quality and range of information provided to Councillors to further reinforce scrutiny arrangements.

Performance evaluation

We said we would continue to focus on stability and sustainability in terms of our finances through an effective financial management framework

In our 2014 Corporate Plan we set out a key performance indicator that we would use to gauge our progress:

What we said at the start of 2014/15	Did we meet the target we set?	How did we perform?
Maintain an adequate amount of money in reserve to deal with unexpected events. The level, and whether it is adequate, will be determined at the end of the financial year.	Yes	The Section 151 Officer in his 2015/16 Budget Strategy report to Council on 4 th March 2015 indicated that it remains his view that the Council should hold a minimum of £10M as General Fund Balances (i.e. its working balance). Based on the latest full year financial position for the 2014/15 financial year, forecasted as at December 2014, it is considered that the Council will still be able to hold the level of General Reserve balances in line with this requirement.

The Council has placed fundamental importance in robust financial planning and management to help it focus on financial stability and get the most from the resources available. Key elements of the arrangements include, along with questions we ask ourselves:

- Robust budget setting – did we set a budget that will enable the Council to live within its means in 2014/15 and allocate resources in line with its priorities?
- Robust in year budgetary control – did we spend within the budget allocated and also maintain general reserves at an adequate level?
- Robust medium term financial planning – did we set a medium term forecast of likely spending requirements against likely funding levels to inform current and future decision making?

An overview of how the Council performed during 2014/15 is set out below.

Budget Setting

The funding we received from the Welsh Government fell by 3.7% for 2014/15 and after taking account of a 4.5% increase in Council Tax, the Council was required to find £14.4 million in savings during the year. A proposed plan to deliver this level of saving and allocate appropriate resources to services was compiled, called a budget strategy, and was approved at a meeting of Full Council on 26th February 2014. The Budget Strategy would meet the level of savings through the delivery of efficiency savings (i.e. those that do not impact on front line services), the part year effect of 'Phase 1'⁸ cuts to front line services and the use of one-off funding.

Further to Council approving the 2014/15 Budget Strategy, one 'Phase 1' service change decision was subject to legal challenge in respect of revised admission arrangements for Nursery provision. On the 23rd May 2014 a Court quashed the Council's decision to change admission arrangements on the basis that additional information should have been presented to Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

In addition, for another of the 'Phase 1' service change decisions agreed by Council i.e. reduction in the number of libraries, on the 10th June 2014 a decision was also taken to re-open Rhydyfelin Library and to undertake further dialogue with the community in that area. This process is currently on-going.

The combined impact of these changes was the removal of savings amounting to £1.95million and required the Council to find alternative savings from other areas to balance its budget. It was proposed this would be achieved through the delivery of 'Phase 2' service cuts and charges⁹ that would be implemented during the year, and increasing the amount of one-off funding; this was agreed by Council at its meeting on 25th June 2014 - link. A summary of how the Council delivered £14.4M of savings in 2014/15 is shown in Table1 below.

Table 1 – Summary of savings delivered by the Council in 2014/15

	£ Million	£ Million
Total savings required for 2014/15		14.4
Efficiency savings i.e. those that do not affect front line services	(4.0)	
Phase 1 service cuts i.e. Libraries, Day Centres, Youth Service and Meals on Wheels (excluding savings from changes to Nursery admission arrangements)	(3.2) (0.8)	
Phase 2 service cuts and charges i.e. Adult Social Care Charging, Heritage Service, Arts and Culture Service, Supported Bus Routes and Paddling Pools		
One-off funding	(6.4)	
Total savings		(14.4)

More detailed information on the service cuts introduced to help bridge the 2014/15 budget gap, all of which were subject to public consultation, can be found at:

- Phase 1 – link to 8th January 2014 Cabinet report

⁸ Phase 1 cuts – reported to and agreed by Cabinet on 8th January 2014

⁹ Phase 2 cuts – reported to and agreed by Cabinet on 14th May 2014

- Phase 2 – link to 14th May 2014 Cabinet report

After taking account of the above savings, the Council's 2014/15 revenue budget totalled £466.779M and was allocated as set out in Table 2:

Table 2 – Summary breakdown of 2014/15 revenue budget

	2013/14 Revenue Budget	2014/15 revenue budget	2014/15 Increase / (Decrease)
	£M	£M	£M
Schools' budgets	140.896	140.371	(0.525)
Education and lifelong Learning Services	37.846	35.160	2.686
Community and Children's Services	124.178	125.450	1.272
Environmental Services ¹⁰	61.285	63.588	2.303
Corporate Services and the Chief Executive's Division	32.327	32.571	0.244
Authority Wide Budgets	72.671	68.463	(4.208)
TOTALS	469.203	465.603	(3.600)

In Year Budgetary Control

Against an amended budget of £466.779M, the Council spent £465.968M resulting in a year end underspend of £0.811M.

It is too early to establish if there have any unplanned or unintended consequences as a result of the service cuts introduced in 2014/15. Service areas are currently collecting information to evaluate impact to date and will report these to designated scrutiny committees during 2015/16 for review.

Medium Term Financial Planning

Throughout 2014/15, we updated our medium term financial forecasts on an on-going basis in line with changing service needs, changing inflationary estimates and likely changes in the level of funding we could expect to receive. This information was also subject to sensitivity analysis to test what the likely impact would be if one or a number of our assumptions were incorrect. The clear picture from all our forecasting was that the Council was facing a budget gap of over £30M in 2015/16, rising to approximately £60m up to 2017/18.

This position was similar to the forecasts we calculated in the previous year and meant that our ability to make the majority of future savings through efficiency alone was not feasible. Instead we

¹⁰ Environmental Services – in December 2014 the Environmental Services Group was disbanded as a self-standing service group and the individual service areas within it were re-allocated to one of the remaining three Service Groups. The Corporate Services Group was also renamed Corporate and Frontline Services, reflecting the areas transferred in from the former Environmental Services Group

will need to focus our efforts on reviewing everything we do as a Council to become even more efficient and ask if every one of our current activities needs to be done, if there are better ways of delivering the same outcomes or if other organisations could work with us to deliver better or the same for less. It will also mean delivering services in different ways and where absolutely necessary reducing or stopping services and there would be a need to continue to make cuts or changes to front line services.

In October 2014 we received provisional information from the Welsh Government around the funding level we were likely to receive for the 2015/16 financial year; this enabled us to confirm the saving requirement as £30.4M for this period. To address this, a series of service changes and efficiencies were planned together with the requirement to use one-off funding of £4.396M to meet the full target – link to report. The programme of service changes also included revision to admission arrangements of nursery education amounting to £1.259M for 2015/16 following the Council again initiating public consultation on a proposal for this area in October 2014 (link to report).

When our performance in the areas we deem fundamental to securing and maintaining financial stability are considered together, it is our view that overall our financial management and planning arrangements remained fit for purpose in 2014/15. We have concluded this because:

- Budget setting – we set a balanced budget and allocated resources in line with our priorities; we recognise that £6.4Million was one-off funding with the requirement for permanent budget savings to be delivered in 2015/16 to meet this;
- In year budgetary control – we were able to deliver a balanced budget overall; we recognise that there are a small number of activities that significantly under / over spent and will require on-going attention in 2015/16;
- Medium term financial planning – the medium term forecasts we have prepared have proven to be accurate and have provided the impetus to drive a fundamental programme of change within the Council. We recognise that further work is needed to meet the unprecedented budget saving requirements over the net 3 years.

In addition, the Wales Audit Office issued its latest report to us in June 2014. Whilst primarily relating to the 2013/14 financial year, it is also relevant to 2014/15; one part of the report said that:

"The Council's strategic financial planning arrangements remain sound but improved communication and engagement with citizens is needed around the scale of the Council's improvement ambitions and the impact of service changes in its priority areas. The Council is likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in 2014-15." The full report can be viewed at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/WAO-Air2014

We have gained invaluable experience from the above programme of work over the past 12 to 18 months and will be using this to fine tune how we go about service changes into the future. This includes undertaking more public engagement events so that we can discuss the scale of the financial challenges facing the Council, identify opportunities to work together more with local communities, and also help and support communities / groups as early as possible to operate services themselves.

Other important work in this area included:

- The development of our online services to help people access the information and services they need more quickly and deliver customer services more efficiently. For example, an

online map for reporting streetlight problems was developed so residents can click on any streetlight in the County Borough and report dim or no light, lighting during the day or flickering lights;

- At One4aLL Centres, we promoted the use of appointments for more complex enquires including Transport 'permits' (Bus Pass and Blue Badges) and Council Tax/Housing Benefit enquiries, to increase convenience for our customers and make the best use of staff time. As at December 2014, 10% of advice visits were via booked appointments;
- With decreasing budgets, gaining and using external funding has become increasingly important and we have worked to secure external funding to support key Council projects;
- Training was provided to relevant staff to help them secure and manage the best value contracts for goods and services. 'Best practice' guides are also being produced although their introduction has been delayed slightly so they can link with a new IT system.

We said we would ensure that effective workforce planning arrangements were put in place and that services would receive the necessary support and guidance to secure best value from their staff resources

In our 2014 Corporate Plan we did not include performance indicators to gauge our performance. Instead we would concentrate on the delivery of key activities to support this area of work.

We continued to focus on our workforce planning arrangements to further improve the flexibility of the workforce to meet the changing needs of those who use Council services and in managing changes to services as a result of significant reductions in funding. During 2014/15 we have used our workforce planning arrangements to:

- Support a series of service changes, in consultation with staff and Trade Union representatives, that has enabled officers to be re-trained to move into other jobs where their old job was no longer required;
- Provide opportunities for officers to leave under the Council's Voluntary Redundancy or Voluntary Early Retirement Schemes where in the best interest of the service and individual concerned;
- Recruited 17 new Council apprenticeships and appointed 4 new graduate officers as part of our strategy to 'grow our own' employees, particularly in difficult to appoint to jobs. Our performance in previous years' has shown positive results: 94% of apprentices meeting the required standards at the end of their courses and 100% of graduates completing the programme and also finding employment within a year after the programme ended. We hope that our 2014 cohorts will also achieve similar positive outcomes;
- Provide targeted support to children leaving care through a 'Step in the right direction' programme. During 2014/15 this has enabled 3 young people access this programme that aims to provide a solid foundation for their future development.

We also continued our work to improve the skills of the workforce through 'on the job' training, external courses and mentoring arrangements, and also worked with schools and local colleges to create 'temporary' placements and 'gap year' placements. Whilst the impact from our placement

work may not be apparent in the short term, it is intended that these opportunities will encourage young people nearing working age to strive to work for the Council in the future.

The health of our workforce and their attendance at work was also a high priority for us. We delivered a range of occupational health initiatives to help improve this by supporting staff to make healthy lifestyle choices such as through the cycle to work scheme, and providing targeted support to help individuals recover from illness and injury. 'Fast tracking' for external medical diagnosis was extended to additional conditions including mental health, enabling officers to access support and treatment more quickly. Injection therapy as a targeted early intervention treatment for Musculoskeletal Disorders was introduced in May 2014, with guided injection therapy under ultrasound. This has significantly reduced the number of physiotherapy appointments required per person and reduced recovery times.

Case study - injection therapy

"S" presented to the OHU with a four week history of insidious onset, right elbow pain with gradual deterioration. The pain was described as an underlying "ache" which became "sharp" with certain aggravating activities such as gripping, lifting and tasks involving fine motor skills. S reported increasing difficulty with normal working activities, to the point that she felt a period of sickness absence may well have been imminent. A provisional diagnosis of chronic lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow) was confirmed via an ultrasound scan performed by the Occupational Health Physiotherapist.

Following screening to check for any contraindications a corticosteroid injection was administered under ultrasound guidance. S was given a patient information leaflet detailing appropriate after-care advice and treatment record detailing medication used, dosage and injection site.

S was reassessed approximately 10 days later. At this time she was asymptomatic, exhibiting a full range of motion, strength and normal function, and was discharged from the OHU. As a result of the treatment S did not require any time off work due to the condition.

Prior to the introduction of injection therapy and ultrasound scanning, lateral epicondylitis was, on average, accounting for six physiotherapy appointments per episode of care. The introduction of injection therapy and ultrasound scanning has seen this average reduced to two appointments per episode of care.

An ear irrigation service (primarily for employees with manual based roles) was introduced in October 2014 to help accelerate treatment required following hearing tests. Flu vaccinations were offered to all staff and over 1,500 vaccinations were administered. Over 500 case reviews were held for employees on long-term sick to ensure that appropriate support was being provided to help them return to the workplace.

A revised sickness absence policy and maximising attendance strategy is currently being consulted on with Trade Unions and senior management, and is anticipated to be in place in the early part of 2015/16. It will include areas such as policy changes, early interventions and fast tracking treatments.

Despite these interventions, during April to December 2014 the percentage of days/shifts lost to sickness absence was 4.90%, compared to 4.18% for the same period in 2013/14 (and 4.34% for the whole year 2013/14). The number of days / shifts lost to sickness absence per employee between April and December 2014 (based on headcount) was 8.77, higher than the 8.03 in the same period in 2013/14 (the full year position for 2013/14 was 10.7). The main reasons for sickness absence were similar to previous years, with mental health issues accounting for 29% of all absences from April to December 2014 (an increase from 27% in 2013/14), and musculoskeletal problems the second highest reason for absence (27% compared to 25% in 2013/14). It is anticipated that the introduction

of the new sickness absence policy, maximising attendance strategy and measures such as fast tracking external diagnosis will have a positive impact on future performance.

We produced a strategy to tackle Hate Crime in Rhondda Cynon Taf. A Hate Crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender. In 2014 there were 491 reported incidents of Hate Crime in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Reported offences involving the protected characteristics of race and disability have gradually increased since 2006, with reported levels for other types of Hate Crime appearing to remain similar year on year. Our local strategy focuses on supporting victims and reducing repeat victimisation; improving confidence in our communities to report hate crime; and taking action against the perpetrators of hate crime and reducing reoffending. It also contributes to a number of higher level regional and national plans¹¹. We are already actively working to support the victims of hate crime, and this work will continue and form part of the 'Protecting People from Harm' plan for 2015/16.

Case Study - Supporting Victims of Hate Crime

A 17 year old victim with both physical and learning disabilities was being made fun of by local youths when playing in a park near her address. The incidents then escalated and the youths would attend her address shouting abuse and throwing items at the property. Both of the girl's parents also have learning disabilities.

Social workers, teachers, housing officers and the Hate Crime Officer jointly met with the family to discuss how they could support them. A number of actions were agreed including providing counselling for the victim in school due the emotional impact of the incidents; installation of CCTV to identify the offenders; providing a referral to victim support and implementing an action plan to safeguard the victim; and, following the family's decision to move, to provide support for their new housing application.

While the family were waiting for appropriate housing to become available in the specific areas they wished to move to, local neighbourhood officers patrolled the area and weekly reassurance visits were carried out. A follow up visit confirmed that no further incidents had occurred and the parents expressed they were much happier and their daughter was receiving ongoing support. Since this visit, new housing has been found for the family.

The findings of Women Adding Value to the Economy (WAVE) project on Gender pay equality were evaluated and a number of themes were identified. These included barriers to women in casual or temporary jobs increasing their working hours and/or progressing to permanent employment, and a lack of women within senior management roles.

Recommendations included undertaking a skills audit of employees in part time roles to explore their aspirations and perceived barriers to progress; and investigating alternatives to multiple job holding, where employees make up their hours from a number of part time or casual roles. To start to address these areas, the Council has produced an action plan for delivery in 2015/16.

We said we would improve the efficiency of our buildings through reduction of carbon emissions and improved property management processes

40 energy saving projects were undertaken during 2013/14 and with all the schemes fully operational a review was undertaken to determine their impact. From a review of the technical information this equates to approximately the same amount of energy as is needed to run 190 typical domestic households for a year.

¹¹ The Rhondda Cynon Taf Hate Crime Strategy links to the delivery of the Welsh Government Strategy - Tackling Hate Crime and Incidents: A Framework for Action, and the Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan 2014-16 as well as 'Delivering Change', the Single Integrated plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf

21 Invest to save energy projects were delivered during 2014/15, including installation of voltage optimisers, internal and external LED lighting schemes and the installation of solar panels on Council buildings to generate renewable energy. Each scheme was carefully considered to ensure that energy savings would be achieved, both lowering our CO2 emissions and providing cost savings.

Case Study – Troedyrhiw Home for the Elderly

In 2013/14, three energy saving initiatives were installed at Troedyrhiw Home for the Elderly. A new hydrogen fuel cell which contributed to heating the building as well generating electricity is the first of its kind in Wales. An LED lighting upgrade improved the interior environment of the home and a 20kW solar panel array further reduced the electricity consumption of this building. These changes should reduce running costs by over £10,000 per year.

We have continued with work to assess the viability of renewable energy projects on Council land. To date, the estimated pay back periods have all been in excess of 10 years for the locations examined and as a result feasibility work will be undertaken at other locations during 2015/16 to identify the possibility of more viable options.

Carbon dioxide emissions from all the Council's buildings decreased by 6.20% between 2012/13 and 2013/14. Due to the complexity of this data, up to date information on emissions for 2014/15 will be reported later in the year.

New legislation required the expansion of Display energy certificates (DECs) to eligible buildings over 250m². Display energy certificates show the actual energy use of a building and help the public see the energy efficiency of a building. An additional 67 DECs were required, 66 of these were completed during the year with the final one completed in April 2015.

Following phase 1 and 2 service changes, 29 properties were no longer required by the Council for their previous purpose and were carefully reviewed to determine future action. 24 of the properties were owned outright by the Council. Where possible, these have been offered to Community organisations to continue to provide services. As of February 2015, 4 properties had been leased to community organisations, namely Beddau, Penrhiwceiber and Ynyshir Libraries and Pontyclun day centre. Leases on a further 6 buildings have been offered to interested Community groups. Of the remaining buildings, 8 were sold and 1 is due to be auctioned in May 2015; and 5 are being put to alternative uses within the Council.

5 surplus properties were being leased by the Council. Of these 4 leases were surrendered, sold or a break clause invoked. The final building, which has a long lease in place, is being considered for alternative uses.

Case Study - Former Ynyshir Library

Following the closure of this facility, two local artists presented a Business Plan in support of their proposals to reopen the premises as a "Workers Gallery". This was supported by the Council and a formal lease has been granted to enable the project to open. The space was renovated by volunteers from the local community and the proprietors added new fittings and fixtures to provide a professional art exhibition space. The gallery offers a free art reference library, pick up point for recycling bags, display area for local news and events plus a space to show and see local art. One of the proprietors commented "With the support of local people and the local council we have been able to retain this unique building for the local community and visitors to the area." This is an example of new and innovative methods of delivering services in partnership with other

organisations.

As additional transfers of community assets have taken place, we have recognised the need to provide more structured advice and support to organisations and community groups wishing to deliver Council services or take over Council assets. With this in mind, we have established a Voluntary sector liaison committee to assist in co-ordinating the approach, consisting of representatives from across the Council, as well as partners such as Interlink and Wales Co-operative Centre. A launch event for 'RCT Together' was held on 25th March 2015 to inform local community groups and inspire them to get involved. A £100,000 Enabling Fund for Community Led services has also been established, providing one off grants to support communities in establishing alternative community based delivery for traditionally Council led services.

We said we would strengthen local public service leadership to tackle service delivery challenges from a citizen perspective by working in partnership

Our Annual Review of the Single Integrated Plan was undertaken in June 2014, and confirmed that our current priorities of Safety, Health and Prosperity would be continued. This Annual Review for 2013/14 summarises all of the work done by partners towards achieving our priorities and can be viewed at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/singleplan

In line with the Annual review of the SIP we continued to review our partnership arrangements. Traditionally, partnership working has been directed through strategic partnership boards but, more and more, partners are working together directly, as a team, to achieve better outcomes for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf. We decided that now these good relationships and ways of working were established that partnership boards were no longer the most effective way of co-ordinating our work. Instead, frontline staff will continue to work together to deliver the priorities of 'Delivering Change'. '*Delivering Change*' will still be at the heart of our organisational plans and continue to be monitored by the LSB. In addition, there will be a focus on the key issue of 'Skills and Jobs', with geographically focussed task and finish groups targeting resources where they are needed most and working with local communities to improve outcomes for local people.

The Cwm Taf Data Observatory (<http://cwmtaf.infobasecymru.net>), a local information system for Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil, is now being used to report our progress against the population measures within 'Delivering Change', making data much more accessible and timely and less resource intensive to produce. This means we can get the information we need more easily and act on it more quickly.

The planned introduction of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill will require us to focus on long term and sustainable solutions in our decisions. The Bill will require all public organisations in Wales to work towards national wellbeing goals, taking a preventative approach to reduce the impact on communities in the future. It requires us to work closely with local people and communities in setting our own local goals. We are involved in a local research project which is looking at how prepared organisations are to implement the Bill and we are liaising with the Welsh Government on their plans for the future to make sure that the changes they propose will help us to deliver lasting and sustainable change for local people. Due to these changes we are postponing a review of the LSB scrutiny arrangements, as the role of scrutiny is likely to be influenced by the Future Generations Bill.

Partner organisations are working closely together on joint projects to improve the Health and wellbeing of people within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Working with partners to lower rates of smoking, we

progressed the introduction of smoke free outdoor spaces. This included development of policies for smoke free grounds for the premises of partner organisations and developing a campaign for smoke free play areas. We have established Stop Smoking Groups across a number of offices and depots, as well as developing a brief intervention and referral pathway, to provide the best possible support for staff who want to quit smoking. We have also begun work with schools to develop 'Smoke Free Zones' around school gates.

As part of lowering the rates of obesity, we are promoting healthy environments which maximise the opportunities for physical activity by making it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle. Sustrans, Four Point Mapping and Local Transport projects are supporting us to identify and assess current routes.

Working towards lowering the rates of suicide in Rhondda Cynon Taf, partners organised a suicide and self harm prevention conference in July 2014, identifying key priorities such as data and information sharing, training and awareness training, communication and signposting and prevention and intervention.

A Welsh government European Social Fund project was undertaken to bring together Communities First, Flying Start, Families First and the Integrated Family Support Project across Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil to better meet the needs of local children, young people, families and communities. This brought together practitioners and encouraged them to work in partnership to deliver shared outcomes. As a result of this work, the projects supporting families are now more closely aligned so people are more able to access the support they need.

We have worked in collaboration with Merthyr Tydfil CBC to improve the IT Infrastructure in schools, to provide pupils and teachers access to the latest technology and information to enhance teaching and learning. 123 of our 132 schools now have increased broadband capacity and wireless technology, with the remainder due to be completed by March 2015.

We said we would improve the Council's Governance arrangements to support the delivery of efficient and effective services

The major risks which could prevent the Council delivering its priorities, including reduction in Welsh Government funding, delivery of the 21st Century schools project and changing demographics placing increased challenges on social services, were set out in a Strategic Risk Register and reported to the Audit Committee on 30th October 2014. These risks were also included within the Council's priority plans for the first time, so that risks and performance could be considered together on a quarterly basis. Alongside this work, targeted training was carried out to improve managers' understanding of risk management and a manager's guide produced, to ensure risks are fully taken into account when planning and delivering services.

The Council's key documents demonstrating performance and progress (the 'Corporate Plan' and 'Annual Delivery Report') were made more user friendly in 2014/15. Documents were made shorter, simpler language was used to allow the public to engage more with the information and links were provided to more detailed information. In addition, there was more involvement of Councillors in scrutinising the information included.

Lessons learned from 2014/15 are informing the approach for 2015/16 through further simplifying our planning by combining a review of performance in the last year and our plans for the future into a single document. This will make information on our performance available to people much more quickly and we hope will be more informative and easier to understand.

We continue to improve information management practices. To make sure that personal information is kept safe but at the same time staff can access information they need to do their jobs, we have developed a number of agreements which set out how and when we will share certain information with other organisations (Information sharing protocol or ISP). These agreements are now in place with RCT Homes and Cwm Taf Youth Offending Team.

What does this mean for 2015/16?

Medium Term Service Planning will remain the single most important programme of work within the Council with up dates being provided to Cabinet and Members during the year, and this built into all areas of the Council's work. Based on this, it is considered a priority action plan for 2015/16 setting out the Medium Term Service Planning framework that is already well embedded will add little value to the Council's existing arrangements. Therefore, it is proposed that the Medium Term Service Planning priority area, for the statutory purposes of the Local Government Measure, no longer applies.

DRAFT

Important Themes that underpin our work

Our values as a Council continue to shape the behaviour of the people that deliver services to you and the way we determine our priorities. What this means is we will:

- Act with integrity;
- Put service users at the centre of what do;
- Make sure we tell you how we are doing;
- Constantly try to make things better;
- Work with partners where it will improve what we do;
- Respect others.

Cross cutting themes that shape how we work

Everyone in the Council works hard to make sure that people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are treated equally, fairly, with respect and offered a service in the language of their choice. These principles are in line with what we call our "cross cutting themes" of **Equalities, Welsh Language and Sustainable Development**. What this means for our residents is that we value each other's differences and target resources to better meet their needs now, but also take decisions that will benefit future generations growing up in Rhondda Cynon Taf .

- *Equalities*
- *Sustainable Development*
- *Welsh Language*

We want Rhondda Cynon Taf to be a place where people can live and work in communities where difference is accepted and everyone is able to live their lives with tolerance and respect without harassment

As we set out in our 2014-17 Equality Report at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/StrategicEqualityPlan2014-17, in the last year we focused much of our work on

- Hate Crime and Addressing Negative Attitudes and Behaviours
- Developing more robust monitoring arrangements
- Gender Pay.

We have made good progress in two of these areas both as a Council and in partnership. We haven't made as much progress on our monitoring arrangements as you will see below.

Hate Crime and Addressing Negative Attitudes and Behaviours

There are many different forms of Hate Crime and we have worked with the South Wales Police to develop and deliver Hate Crime Awareness sessions to over 400 Council staff. Although it is too early to say with any certainty that this work has led to more incidents of hate crime being reported, we have anecdotal evidence to suggest that this is the case. Our Social Workers and Support Workers are working more closely with our Anti Social Behaviour Team, the Police, Housing providers and other agencies to tackle disability hate crime and better support the victims. Early

feedback from vulnerable people and or their parents that have been involved in cases of disability hate crime suggest that incidents had stopped and that they and the victims felt happier when these agencies work together. But it is early days and we know that there is much more to do.

As a result of the success of the Hate Crime awareness raising sessions we were asked by Communities First staff to provide them with Dignity and Respect training to help them to better understand how negative attitudes and behaviours can impact on both individuals and the communities they support. Behaviour change is difficult to measure in the short term however, we will be revisiting the staff involved to establish how their work has been affected by this training.

We have also worked with our partners to tackle cases of 'mate crime'. 'Mate crime' is where people make friends with people that are vulnerable and then take advantage of them by taking their money or medication, damaging their property or even being physically violent. This can also lead the victim feeling upset and confused about friendships as well as being in debt or having their health and wellbeing affected. It is too early to give firm evidence about how people who have been made aware of 'mate crime' are responding. We know that there was an initial 'spike' in reported 'mate crime' as a result of raising awareness. These reports were mostly from concerned carers of vulnerable people. We are continuing to tackle 'mate crime' and we are working with partners to obtain more representative data in the future.

Our mental health affects the way we think and feel about ourselves and others, and how we deal with life. This shame and secrecy makes it hard for people to speak about mental health, but can also lead us to ignore people or treat them in negative ways. Rhondda Cynon Taf has a high level of mental illness and so we have also worked in partnership with Cwm Taf University Health Board and Merthyr Council and signed the 'Time to Change Wales' Pledge to address the shame and secrecy around mental health problems.

We continued our work with schools to help children grow up with a better understanding of differences in our communities eg

- Alongside our partners in the Multi Agency Diversity Forum, we held the annual Primary schools Calendar competition. The theme this year was Cyber bullying. Primary and Special School children were asked to design pictures for a calendar that showed that cyber bullying is unacceptable. The calendar has been distributed to all primary and special schools throughout the County Borough as well as to our partners.
- We have also worked with South Wales Police and schools to deliver a Holocaust Memorial Day event that linked past and present prejudices and Hate Crimes.

We have continued our commitment to making improvements in the way Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people are treated within the Community and the Council. We attended Cardiff Pride and talked to people from Rhondda Cynon Taf about how they felt the Council helps LGBT people in the community. What they told us included that we needed to raise more awareness of the problems faced by young LGBT people in schools. As a result of this feedback, together with 'Stonewall' which is an organisation that works with a whole range of agencies to address the needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people in the wider community, RCT is part of an 'Education Champions Programme' to tackle homophobia and homophobic bullying in schools so that all pupils feel safe in schools.

We have also signed up to the 'Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme' which is helping us to make RCT Council the best workplace it can be for LGTB people. As part of our work we set up an LGBT network and are raising awareness of LGBT issues with all staff in various ways. As a result of

everything we are doing, much of which is described in this section, over one year, we improved our position in the Workplace Equality Index, from 338 to 133rd place.

Developing more robust monitoring arrangements

In the last year our work has focused on getting things done and we have made great progress with many new projects. However, we haven't made as much progress as we had hoped in our monitoring arrangements. Now that we have many more projects in place, we need to get better at measuring and monitoring what we do to make sure we can show that our work is making a real difference to the people and communities of RCT.

Gender Pay.

We are making sure that everyone who works for the Council is treated equally by working with Cardiff University on a project to find out if there are any differences between the way that men and women are paid. This is part of a national project called WAVE, (Women Adding Value to the Economy) which is funded by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government <http://www.wavewales.co.uk/gender-pay/>

We have also been making sure that the same people are not repeatedly affected by the choices that the Council is making as a result of service changes being made. This work is recorded in what we call Equality Impact Assessments and these are completed every time that proposals for service change are made. You can see these assessments included within the reports that are presented to relevant Cabinet meetings, you can see an example at [*****example to go in here](#). We know that it is important for the Council to live within its means but at the same time, we need to make sure that everyone is treated fairly.

What are we going to do next year?

Our work programme for 2014/17 is set out in our Strategic Equality Plan <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/relateddocuments/publications/equalitydiversity/strategiequalityplan.pdf> but we are currently updating it, in the meantime we will continue to

- work with the South Wales Police and Community Safety partnership to raise awareness of Hate Crime and 'Mate' crime with staff, schools and the people that use our services
- improve our monitoring arrangements by collecting better information so that we can check the progress and results of our work.
- work with partners to deliver on the 'Time to Change Wales' pledge, to tackle the shame and secrecy around mental health.
- work within the WAVE project to check that men and women who work for the Council are treated equally.

You can see more detail about our work and progress in our Annual Equality Report which was presented to a meeting of the Cabinet on 19 March.

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/cabinet/2015/03/19/reports/agendaitem5-annualequalitiesreport2013-14.pdf>

Sustainable Development

We want to make sure that we are acting now in the best interests of future generations in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Sustainable development is about improving how we can achieve long-term cultural, economic, social and environmental wellbeing by taking action together, with people, communities and other public bodies.

In the services we provide, we take into account the long term **wellbeing** of our communities. We look to prevent problems from occurring and try to take a joined-up, common sense approach. These principles are set in everything we do as part of our day to day business.

In the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf - the Council is currently seen as the Community Leader by planning and helping public and third sector organisations work together better for the benefit of the people that live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf -now and in the future.

The work we have already described in this report and other work is helping us to contribute to economic, social, environmental and cultural well being by eg

Economic wellbeing

- building new schools that are better equipped for the 21st century
- helping more unemployed people to get into training or jobs
- installing more new energy efficient insulation measures in homes across Rhondda Cynon Taf
- continuing to support businesses to create jobs

Social well being

- Preventing more people from becoming homeless
- Supporting more older people to live in their own homes for longer
- Giving older people the confidence to resist door step crime
- Helping children, young people and families early so that their problems don't get any worse

Environmental wellbeing

- Making sure our streets are clean
- Reducing the amount of waste we send to landfill
- Helping to minimise the risk of flooding to homes and businesses
- Completing 21 new energy saving projects within the Council including installing solar panels on our buildings to generate renewable energy

Cultural wellbeing

- Supporting community organisations to take over the running of Council buildings to provide cultural spaces for the community, such as the Workers Gallery in Ynyshir
- Involving local people in the renovation of Pontypridd Lido through learning traditional construction skills, capturing local history and producing artwork inspired by the site

But we have also set out that we have a lot more to do, especially where data shows that currently we aren't making the progress we planned or performance isn't as good as the rest of Wales, e.g.

- Recycling rates - We need to recycling more of our waste as we narrowly missed our target a and we at the moment we don't compare well with the rest of Wales. We aim to improve

this next year by learning from our communities who recycle lots of their waste and targeting help to those who don't

- We didn't assess as many Carers as other Councils. We need to make sure that we know the reasons for this and take improve next year
- Our school inspection results for the quality of leadership and management were not as high as we would like, with 42 out of 59 schools graded at least good, 16 schools graded adequate and 1 unsatisfactory and our work to make sure more schools improve their inspection results remains a priority for us.
- Supported accommodation for vulnerable young people in the Old Bakery and Ty Rhondda hasn't been completed, as we needed to concentrate on providing emergency accommodation for single homeless young people
- We don't always assess vulnerable children as quickly as other councils, nor are as many of our assessments undertaken by social workers and this remains one of our priorities for next year
- Not as many of our Domestic Abuse clients felt safer as a result of our support, although the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service dealt with 50% more cases than they did last year.
- We didn't continue with a hydroelectricity scheme in Dare Valley Country Park to produce green electricity as we found it wasn't cost effective.

You can see more details in our detailed evaluations for 2014/15 which you can see at *****

Along with our partner organisations, we are currently preparing for the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, which will come into force in 2016. This Act puts 'sustainable development' at the centre of everything public organisations do. In other words, we need to make sure that any decisions we make consider the impact they could have on people living in Wales and Rhondda Cynon Taf in the future.

The Act sets out we want for future generations in Wales through seven wellbeing goals that we will work towards. These are:

1. A prosperous Wales;
2. A resilient Wales;
3. A healthier Wales;
4. A more equal Wales;
5. A Wales of cohesive communities;
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language;
7. A globally responsible Wales.

You can still get involved in the national conversation about the future in Wales at <http://thewaleswewant.co.uk/>

Meeting the requirements of the new law will present us with some challenges and will make us more accountable to you. Inspectors will test that we are doing the right things. We think that the work we have already done through our partnerships and working sustainably means that Rhondda Cynon Taf is well placed to do meet these new requirements although there is still time to prepare before it comes into force. You can see the Act at <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-bill/?lang=en>

Welsh Language: Accessing services in the language of your choice.

As a result of a law in Wales called the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, all Councils and public bodies in Wales must comply with a set of 176 standards about the way we use the Welsh Language in our organisations. The standards relate to different areas of our work but have conditions that we need to meet:

1. the Welsh language should be treated the same as the English language in Wales; and
2. people in Wales should be able to live their lives using the Welsh language if they choose to do so.

A Welsh Language Commissioner reports directly to the First Minister and makes sure all organisations covered by the Measure follow these requirements, including the standards. The Standards were agreed by Welsh Government on 23 March 2015. <http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s37330/CLA496%20-%20The%20Welsh%20Language%20Standards%20No.%201%20Regulations%202015.pdf> (*Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Ministers, County and County Borough Councils, and National Park Authorities) Regulations 2015*)

Over the last year, the Commissioner's representatives have been inspecting public bodies to identify the standards that could apply directly to them, depending on what arrangements for the Welsh Language were already in place. In September 2015, the Commissioner will impose those standards deemed necessary to meet the requirements of the Measure in a compliance notice.

Once we receive our compliance notice as a Council, we will work with the Welsh Language Commissioner for six months to agree a timetable to implement more challenging standards. We will also start work on a five year strategy to promote the Welsh language and facilitate the use of Welsh.

As a result of our own work, we recognised that we needed to do more to build on what we are doing to implement all of the new standards. However, we feel that the Council is well placed to meet the requirements of the Measure because we have:

- continued to work closely with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office and across Council services to prepare to meet the service standards;
- started to check what we currently do with what we will need to do;
- started to implement new standards that we had already identified as a gap e.g. making sure that we provide a member of staff to attend the reception area when a person attends and wishes to receive a Welsh-language service;
- preparing to implement other standards that we think may be imposed;
- started to introduce Welsh language technology e.g. Microsoft Welsh Language Interface Packs, in partnership with the Welsh Government, to support the implementation of the standards, across the Council and our schools; and
- put in place a Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Working Group that will set the strategic direction, introduce and monitor what we implement.

And we will continue with this work over the next year. In the meantime you will be able to see our annual report to the Welsh Language Commissioner (report to Cabinet in June)

How we continue to engage with the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf

Over the last few years we have been changing the way we engage with you, as residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf. But despite providing different ways for you to give us your views, we know there is room for improvement. In 2013, the Wales Audit Office told us that we needed to get better at making the information we provide less complicated, as we were not making it easy for people to understand what we were trying to do. This meant that people weren't always able to respond and give us their views.

Over the last year we have been working harder to make our information more accessible and to give people more time to give us their views. For example, we have provided more information in our reports, easy to read summary booklets with FAQs and a web page that focuses on the budget challenge www.rctcbc.gov.uk/budgetchallenge. More recently, we have refreshed our approach to involving residents and communities about the future delivery of services and facilities as part of the RCT Together approach. This approach is about involving residents in a number of ways to help the Council and communities to work together to explore different ways of service delivery and managing buildings in the future. This approach will continue during 2015/16.

Over the last year, residents have been invited to:

- Nine drop in sessions with Cabinet members to discuss specific service change proposals e.g. Funding for Nursery Education and the Council funded Music Service.
- Three Leader engagement events - to discuss the General Budget Challenge.
- Use social media to get better and more up to date information about things that matter to them e.g. road closures, upcoming events and changes to bin collection arrangements. We also respond to residents when they ask a question, raise a concern or report a problem with a service.

We are grateful to everyone who has provided feedback to help us shape the services we deliver. We want you to continue to give us your views about our plans and our work so that we can better prioritise areas to change and/or improve. Please see our contact details to get in touch.

The Welsh Government sometimes tells us to consult with our residents, but mostly we ask your views because it is a fair and right thing to do. Getting your views and opinions help us to check what we are doing and how it is making a difference to the people that live and work in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Listening and responding to you is important and we know that by involving you directly and more regularly, we get a better understanding of your needs and expectations. It also means that you get more information about the challenges and choices we face.

One of the best ways of consulting with residents remains our Citizens' Panel, which continues to provide a credible, representative public voice. This means that more local people on the Panel have an opportunity to influence how the Council works in a more focused and direct way. Our Citizens' Panel is made up of 1,000 Rhondda Cynon Taf residents who are representative of the population, interested in the work of the Council and are willing to be involved. Our Panel also joins with the Panel for Merthyr Tydfil Council to create a joint Citizens' Panel which is currently made up of 1,600 residents of both Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. Partners such as the Health Board consult with this Joint Panel too. You can join our Citizens' Panel at www.rctcbc/citizenspanel.

As well as our Panel, we ask people for their views in different ways, through on-line surveys, questionnaires and also talking about issues with smaller established interest groups, as well as opportunities in Council events. As part of our commitment to this area, we use the feedback we

receive from people to help us check if what we do is making a difference to the lives of people that live and work in Rhondda Cynon Taf and has been used to inform this Corporate Performance Report.

We have continued to work with our partners to coordinate, promote and develop consultation and engagement, making best use of the opportunities to consult with local people and the information they provide. In the last year, there have been 65 surveys on the Cwm Taf Community Engagement Hub that we share with Merthyr Tydfil Council and Cwm Taf Health Board - this includes 26 that were specific to this Council. The Hub has allowed us to check our consultation and engagement activity is being acted upon, as it automatically reports to officers when consultations end, see the Hub for yourself at www.cwmtafhub.co.uk.

The Hub, and our work to put together our joint Citizens' Panel, was funded as part of the European Social Fund through Welsh Government for a joint consultation and engagement project with Merthyr Tydfil. The project aimed to provide an effective and efficient approach to consultation and engagement across all partners of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. The funding came to an end in December 2014 but we have carried forward the lessons and key actions from this work into 2015/16.

At the end of the project we checked that we had achieved everything we set out to achieve through the project and we found that it had. This is because:

- The online Community Engagement Hub is now being used by a range of partners to promote and carry out consultation and engagement with our residents, as well as providing feedback to service users.
- Over 65 separate consultations were carried out in the Hub including RCT anti-social behaviour survey, South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan Consultation and a survey of people's shopping habits and how far they travel, to understand how this might change as a result of new housing in the County Borough.
- The Hub has been so successful as a way of consulting, the partners have agreed to carry on funding it when the ESF funding comes to an end.
- All the partners have worked together to agree a set of common standards for consulting with local people to which they will all work
- Over 70 staff from all partners have been trained in the best ways to get the views of local people
- We have asked the new joint Citizens' Panel for their views in 13 different surveys including the Council's 2015/16 Budget, service change proposals and survey on home ownership.
- Most of the people involved in the Hub told us that joint working has helped to improve links between partners and helped to provide consistent ways of working and less duplication
- People also told us that they thought that the Project had helped residents to give their views more easily and had reached a wider audience than previously.

We know we still have more to do and are continuing to look at ways we can improve how we involve residents in what we do and in 2015 we have plans to

- Hold more Leader Engagement Events.

- Improve residents involvement in Scrutiny arrangements.
- Carry out consultation for each Service Change proposal.
- Make more use of Social Media as a way to communicate and consult with our residents.
- Make sure that our consultation with Older People meets the guidance set out by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales.
- Develop a Young Persons version of our consultation Hub.

In the meantime there are lots of ways you can get involved, make suggestion to improve or tell us what you think

	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/sayit
Twitter	@rctcouncil or www.twitter.com/rctcouncil
Facebook	*****
	Improvement@rctcbc.gov.uk
	(01443) 680723
	Performance Team, Ty Bronwydd, Porth, CF39 9DL
For current surveys	consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk
Join the Citizens' Panel	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/citizenspanel
Cwm Taf Engagement Hub	www.cwmtafhub.co.uk
RCT "Help us Improve" Scheme	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/feedback
Your ideas on Council Savings	www.rctcbc.gov.uk/PublicSuggestionSurvey
Your Councillor	Find the contact details of you local Councillor www.rctcbc.gov.uk/councillors
If you are interested in taking over the running of a Council run building or service	For more information http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/communityliving/communityinitiativessandprogrammes/rcttogether/rcttogether-expressionofinterest.aspx

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group held at the Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Tuesday, 21st April 2015.

Present:

County Borough Councillor (Mrs) M Davies - in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

J David
(Mrs) S J Jones
(Mrs) S Rees

Co-opted Members:

Mr G Bell – Vice Chair Older Person's Advisory Group
(Mrs) L Corre – Secretary, Older Person's Advisory Group

Officers in Attendance:

Mr N Elliott – Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing
Mr R Gatis – Service Director, Adult Locality Services and Short Term Intervention
Mr P Griffiths – Service Director, Performance and Improvement
Ms Lesley Lawson – Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning
Ms K May – Head of Democratic Services
Ms A Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer
Ms J Nicholls – Scrutiny Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors (Mrs) A Roberts and (Mrs) J S Ward. An apology for absence was also received from (Mrs) A Tritschler, co-opted Member.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was received in relation to the agenda:

- (i) Mr G Bell – I am an independent member of Cwm Taf University Health Board. Mrs Corre and myself both represent OPAG on Interlink.
- (ii) – Mrs A Edwards – My mother is in receipt of Home Care Services

3. INTRODUCTIONS

For the benefit of the co-opted Members introductions were made. The Head of Democratic Services informed those present that a decision had been taken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that two representatives of the Older Person's Advisory Forum should sit as co-opted members to the Adult Services Scrutiny Working Group and she welcomed Mr Bell and Mrs Corre to the meeting.

4. CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S EVALUATION OF ITS PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERING ITS 2014/15 PRIORITY PLANS AND THE CHALLENGE TO THE DRAFT PRIORITY PLANS FOR 2015/16

The Service Director Performance and Improvement provided the Working Group with an understanding of the Council's statutory obligation to secure continuous improvement and he explained that Members were being asked to challenge both the performance evaluation of the 2014/15 action plan 'Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently' and the content of the draft plan for 2015/16.

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement drew Members' attention to the recommendations at 2.2 of the report and the list of possible points for consideration set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

5. CHALLENGE OF THE DRAFT EVALUATION OF THE 2014/2015 PRIORITY PLAN - 'Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently'

The Service Director, Adult Locality Services and Short Term Intervention introduced the draft evaluation report and explained that as well as taking a backward look on the performance over 2014/15, the report also looked toward the challenges faced by the Council in relation to the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

Members questioned the Service Director in relation to work being undertaken toward the prevention of falls and he responded by commenting on the various elements of the service which contribute to keeping people safe in their homes and providing a level of reassurance for families/carers.

The Service Director pointed out that much of the work in this area, such as Lifeline/Telecare and Aids were difficult to analyse in terms of assessing impact and much of the work was around quality assurance.

The Service Director, Adult Locality Services and Short Term Intervention also explained that it was difficult to put in place quality assurance checks in relation to clients' assessments and he accepted that there are inconsistencies. However, he also pointed out that the number of complaints received in relation to the numbers of frail/elderly supported is very low and regulatory annual checks have always been positive which provides a level of assurance and in addition the Community & Children's Services Scrutiny Committee receive a detailed report on the numbers and types of complaints received on an annual basis.

The Service Director, Adult Locality Services and Short Term Intervention acknowledged that there is a need to provide a better system of checks and balances in the independent sector and work was underway to introduce improvements at the re-tendering stage.

The Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing added that whilst there is a range of quality assurance information being collected it is difficult to fit it all together in a way which would be helpful to bring about positive change.

The Working Group noted from the draft performance evaluation that performance in respect of supporting older people over 65 in the community had dipped although it is still above the current Welsh average. It was agreed that a report should be presented to a future meeting of the scrutiny committee to explore this issue in more detail. The Working Group also noted that no reference had been made to the number of clients supported in

care homes to provide a more complete picture of the support the Council provides and associated performance.

With regard to the customer feedback in relation to the Reablement services, the Working Group questioned the return rate of the survey.

The Service Director, Adult Locality Services and Short Term Intervention reported that the response rate to the exit survey was approximately 15% which was on the low side but he had no evidence to suggest that people were not happy with the service. He reported that research had been undertaken on an all Wales basis into Home Care and the results will be used as a basis for developing new contracts but generally people valued a service which in addition to meeting their personal care needs was consistent and delivered on time.

In conclusion, the Working Group **AGREED** that:

1. Further work required in order to ensure that the evaluation sets out a fair and balanced assessment:
 - Opportunity for a more complete picture to be included around the how clients are supported by the Council i.e. references made to those supported in the community but not in care homes;
 - The need to further explore how or if elements of the Service's work are making a difference e.g. to what extent are the Council's quality assurance arrangements making a difference?
 - More clearer narrative needed that links the 2014/15 evaluation with the 2015/16 priority plan;
 - The inclusion of the case studies provide a useful illustration of the impact which the service has and should if possible be included for each service area. Thought also to be given as to whether a case study from the social worker perspective could provide an additional insight.
2. A report to be provided to a future meeting of the Community & Children's Service Scrutiny Committee to enable Members to explore the reasons for the dip in performance in relation to the numbers of over 65s supported in the community.

6. **CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2015/16 PRIORITY PLAN - '*Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently*'**

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement explained that Members were being asked for their views on the draft action plan ie is the plan stretching enough or too ambitious. He also reminded the Working Group that the quarterly updates on the performance of the plan would be used by the Scrutiny Committees as a basis for scrutiny and Members would need to be satisfied that the priority plan is fit for purpose.

The Service Director, Adult Locality Services and Short Term Intervention provided an overview of the plan and emphasised that the version before Members was a draft and that further work needed to be undertaken in relation to the target setting. He reported that the plan is linked to the introduction of the Social Services Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and has two key sections, one focusing on safeguarding and the other supporting independence. He asked Members to note that in relation to the section on MASH (CIA 1) this should read 'Consolidation of the Multi Agency Single Hub'.

The Working Group pointed out that to deliver the plan, the right mix/types of services needed to be in place and asked the Service Director what steps had been taken to determine this.

The Service Director, Adult Locality Services and Short Term Intervention explained that a review of the Commissioning Strategy would be undertaken as a priority during the year and reported that currently consultation is underway on the higher level aspects of what will be a 10 year Strategy. He explained that work had already begun in terms of remodelling residential care as it was known that there will be a greater need for more EMI places and the nursing staff to support this. He explained that more work needs to be undertaken with regard to the Preventative Strategy which will need to include our public sector partners and take into consideration what communities themselves are doing.

The Working Group highlighted the fact that the proposed priority plan did not include Carers' Assessments, considering the below target performance result during 2014/15. The Service Director reported that this concern would be acted upon.

The Working Group questioned the ambition of the Plan, citing as an example 'the percentage of care packages completed in the period where the client requires no on-going services'. The latest data for this indicator being 75.10% and yet the target figure has been set at 65%. Similarly, the measure sitting below this in the plan ie in relation to the rate of older people (aged 65 and over) supported in care homes was also referred to.

The Service Director explained that the aim is to provide a service that is at least as good as that being provided across Wales but this has to be tempered by the financial position. In some areas the Council is currently in the top quartile but in other areas this is not the case and there are a number of reasons for this including the socio economics of the area. He reported that the Group Director had already challenged him to review the target figures and this would be done before the priority plan is finalised. However, he pointed out that with regard to the re-ablement service, whilst the performance figures are high at the moment, he explained that as the service moves towards working with more clients with dementia, the figures are likely to fall. He also reported that work is underway to try and develop more meaningful measures and pointed to a new measure included at page 30 of the pack "the percentage of people reporting that they feel safe". In response to queries he explained that officers are currently taking guidance on how this measure can be best evidenced.

The Working Group noted that no measure in relation to Delayed Transfers of Care had been included and whilst acknowledging the limitations of the previous measure, Members questioned this decision and asked whether a more useful measure could be included.

In conclusion, the Working Group **AGREED** that there were opportunities to improve the content of the draft priority plan to better inform the scrutiny of progress during the year. In particular:

- The extent to which some proposed targets represent sufficient enough 'improvement' and can be more ambitious;
- Target completion dates included for all actions in the plan;
- The requirement to include information in the plan to support further improvement around Carers Assessments and Delayed Transfers of Care.

(Mrs) M E Davies
Chairman

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm.

Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live at home

People are living longer than even before and in Rhondda Cynon Taf there will be 40% more people aged over 65 in our communities by 2033.

We know that even though life expectancy for both men and women in Rhondda Cynon Taf is amongst the lowest in Wales, there will still be a greater number of people will be affected by the physical and mental ill health problems that are related to old age. We also know that where possible people prefer to live in their own homes for as long as they can. We know that the number of people with dementia is likely to double and the number of people predicted to be admitted to hospital because of a fall will increase. We also know that more adults are now suffering from poor physical and mental health and we have a higher rate of disability than the Welsh average. What this means is we have more people that need help and we also have to support people that care for these people. This ever increasing demand for services both directly from us and as part of a partnership, is at a time when all public services budgets are falling. With the changes in the population of our residents, if we don't change the way we work we will struggle to keep people independent and safe and costs will increase.

People also want and deserve more say and more control and sometimes social care does not always help people to be independent. To tackle this situation across Wales the Welsh Government has introduced a new law, called the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. We are starting to meet the requirements of this law. The legislation will help us to make life better for people and their carers; make social care law easier to use; give people a stronger voice; make sure people get the help they need to lead a good life; make sure communities have a chance to offer their knowledge and experience and say what social services will be like all over Wales. If we don't prepare for this new law, we won't be able to meet our duties to our residents. For RCT this will mean challenging the way we use resources, changing the focus to services that are identified and delivered in local communities and that help people to remain independent of statutory services. Continuing short term services that help people regain and retain control and independence of their lives whilst at the same time reducing the number of people that have to go into residential care.

In its most recent report the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) www.rctcbc.gov.uk/CSSIWPerformanceReport2013-14 , set out the challenges faced by the service, acknowledged the progress we are making in areas such as closer working with the Health Board, the Butterfly project and the positive developments arising from the implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. It also set confirmed the areas for improvement set out in the Director of Social Service's Annual Report as e.g. reviewing care plans within timescales, improving systems for the quality assurance of assessment and care management and increasing the assessments of adult carers.

We have, and are continuing to tackle these local and national challenges across our services as well as in our Priority Action Plan for ***Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live at home***

In 2014/15 we said we would focus on

- Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Helping people to live independently

We know that we have more to do but having considered the information available to us including progress, current, trend and comparative data, complaints and feedback from the Regulators and our own self assessment, overall our progress in the two Outcomes in this Priority Plan has been generally good and details of our progress are outlined in detail below. Also, two of the three key measures we had indicated would help to evidence success have been achieved with one of the measures just missing an increased target

These are

- Risk has been managed in more than 99.5% of adult protection referrals - exceeding our target of 96.1%
- 74.74% of the care packages we put in place have resulted in people not needing longer term care - exceeding our target of 65%
- 94.40% of short term reablement clients felt that a short period of reablement support had helped them to remain independent just missing our increased target of 95% (was originally 92%)

This means that more people are being supported to live independently in their own homes for longer

The detailed evaluation is set out below.

We said that we would safeguard vulnerable adults, ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect and are protected from avoidable harm

1 Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH

This is a way of making sure that we share information our partners so that concerns about adults and children are dealt with in the best possible way. The MASH was put in place in Pontypridd Police station in January and now social care professionals, health, probation and the police work together more closely to keep people safe. The focus in the initial work was on adults and the same approach is now being taken for children, and will be in place in April/May 2015.

It is too early to say how this new service is directly affecting our vulnerable adult residents but early indications are that we are able to respond more quickly to concerns and also put in place joint interventions more quickly.

MASH - how working better together delivers better help

Through the work of the MASH Mrs X had access to the right support at the right time and the certainty and assurance that she was safe.

Mrs X is in her 70s, and married to Mr X for over 50 years. They have an adult daughter, who lives locally but has not been in contact with for a number of years. However, Mrs X recently contacted her daughter because, following an initial visit to A&E, she was admitted to hospital for the treatment of injuries, including multiple fractures to her hands and ribs. Mrs X had disclosed to hospital staff that she had been assaulted by her husband. Mrs X's daughter subsequently maintained that both she, as a child, and her mother had experienced regular violence at the hands of Mr X, but that Mrs X always refused to seek help or leave him.

A&E staff contacted the police following the disclosure, following which police went to A&E to take an account of what happened from Mrs X. Mr X was arrested and then bailed with a condition to have no contact with Mrs X pending further enquiries. The arresting officers completed a Public Protection Notification (PPN) and submitted this to police colleagues in the MASH who were able to review the information on the PPN and quickly access information on Mrs X's medical condition from health and engage with the Safeguarding Liaison Officer.

Mrs X was stayed with her daughter following discharge from hospital. However, she learned that Mr X had also been admitted to hospital. In his absence, she returned to the marital home, supported by her daughter. Mrs X's case was referred to a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference, as a result of which she was contacted by the Safeguarding Liaison Officer. Mrs X indicated that she was struggling with personal care tasks as a result of her injuries, and was referred for Reablement services. Mrs X's need were assessed by the Council's Single Point of Access Team and services to support her were put in place that day. *Further discussion took place between police, the Safeguarding Liaison Officer and RCT's Adult Protection Officer to agree that the safeguarding actions that had been taken so far had been sufficient.*

Mr X was diagnosed with early dementia whilst in hospital. When he was medically fit to be discharged, he had nowhere to live as Mrs X was now living in the marital home and he remained subject to police bail conditions that stated he was to have no contact with Mrs X. The Short-Term Intervention team undertook a needs assessment for Mr X to determine whether he had any care and support needs.

This case is continuing and Mrs X may decide not give a full statement to police and allow her husband to return to the marital home once his bail conditions end. If this is the case, we will consider instigating the Adult Protection Procedures, in addition to the safeguarding measures already undertaken.

We haven't made as much progress with the Safeguarding website as we intended but we have now agreed hosting arrangements and a Cwm Taf website will go live during 2015/16

2 QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACHES

We have not made as much progress as we anticipated in both for our own work and also other service providers where we use them. This is partly due to a focus on integrated working with health colleagues. We need to do more to make sure that all checks on the information we hold are completed in the same way and in September 2014 we changed the way that we plan to meet people's needs to make it clearer how we will do this and easier to check. This highlighted a need to improve the standards for timely re-assessment and review and reduce the bureaucracy associated with our work. Positively the number of complaints and representations in regard to our work is low with the most recent report to the Community and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in November 2014 www.rctcbc.gov.uk/CommunityScrutinyCommittee-04-Nov-2014 indicating that of the 6,428 clients dealt with by Adults services, 70 complaints have been received through the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between April 2013 and March 2014. We make sure that we resolve and respond to complaints from service users and when things go wrong, we listen and learn so that we can improve what we do.

3 CARERS

Many people can only stay in their own homes with the help of Carers so we want to make sure that their carers get the support they need. One in ten of our residents is already a carer. We are working with the First Response service to identify carers when they contact the Council and to make sure that they are directed to the right information and support. Our Carers' newsletter also provides carers with information on a wide range of services, events, support and third sector organisations that can help. www.rctcbc.gov.uk/carersnewsspring2015

We want to make sure that everyone who works for the Council knows and understands how important carers are and a number of staff have undergone e learning to help them to better understand the caring role we have delivered and face to face awareness raising sessions to around 900 people. We currently support over 2,300 carers through our Carers Project, which you can find out about here, <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/relateddocuments/publications/communitycare/carers/carerssupportprojectfactsheet.pdf>. This support includes providing a range of courses from finding out more about Dementia, Carers' First Aid, support to manage finances, signing and symbol skills, Arts Workshop, mindfulness and communicating through touch for those who care for someone with an Autism Spectrum Disorder or learning disabilities. Feedback from carers that attended a Carers Rights Day event in November 2014, was positive, with the majority responding that the event helped them in their caring role.

However, we continue to do less well in offering assessments for carers. Last year, despite improving our performance, the 2013/14 data showed that we were one of the worst Councils in Wales for offering an assessment to our carers. The current data reported for this measure would suggest that it is likely that we will remain among the worst again this year. However, we think this may not reflect what we do as we are not effectively collecting the figures to calculate this measure properly. We believe that carers are being offered assessments and that their needs are generally included when the person cared for is being assessed. The Social Services Inspectors raised this in its most recent inspection report www.rctcbc.gov.uk/CSSIWPerformanceReport2013-14. We want to get this right as quickly as we can so that we can be sure about what we are doing, and this has been included in the plan for 2015/16.

4 DEMENTIA CARE -

When people are suffering from dementia and need to be cared for in our residential care homes, we want to provide the best possible care we can. Our care homes in Clydach Court, Trealaw and Dan y Mynydd, Porth were initially awarded the highest-possible standard in the Butterfly Project, which continues to improve the way residents with dementia are cared for. The friends and family of those living in these care homes have seen a noticeable difference in the outlook and behaviour of their loved-ones, which allows them to explore themselves, their lifestyles and their pasts in a gentle, soothing environment.

As part of its regular monitoring arrangements Dementia Care Matters grade projects from level 1 to 11 based on the standards of care observed by them. Last June Dementia Care Matters carried out unannounced visits to Clydach Court and Dan y Mynydd. As a result of the visits, Dan y Mynydd maintained its level 1, top, status, which means the observers saw 'exceptional person centred dementia care'. However, Clydach Court was downgraded to level 3, which means that the observers saw 'good dementia care with many positive elements' which although not as good as level 1, is still positive. The reason for the changes in dementia care observed was as a result of management and staffing changes and we are working to ensure that Clydach Court is back up to level 1 following the next unannounced visit in the summer of 2015.

Case study:

"it's like a happy family - I love it here! I've seen the difference as my dad was here before the Butterfly project was started when people were bored. Now its a joy to visit. I never worry at all when I walk out the door and look forward to coming back!"

Daughter of a man living in Dan y Mynydd

Last September we introduced the Butterfly way of working to Cae Glas home for the elderly and although it is too soon to check our progress in detail, there are encouraging early signs that Cae Glas is following the early successes of Clydach Court and Dan y Mynydd. In January 2015, we were pleased that two privately run Care Homes i.e. Rhondda Care Home, Ystrad and Ty Pentwyn Care Home in Treorchy decided to implement the Butterfly approach utilising grant monies. These homes will be supported by the Council's Contracts and Commissioning Team and they will also be subject to unannounced visits and rigorous monitoring by Dementia Care Matters.

We said we would promote Wellbeing and Independence -

Last year we were one of the best Councils in Wales for the rate of older people over 65 supported in the community, at 106.9 per thousand population. Our performance this year has dipped, although it is still above the current Welsh average. We are currently looking at the reasons why, but we think that it may have been affected by our success in reducing waiting lists for aids and adaptations and also the success of the reablement service in helping people to stay independent. The reduction in waiting times means that people are being seen more quickly, not waiting significant amounts of time for an assessment for aids and equipment and no longer being supported in the community.

At 97.84%, we were one of the best in Wales at supporting clients aged 18-64 in the community and if current performance is sustained we will remain in the top quartile. Our performance in the % of all adults supported in the community was above Welsh average last year, and on current performance this will be maintained.

Aids and Community Equipment Team (ACE Service provides aids and adaptations) Management

There are a number of ways that we help people live independently in the community, i.e. through direct personal care and by awarding grants for adaptations to and within homes. This year among other things, we have done more to get aids and adaptations in place and so this has helped more people to live in the community without our help. We are also delivering Disabled Facilities Grants more quickly and last year we continued to reduce the number of days to deliver a Grant for adults by 27 days to 201 days, which is above the current Wales average.

Customer Comments arising from work carried out through Disabled Facilities Grants

- **External works to improve access to a house in Pontypridd**

"I am extremely grateful for all the work carried out. It has made my day to day living so much easier."

"The people who helped with the decisions and the building Contractors were very professional and polite."

- **Internal works to bathroom in Nantgarw to accommodate new seated shower**

"Absolutely delighted with all the work done!" My quality of life has been improved."

All people involved were marvellous! I am so grateful for everything you have done for me."

1 Short term care

1a REABLEMENT

Rhondda Cynon Taf residents have a Single Point of Access to the reablement and intermediate care services provided by the Council. This already means that people are directed to appropriate services in a co-ordinated and timely way. A business case for developing a single service with health partners for all reablement and intermediate care is ongoing which will mean that referrals for both community health and social care can be accessed from a single point. It is taking longer than we planned because we need to ensure that we are clear about how a joint service can be resourced and what it can provide within those resources, over and above what we are already providing separately. As a result of these ongoing discussions work will be carried forward into 2015/16.

Our Reablement service continued to help to get people back on their feet. The service which lasts for about 6 weeks, helps people to regain their independence so that they have less need for ongoing care. For the third year running, fewer people, that completed the reablement programme, needed any ongoing services when the programme ended. Also we exceeded the target we set ourselves. It is not just the data that tells us this, we also asked the

people that received this type of help. Between April and March 2014, we asked over 1,600 people that received a service whether they felt we had helped them to remain living independently at home 94 of the 232 responses said that we had. At 94.40% this is more than last year but slightly less than anticipated we would achieve this year.

Positive feedback on our Reablement service included

- "The service received from all ladies was excellent. I couldn't have survived without it"
- "Thanks to everyone concerned I can now manage on my own" Mr S
- "Without this support I don't think I would have been able to recover so quickly and then maintain my independence"

However, people also told us when things didn't go so well e.g.

"care received was excellent but there was a lack of communication between hospital discharge and services being set up"
Feedback like this reminds us that we need to continue to work hard to improve communication between health and social care services.

At the start of the year we had anticipated the need for additional 'Step up Step down' beds to supplement the three already in place but we have since concluded that there was not enough demand to continue with the action. The three existing beds in Parc Newydd, Garth Olwg and Tegfan are sufficient to meet the needs of people who require the temporary help that these beds provide following discharge from hospital or as a result of the need for full time care. The temporary help means that people have time they need to help their recovery and get them back on their feet so they can return home to live their lives with confidence.

2 TELECARE

The use of technology through Telecare is another way that that helps people to stay independent. We have reviewed the way we deliver Telecare to make sure that it meets the changing needs of our residents and initial findings will be available in April 2015. The number of clients that are using Telecare to help them stay at home is falling and is now less than 2013/14 (Q4 13/14 – 430) (Q1- 415/Q2-408/Q3- 398/Q4- 394) Historically, an increase in the charges for Telecare has resulted in a drop off of users. This may account for a fall in numbers of Telecare users. We are currently looking at ways to simplify the process for Telecare and promote the service.

An example of how Telecare can help people stay independent

Mrs X is an 80 year old lady who lives alone in a terraced property. She lives and sleeps downstairs. There are Telecare heat alarm systems in place in her home. Diagnosed with dementia 2007, her speech is affected and she is unable to express her needs although she is independently mobile.

Mrs X currently receives a package of care of 3 calls per day and she also attends a day centre 3 times a week. There is substantial support from family who call daily and spend several hours there, also a neighbour calls in regularly. Concerns were raised about Mrs X's activities at night, ie was she distressed and pacing in her own home?.

'Just checking' system was installed at Mrs X's home and monitored over a 4 week period. The information provided by the system was easily accessible online and indicated that Mrs X was going to bed at a regular time following carer's intervention. It also showed that for the majority of time Mrs X remained in bed until the following morning when the carer arrived. Over a 4 week period it was established that Mrs X was mainly settled at night and there was little activity.

As a result of this information and following discussions with the family and other professionals, it was agreed that there was no evidence that Mrs X was distressed and risks were minimised. Family have peace of mind that Mrs X is safe and well at night, she still lives at home and a long term placement has been averted.

3 DIRECT PAYMENTS

We want to give people the freedom to manage their own arrangements and pay their carers through direct payment. People need to have the right information and confidence to do this. In the last twelve months we have learned lessons from a pilot that we conducted in 2014/15 with 7 people. The pilot was aimed at people who would meet the criteria for a direct payment but have difficulty in managing money. The scheme managed by a service user organisation, Dewis Centre for Independent Living, assisted a small number of people who were unable to physically manage a Direct Payment in order to ensure they had equal access to a Direct Payment service, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. This proved successful and also showed a reduced risk to service users accumulating debt in their management of the Direct Payment and has been incorporated into our Direct payments policy.

We put in place a revised policy to clarify some ambiguities and also made our contract with service users more robust, which was an issue that had been highlighted to us by service users in several complaints. An example of a complaint from one family stated they did not feel our contract with them was clear enough about our expectation of their responsibilities regarding ensuring Personal Assistants received police checks. We have tried to make the service user responsibilities clearer for people to understand. We have also tried to be clearer in assessing risk of the possible difficulties in managing a Direct Payments to help people avoid falling into financial difficulties as this was also an issue that had been highlighted. Thus the revised policy and process also includes greater input/support from RCT finance for those people with more challenges in managing a Direct Payment. There have also been some updates regarding statutory changes such as Statutory Sick Pay and pensions. As a result of this work and a clear review process we have made it easier for people to give us their views about the benefits and barriers to using the system. We will be conducting a satisfaction survey of those people in receipt of Direct Payments and a Managed Account in 2015/16. At 13.02%, we are currently marginally above the target we set ourselves (13%) and last year's performance (12.54%) with 359 out of 2,758 clients choosing their own service providers (Staff are expected to consider the appropriateness and benefits of receiving a Direct Payment for individuals and to discuss this with them so they can make an informed choice regarding the way their service is delivered)

How Direct Payments has helped L to maintain her independence

L has a neurological disorder which she has had for approximately 15 years. At the time of her diagnosis her daughter was a toddler and her husband was working full time in a job which involved spending time away from home overnight. A small Direct Payment helped Lucy to spend time safely with her daughter and enable her husband to carry on working, knowing she had support. She was also able to retain control over her own decisions and use the Direct Payments to provide her with flexibility when arranging her care. Over the years, L's health has deteriorated slowly and she is now dependent on others for all her care needs. Her Direct Payment has increased over the years to accommodate changes to her health and to enable her to employ people who had come to know her well and who understood her illness. She was able to ensure that she had continuity of her own care and also had confidence that people coming into the home were familiar to her child. Unfortunately L's illness is now at a level that means her husband has had to reduce his working hours to help to care for her. The Direct Payment continues to assist her to meet her care needs and the presence of her small team of personal assistants, supplemented by the Independent Living Fund, means her husband is able to spend quality time with his daughter, carry on working and still be satisfied that L is receiving good quality care from people who are very familiar with her needs. This has helped L remain with her family in her own home, maintain her independence and avoid the need for residential care.

4 COMMUNITY BASED HOUSING

We are continuing with our plans for a new purpose built 42 unit extra care housing facility in Talbot Green although the work will now be completed in the spring 2016 which is slightly later than October 2015 date originally anticipated. The slight delay was as a result of planning issues connected with the scheme as well as the housing provider, Hafod Care, ensuring that the appropriate resources were in place. We slowed our planned discussions with Housing Providers regarding meeting demands for Community Based Housing to make sure that what we provide is what the new law asks us to provide and we will make sure that this remains a priority for 2015/16. The introduction of new arrangements for a cross tenure floating support service for older persons is currently out to tender, with a view to commissioning a new service provider in summer 2015

We have also strengthened links with housing providers and are developing 3 units of bariatric friendly housing support for people with significant health or disability needs.

Following new arrangements we put in place for our Adaptation and Community Equipment service we have been able to reduce waiting list for equipment and adaptations from 444 -144 (Feb 2015). This means that more people are getting the help they need more quickly.

5 MAKE BEST USE OF RESOURCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE GROWING POPULATION

Our resources are reducing and we need to continue to make the best possible use of what we have so that we focus on those people that can most benefit from our help and have ensured a balanced budget for 2014/15. We have also taken early steps to address the long term need for more preventative services. This will continue in 2015/16 and beyond as part of the implementation of the new Social Care and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, which is why it will remain in our Supporting Independence priority plan.

As part of our budget plans, we also looked in detail at our Community Day Centres. We found some to be providing a positive experience for our residents and well attended, but many which were not. There were different things happening across the centres, e.g. one opened for three hours only in the middle of the day. One centre had only three people attending and some offered little if any, activities. Also, the subsidies that the Council was paying for the meals sold in some the centres far outweighed the cost of providing the meal, in the worst case this was by over £50. As a result of the thorough review, we closed ten of the nineteen day centres. In the nine remaining centres we ensured that there was a geographical spread so that people don't have far to travel and all centres open at the same times, i.e. from Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm. for full report see www.rctcbc.gov.uk/Cabinet-8-Jan-2014

6 SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO FIND THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS

We need to change the way we respond to the needs of our community, we want to make sure that we help the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf to find the solutions themselves. We are also working closely with the third sector so that together we can find other ways to meet the needs of our residents and our regional implementation plan in support of the Social Services and Well Being Act will address this issue.

We are also making information that people can use to make better decisions more easily available. For example, adults that come into our care are referred to our Welfare Rights Advisers who provide specialist information and support so that they claim all the benefits to which they are entitled and to advise people who have complex financial problems. The advice is confidential, impartial and free. Between 1 April (to 11/3) Welfare rights team opened 1,048 new enquiries, 490 of which relate directly to our Service users.

6 ASSESS NEEDS IN A TIMELY MANNER

Implemented new integrated assessment guidance

There is a collective responsibility on all public agencies to deliver effective joined up well-being services and to help individuals to connect to their natural communities. Local Authorities and local health boards are required to jointly develop common arrangements to enable an older person in the community, residential care or hospital to get the information from professionals to help them promote their well-being.

The Welsh Government set out its requirements for integrated health and social care in A Framework for Delivering Integrated Health and Social Care for Older People for with complex needs. Cwm Taf UHB, Merthyr Council and RCT have published a statement of intent of in relation to integrating care for older people, <http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/140319integrationen.pdf> it sets out our aspirations and expectations for closer working www.rctcbc.gov.uk/statementofintent As part of the process for delivering an integrated approach Welsh Government introduced guidance for Local Authorities and Local Health Boards which sets out a process for delivering integrated assessment for people over 65 years old. The guidance covered assessment, planning and review arrangements for older people.

Due to the scope of the work a phased approach has been taken to the development and implementation of the integrated assessment processes. Assessment documentation has been developed for older people which can be used across health and social care. This assessment documentation has, to date, been implemented across Cwm Taf for hospital discharges to social care for the over 65s.

As a result of our work with the sensory services team we have reduced the waiting list for people with a Sensory Impairment to be reviewed from 131 to 91 and work to complete the implementation of a new model has now been completed.

Regulators from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) told us - that they recognised that we were making progress in changing the way we deliver adult services, which will be aligned with what we need to do to meet the requirements of the new Social Services and Well-being (Wales). They also saw that we have been working together with the local health board and Merthyr Council. Despite our progress we have to do more to make changes more quickly. The Regulators' full report can be found at - www.rctcbc.gov.uk/CSSIWPerformanceReport2013-14.

What this means for 2015/16

As our resources reduce, we need to make the best possible use of what we have and focus on those people that can most benefit from our help. Our services are going through a modernisation programme that focuses on working with our partners in the Health Board, Merthyr Tydfil Council and the voluntary sector to support older people, vulnerable people and their carers to have the choice and say in their care arrangements.

We need to change the way we respond to the needs of our community, and help the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf to find the solutions themselves. This includes taking steps to focus on services that will prevent problems from getting worse. This will continue in 2015/16 and beyond as part of the new Social Care and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, which is why it will remain in this priority plan.

Our plan for 2015/16 focuses on:

- **Safeguarding adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable, ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect and are protected from avoidable harm.** This will include:
 - Building on the success of the MASH and making sure there are strong arrangements in place to safeguard adults, according to our legal requirements.
- **Giving adults and older people who need support greater choice and control, within available resources, through prevention and greater integration of health and social services.** This will include:
 - Continuing our work on the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act so that we make sure our duties are delivered jointly with the Health Board.
 - Providing services that help people to safely regain and keep their independence.
 - Empowering people to have great choice and control, focussing on preventing long term illness.
 - Redesigning and modernising our services, including the Learning Disability Service, to support people to be independent and manage our resources.

**Wales Programme for Improvement
Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently**

What we aim to achieve:

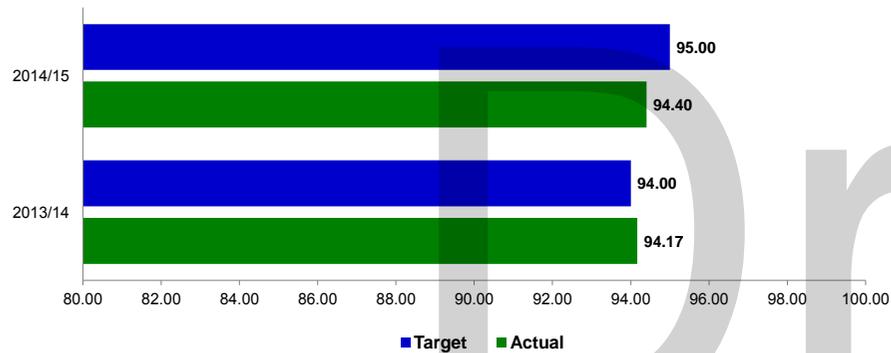
The Council will continue to reconfigure its services, with the University Health Board and other partners, to ensure older and vulnerable people and their carers are supported to remain in control of their care arrangements and accommodation. Our priority is to provide good quality interventions that support independence whilst also retaining a focus on safeguarding vulnerable adults from neglect and abuse

Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?

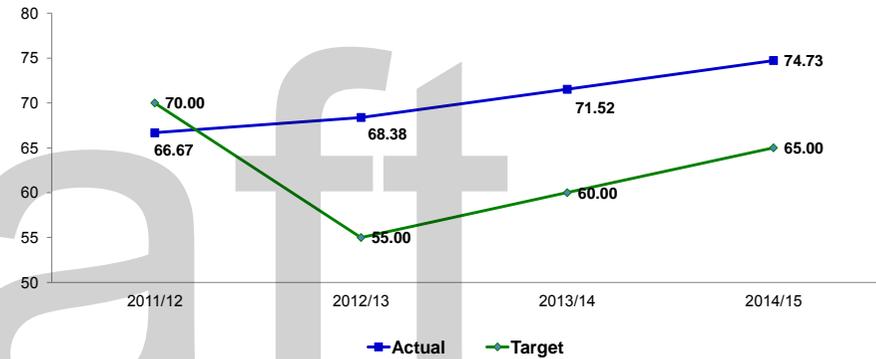
Risk Description:	Outcome Reference
The changing demographics and likely increase in demand to social services may impact on the ability of the Council to safeguard its vulnerable adults, keep citizens independent for longer and result in increased costs of providing services.	1
If the Council does not prepare adequately for the potential implications of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, then it may not meet its duties to provide appropriate services to its citizens.	2

How will we know if we are making a difference:

Key PI(1): % of reablement clients who felt we helped them remain living independently in their own home environment (based on those that returned a questionnaire)



Key PI(2): % of care packages completed in the period where the client requires no on-going services (at the point the package is complete)



Story behind the data:

From April 2012 we have started to collect information on whether or not clients felt we helped them remain living independently in their own home environment. For 2013/14 we sent questionnaires to 1,320 people, 326 returned them and 307 felt we helped them achieve this (94.17%). Between April and March 2015 we sent questionnaires to 1,639 people, 232 responded to the questionnaire and 219 felt we helped them remain living independently in their own home (94.40%). This compares to 96.23% in quarter 1, 98% in quarter 2 and 95.95% in quarter 3 of 2014/15.

Story behind the data:

In 2013/14 1,127 people accessed the service, of which, 806 (71.5%) required no on-going support at the point of completing the reablement package. Between April and March 2015, 1,132 people accessed the service with 846 (74.73%) requiring no on-going support. This compares to 76.99% in quarter 1, 75.4% in quarter 2 and 75.1% in quarter 3 of 2014/15.

Bob Gatis - Service Director, Adult Services - March 2015

Key Priority: Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently
 Lead Officer: Bob Gatis - Service Director, Adult Services

Outcome 1: Safeguard adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable, ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect and are protected from avoidable harm

Theme	Title	Measures									Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16 Annual Target	Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15						
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG				
Safety	Me01 - % of people 65+ supported in community – balance of care (Local)	81.97	83.79	3	12	83.71	83.80	81.82	●	↓	83.80		
	Me02 - % adult protection referral completed where the risk has been managed (action 3) (Local)	92.92	96.11	3	13	94.45	96.10	99.50	●	↑	96.1		

Draft

Key Priority: Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently
 Lead Officer: Bob Gatis - Service Director, Adult Services

Outcome 2: Promote wellbeing and independence, choice and control of adults who need support, within available resources, through prevention and greater integration of health and social

Theme	Title	Measures										Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Safety	Me01 - % of care packages completed in the period where the client requires no ongoing services (at the point the package is complete) (Local)(OA)	68.38	71.52				65.00	74.73	●	↑	66	This measure is also shown graphically at the front of the plan
	Me02 - % of reablement clients who felt they had been helped to remain independent (Local)	95.61	94.17				95.00	94.40	●	↓	95	This measure is also shown graphically at the front of the plan
	Me03 - Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for Adults (Local)	230	228	2	10	236	260	201	●	↑		
	Me04 - % of carers of adult services users who were offered an assessment in their own right during the year (Statutory)	39.5	60.4	4	20	85.8	60.0	76.3	●	↑	86	
	Me05 - % of clients choosing their own service providers through Direct Payments (Local)	11.77	12.54				13.00	13.02	●	↑	13.50	

Draft 2015/16 Priority Plan
Supporting vulnerable adults and older people to live independently

The Council will continue to modernise its services, in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. We will undertake this modernisation programme with the University Health Board, the third sector and other partners to ensure older and vulnerable people and their carers are helped to remain in control of their care and support arrangements. Our priority is to support and where necessary provide a range of services that prevent the need for Social Care intervention. Where care and support is required it will be of high quality and will be tailored to individual circumstances whilst retaining a focus on safeguarding vulnerable adults

Lead officer for this priority – Neil Elliott, Service Director Direct Services, Business and Housing

Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?	
Risk Description:	Outcome Reference:
Inability of key partnerships to deliver integrated approach to regional implementation plans which are citizen focussed.	
Cultural shift required across organisations, communities and citizens	
Organisations are unable to redirect resources from acute care to community based early intervention, prevention and crisis support services	

Council Key Priority:

Managing People's Independence – Supporting adults and older people to live independently

Lead Officer:

Neil Elliott

What we are trying to achieve:	Safeguard adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable, ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect and are protected from avoidable harm
Why we need to do it:	The over-arching challenge for Adult Social Care and our public sector partners is to improve the quality of life for local people in a context where public sector funding will continue to be constrained and where there are increasing numbers of local vulnerable people with long-term physical and emotional conditions, including dementia.
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Priorities (s)	Vulnerable Adults - All adults in Rhondda Cynon Taf are able to live independent and fulfilled lives
What difference will delivery of this objective make to the service users/residents of RCT? (? internal services)	Adults will be able to retain their independence and wellbeing and be kept safe from avoidable harm.

How will we measure our success

Measures		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Data	Annual Target	Target Qtr 1	Target Qtr 2	Target Qtr 3	Annual Target
1	% of people reporting that they feel safe new	NEW				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TBD

Target Rationale – this is a new indicator collected as part of the code of practice in relation to measuring social services performance. Targets will be set when an initial baseline has been established.

How will we measure our success											
Measures		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Data	Annual Target	Target Qtr 1	Target Qtr 2	Target Qtr 3	Annual Target
2	% adult protection referral completed where the risk has been managed (SCA019)	96.11	3	13	94.45	99.5	96.10	96.10	96.10	96.10	96.10
Target Rationale: Target is based on maintaining the improvement in performance achieved during 2014/15											

Critical Improvement Actions		Way Forward/Milestones	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
1	Ensure there are robust governance arrangements in place for safeguarding adults in Rhondda Cynon Taf	M01 – Report performance quarterly to the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board for monitoring against agreed standards	July 2015	Service Director Adult Locality Services
		M02 – Produce annual safeguarding report for 2014/15 detailing achievements and priorities for future improvement	October 2015	
		M03 – Work with Partners to complete development of a dedicated safeguarding website which brings together information for children and young people and their families, adults and professionals who work them	January 2016	
2	Continue to work with Partners to implement the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) across Cwm Taf the region	M01 – Review procedures to include referrals to and from MASH for people with learning disabilities and people with mental health problems	October 2015	
		M02 – Evaluate the performance of the new service to ensure expected outcomes are being delivered	March 2016	

Council Key Priority:

Managing People's Independence – Supporting adults and older people to live independently

Lead Officer:**Neil Elliott**

2. What we are trying to achieve:	Adults and older people who need support have greater choice and control, within available resources, through prevention and greater integration of health and social services										
Why we need to do it:	<p>The over-arching challenge for Adult Social Care and our public sector partners is to improve the quality of life for local people in a context where public sector funding will continue to be constrained and where there are increasing numbers of local vulnerable people with long-term physical and emotional conditions, particularly dementia.</p> <p>The Social Services and Well-being Act will seek to transform statutory social services, so that more people are enabled to find local solutions to meet their care and support needs, through better advice, information and sign-posting to community based resources.</p>										
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Priorities	Vulnerable Adults - All adults in Rhondda Cynon Taf are able to live independent and fulfilled lives										
What difference will delivery of this objective make to the service users/residents of RCT?	More people will be given greater choice to help achieve more for themselves and retain their independence and wellbeing whilst living in their own homes for longer.										
How will we measure our success											
Measures		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16 Targets			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Data	Annual Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Annual
1	People 65+ supported in community – (SCA/003b)	83.79	3	12	83.71	81.82	83.80	83.80	83.80	83.80	83.80
Target Rationale: Target of 83 was based on maintaining the improvement in performance achieved during 2014/15 and in line with the All Wales Average for 2013/14. Looking at the numbers that could better inform this target (as a result of the reduction in residential care)											

Measures		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16 Targets			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Data	Annual Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Annual
2	% of care packages completed in the period where the client requires no ongoing services (at the point the package is complete) (OA) (LSCA/004c)	71.52	N/A	N/A	N/A	74.73	65	66	66	66	66
Target Rationale: Target is based on the fact that during 2015/16 the Service will be increasing the threshold for the provision of care and also increasing access for people with dementia. This is likely to mean that people are likely to require some level of on-going service											
3	The rate of older people (aged 65 or over): whom the authority supports in care homes per 1,000 population aged 65 or over (SCA/002b)	26.83	4	22	19.84	24.46	27.00	23.00	23.00	23.00	23.00
Target Rationale: Group priority to reduce the number of people in long term residential care over the medium term											
4	% of reablement clients who felt they had been helped to remain independent (LSCA/016)	94.17	N/A	N/A	N/A	94.40	95	95	95	95	95
Target Rationale: Target reflects the anticipated larger number of people receiving the service where there is limited improvement in their independence following intervention											
5	% of people reporting they can do what matters to them	NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	TBD
Target Rationale – This is a new indicator collected as part of the code of practice in relation to measuring social services performance. Targets will be set when an initial baseline has been established.											
6	The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over (Statutory)(SCA/001)	4.57	3	14	4.7	8.69	5.30	6	5.5	5	4.7
Target rationale - Target has been set to meet the current Wales average and reflects the maturing partnership arrangements in place for 2015/16											

Measures		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16 Targets			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Data	Annual Target	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Annual
7	% of carers of adult services users who were offered an assessment in their own right during the year. (Statutory) (SCA018a)	60.4	4	20	85.8	76.3	60	70	75	80	86
Target rationale Target has been set to reflect the changes in working practices put in place to improve carers assessments and as a bridge to 16/17 target of 100%											
8	% of clients choosing their own service providers through Direct Payments (Local) 14/15 target (local) (LSCA014)	12.54	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.02	13				13.50
Target rationale Target has been set based on trend data since 2013											

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Critical Improvement Actions		Way Forward/Milestones	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
1	Develop new strategy and operating model to improve the way in which adult social care is arranged and provided in line with the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act	M01 - Submit draft strategy and operating model to Cabinet	July 2015	Service Director Direct Services, Business and Housing
		M02 - Consult with stakeholders and other interested parties on draft strategy and proposed operating model	October 2015	
		M03 – Agree strategy and operating model and implementation plan with Cabinet	March 2016	
2	Continue to expand current intermediate care and reablement services to support more timely discharge from	M01 - Complete the business case to develop an integrated Cwm Taf “Single Point of Access” and “@ home service” and report to the Cwm Taf Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership Board for consideration on an agreed way forward	October 2015	Head of Service Short Term Intervention

Critical Improvement Actions		Way Forward/Milestones	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	hospital and help more people live independent of social care services	M02(i) - Realign resources to create more capacity in Short Term Intervention Services to support personal independence and use resources more effectively	March 2016	Head of Service Short Term Intervention
		M02(ii) - Redesign commissioning process and procedures in order to ensure more efficient and effective implementation of longer term care and support packages	March 2016	
3	Continue to shift more of our investment from traditional services to services that promote independence and support individuals and communities to find solutions for themselves	M01 - Empower more people to have greater choice and control over the support they receive through increased used of direct payments	Throughout 2015/16	Service Director Direct Services, Business and Housing
		M02 - Encourage a greater use of modern "assistive" technology to help maintain independence for longer	Throughout 2015/16	
		M03 - Work with local communities and the voluntary sector to improve access to a range preventative community support networks and wellbeing services	March 2016	Head of Transformation
4	Develop new commissioning model for home care that is reablement focused to ensure that people are helped to regain and retain their independence throughout the time they require care services	M01 – Draft home care commissioning plan and report to Cabinet for approval	October 2014	Service Director Direct Services, Business and Housing
		M02 – Retender existing home care services award new contracts	June 2016	
		M03 – Implement new home care service model	September 2016	
5	Develop and implement a model to provide information, advice and assistance to help people know what support is available to them and to help assist them make informed	M01 - Undertake a baseline assessment of all existing information, advice and assistance services	August 2015	Head of Service Short term Intervention
		M02 - Gather stakeholder views on existing provision	September 2015	
		M03 – Report findings and recommendations for new model change to the Regional Social Services Partnership Board	October 2015	

Critical Improvement Actions		Way Forward/Milestones	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
	decisions about their future care and support needs	M04 – Develop new model and project implementation plan	March 2016	
6	Work with Partners to increase the supply of alternative accommodation and support models for vulnerable people to remain in their own homes for longer and reduce number of people in long term residential care	M01(i) - Determine service needs and demands	September 2015	Service Director Direct Services, Business and Housing
		M01(ii) - Undertake market analysis to include identification of best practice service models	November 2015	
		M01(iii) - Develop accommodation strategy for vulnerable adults and supporting implementation plan for approval by Cabinet	January 2015	
		M02 - Work together with Hafod Housing Association to open new extra care housing scheme in Talbot Green	April 2016	
7	Develop and implement a common eligibility criteria for access to care and support that will be applied to vulnerable adults in line with health social and wellbeing Act	M01 - Draft new eligibility criteria and consult with all relevant stakeholders	April 2016	Service Director Adult Locality Services
		M02 - Present eligibility criteria to cabinet for approval	August 2015	
		M03 - Training and guidance provided to all staff to support implementation of new criteria	March 2016	
8	Ensure people's needs are assessed in a timely manner and the care provided is appropriate	M01 - Review current working practices and procedures and identify changes in order to increase :		Head of Service Localities
		M01(i) - the number care plan reviews undertaken within agreed timescales	July 2015	
		M02 (ii) – the number of carers offered an assessment in their own right	July 2015	
9	Redesign the model for commissioning learning disabilities services in order to support greater focus on personal independence and	M01 – Draft commissioning strategy reported to Cabinet	December 2015	Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing
		M02 - Consult with all relevant stakeholders on the draft commissioning strategy	March 2015	
		M03 - Agree commissioning strategy and implementation plan with Cabinet	April 2016	

Critical Improvement Actions	Way Forward/Milestones	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer	
	more effective use resources.	M04 - Implement new commissioning model as set out in the strategy	April 2016	

Proposed Key Risks		Mitigating Actions
1.	Inability of key partnerships to deliver integrated approach to regional implementation plans which are citizen focussed.	Revised local planning arrangements – Regional Leadership Board
2.	Cultural shift required across organisations, communities and citizens	As strategy and Service Reconfiguration
3.	Organisations are unable to redirect resources from acute care to community based early intervention, prevention and crisis support services	Single Commissioning/Joint Regional implementation/Commissioning Plans

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
JOINT EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING AND COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group held at the Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Tuesday, 28th April 2015.

Present:

County Borough Councillor (Mrs) C Leyshon - in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

C Davies
(Mrs) S Rees
D Weeks

Co-opted Members:

Mr J Fish
Mr J Horton
Ms C Jones

Officers in Attendance:

Mr C Bradshaw – Director, Education & Lifelong Learning
Ms E Thomas – Service Director, Schools & Community
Mr A Gwynn – Service Director, Children's Services
Ms Lesley Lawson – Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning
Ms A Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer
Ms J Nicholls – Scrutiny Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors (Mrs) A Calvert and D W Weeks.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of personal interest relating to the agenda.

3. CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S EVALUATION OF ITS PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERING ITS 2014/15 PRIORITY PLANS AND THE CHALLENGE TO THE DRAFT PRIORITY PLANS FOR 2015/16

The Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning provided the Working Group with an understanding of the Council's statutory obligation to secure

continuous improvement and she explained that Members were being asked to challenge both the performance evaluation of the 2014/15 action plans for Education and Children's Services and the content of the draft plans for 2015/16.

The Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning drew Members' attention to the recommendations at 2.2 of the report and the list of possible points for consideration set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

4. **CHALLENGE OF THE DRAFT EVALUATION OF THE 2014/2015 PRIORITY PLAN – 'A top quality education for all; Every school a great school'**

The Working Group asked if Estyn had changed its methodology in relation to inspections and questioned whether the Council is given the opportunity to challenge the regulator on its findings.

The Director of Education & Lifelong Learning explained that Estyn is very prescriptive when in relation to who they will engage with and it is usually only the Chair of Governors with whom they fully engage. He also reported that Estyn had raised their expectations in terms of school performance and those schools which had been inspected earlier in the cycle of visits had found it easier than those at the end of the cycle and there were fewer schools across Wales now being classed as good or better for both judgements.

The Service Director, Schools & Community also explained that local authorities would no longer be able to predict when a school is due for inspection.

The Working Group discussed the content of the evaluation which pointed out that Rhondda Cynon Taf was one of only two local authorities in Wales to meet its Key Stage 3 and 4 benchmarks for the past two years. However, despite progress, the Authority remains in the bottom quartile of Welsh Authorities when not taking into account the socio-economic disadvantages. Members debated the difficulty of finding a balance when trying to present a picture to the public by way of the evaluation which was both honest but at the same time did not dampen aspirations and damage the morale of staff and pupils.

Whilst not wishing to lengthen the document unduly the Working Group concluded that some sort of short introduction / executive summary at the start which conveyed the balance which is trying to be achieved would be helpful to the reader. Having put this context in place it would then allow an opportunity to celebrate the achievements within the body of the document.

The Working Group questioned the accuracy of teacher assessments when moving from primary to secondary schools.

The Service Director, Schools and Community explained that this was an issue for schools across Wales. However, she pointed out that teacher assessments were only one element in a range of data which was used and

that generally there are good transition processes between the feeder schools and secondary schools.

The Working Group questioned whether there was the leadership capacity within schools to achieve the ambitious targets.

The Director of Education & Lifelong Learning stated that he did not see why the target of 90% of schools being graded as 'at least good' by Estyn for teaching and for leadership could not be achieved and commented that in his opinion a good leader could turn a school around. He referred to the improved school attendance figures and pointed out that these had initially seemed ambitious. The Service Director, Schools and Community added that key to achieving the target will be having the right people in place and ensuring succession planning through the development of staff.

Following discussion it was agreed that the draft evaluation should clarify that the target is a long term target rather than convey the impression that this target was intended to be achieved over a 12 month period. It was further suggested that perhaps the executive summary could convey the key messages.

The Working Group discussed the success in improving the school attendance figures and questioned the impact of the introduction of the fixed penalty notices.

The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning explained that it was too early to form a conclusion in this respect. The Service Director, Schools and Community added that key to further improving attendance levels will be down to changing culture.

The Working Group suggested revising the commentary in relation to surplus places to convey a more positive message in relation to the re-configuration and also asked whether there is plan in place with regard to the remaining surplus places.

The Director of Education & Lifelong Learning explained that they had closed many of the schools close to another school that had sufficient surplus capacity to accommodate the pupils being transferred. The majority of further closures would require significant capital investment which would be dependent on the Welsh Government. The number of surplus places would be around 7,000 following the most recent closures but the operation of removing surplus places was very resource intensive and required capital investment and what could be achieved would be dependent on the next round of funding.

In relation to the paragraph 'Going Forward into 2015/16 (2014/15 academic year) the evaluation stated that "the changes proposed for Nursery education will be monitored to measure the impact on standards" and the Working Group questioned what would be measured.

The Service Director, Schools and Community explained that information should be available from the Foundation Stage.

In conclusion, the Working Group **AGREED** that the performance evaluation was fair and balanced subject to the inclusion of a short introduction / executive summary at the front of the evaluation.

5. CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2015/16 PRIORITY PLAN - 'A top quality education for all; Every school a great school'

The Working Group considered the proposed priority plan for 2015/16 and questioned the number of performance measures and targets included.

The Director of Education & Lifelong Learning explained that there are a large block of indicators that relate to specific groups or specific aspects of education. The example given was in relation to Looked After Children, where there are many indicators providing a range of information on the educational performance of the looked after children. He suggested that the Scrutiny Reporting timetable included a separate report for Looked After Children rather than including the information within the general reporting information. Similar reports could be provided in respect of other pupil groups etc. As a result, a number of performance indicators could be removed from the plan and reported annually as a separate report.

The Working Group agreed with this proposal.

In conclusion, the Working Group **AGREED** that there was opportunity to make the plan more focussed by streamlining the number of performance indicators included. For the indicators removed from the plan, where deemed required, separate up dates could be provided on particular themes at agreed times during the year.

(Mrs) C Leyshon
Chairman The meeting closed at 11.50 am.

Education:**A top quality education for all; “every school a great school”**

We were inspected by Estyn in March 2012 and given an adequate judgement for current performance and for prospects for improvement with required Estyn Monitoring Follow-up. Over the course of 2013 and 2014 Estyn inspectors regularly visited the Council and monitored and challenged the progress being made. In August 2014 Estyn determined that the Council had made good progress against the six recommendations from its 2012 report and the Council was removed from the category of requiring Estyn Monitoring. An Estyn outcome letter that was published in August 2014 can be viewed at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EstynReport2014

What we said we would do that was in part determined by the recommendations of the Estyn Report.....

In our 2014/15 Corporate Plan, we said we would do the following and set nine key measures that would help to evidence success:

- **Make sure our schools set high standards and are well managed**

Effective partnership working between the Local Authority and Central South Consortium (CSC) in providing challenge and support to school leaders in all sectors has resulted in some excellent progress being made. By commissioning additional support from others such as experienced headteachers the improvement in the leadership and management of our schools is having an impact on standards. Nearly all headteachers are responding positively and self critically to the increase in accountability for the educational performance of pupils and are setting more ambitious targets for learners, which bodes well for the future. In addition a wide ranging leadership development programme is in place and available for leaders and managers of all levels. Improving leadership will remain a key priority in our 2015/16 plan as effective leadership is at the heart of school improvement.

- 71.2% of our schools over the last three years have been graded at least ‘good’ by Estyn for **leadership**. This is above the all Wales average of 69.1% but below our target of 90.0%
- 54.2% of our schools over the last three years have been graded at least ‘good’ by Estyn **at the time of inspection** - Improve from 51.9% last year but missed our ambitious target of 70% and is below the all Wales average of 62.5%
- 72.9% of our schools over the last three years have been graded at least ‘good’ by Estyn **for prospects for improvement** – This is above the all Wales average of 68.9% but below our target of 90.0%

- **Provide high quality teaching**

In January 2014 the Central South Wales Challenge Strategy was launched in partnership with Cardiff University. This involves schools acting collaboratively to improve the standards in all schools across the region. The aim is to shift the drive for school improvement from a centrally driven model to a self reflective / self improving model where schools work with other schools, sharing data and learning from good practice. School Improvement Groups (SIGs) have been established across the region to promote and enable this to happen so that the quality of teaching and learning is enhanced. Improvement in teaching is being achieved, this is evident from our last academic year's performance, with key stage 2 core indicator results improving and are now at least equal to that of the Welsh average. The same picture is presented for key stage 3 and key stage 4.

- 50.5% of pupils, aged 16, achieved the Level 2 Threshold including in English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics grade A*– for the first time ever, exceeding our target of 50%

- **Work with others in the community to help families to learn together**

- % of families who told us that they benefitted from attending the family learning programme - (end of April)

- **Make sure more of our children attend school**

A rigorous focus on increasing attendance levels across all sectors has been maintained with all secondary schools showing improvements over the academic year 2013-2014 resulting in a rise of 1.2%. The attendance in primary schools has also increased by 1.1%. The continued attention on attendance should impact on educational standards in the future. It has been pleasing to see the continued overall progress made by schools over the 2013/14 academic year.

- 94.5% attendance in our primary schools exceeding our target of 94.2%
- 93.2% attendance in our secondary schools - equal to our target

- **Renew and improve our school buildings**

There is robust forecasting and planning processes for school organisation and over 800 surplus places have been removed as a result of the alignment of 4 infant schools, 1 primary school and 3 secondary schools. The council has secured £160m of capital funding from the Welsh Government to deliver the 21st. Century Schools programme. Although plans are in place for future improvements it is acknowledged that this is an ongoing long term issue with the Authority still having one of the highest percentages of surplus school places in Wales. 2015/16 plans will accelerate progress with an additional 600

to be achieved when Aberdare Community School is opened, and a further 1,410 places are estimated to be removed if the proposals for the Rhondda and Tonyrefail plans go ahead.

- % of primary schools with 25% or more surplus places (or 30 or more)- (mid June)
 - % of secondary schools with 25% or more surplus places - (mid June)
- **Take every opportunity to improve by learning from what we do**

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The detailed evaluation for each Outcome is as follows

Make sure our schools set high standards and are well managed

The Council together with the Central South Consortium (CSC) continues to challenge school leaders to provide high standards of education in all our schools. Headteachers, senior leaders with whole school responsibility and middle leaders with responsibility for core subjects are challenged and supported through a range of approaches to be able to deliver effective strategies to improve teaching and learning. Support has included a series of 'Achieving the Ambition' core middle leadership programmes involving the heads of English, mathematics, science and Welsh first language, who are sharing effective strategies and taking the next steps towards further networked support. Sessions have focused on key Council priorities and the sharing of successful school improvement strategies. The 'Transforming Leadership' for aspiring headteachers has continued which includes mentoring and coaching sessions in developing excellent senior leaders in our schools.

A key element of the regional school improvement strategy for Central South has been the introduction and development of 'school-to-school' support, where schools with similar priorities, work together to improve educational standards. Schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf have supported this approach and some have been supported by the Consortium to become "hub" schools that are centres of excellence that offer and provide support to other schools.

Case study:

The 'school-to-school' work that is led by headteachers across our region, including primary, secondary and special school headteachers, resulted in Y Pant, Treorchy and Cardinal Newman secondary schools becoming 'hubs' or specialist schools. These schools have generated the capacity to give their time in helping other schools to deliver programmes to improve teaching and learning. A number of our primary schools have also recently applied to become 'hub' schools to improve the quality of Welsh language and Foundation Phase outcomes

Cardinal Newman Catholic Comprehensive is a 'hub' school and has an offer of teaching and leadership programmes that focus on improving pedagogy and leadership skills that they share with other schools. Y Pant Comprehensive School and Treorchy Comprehensive School are also 'hub' schools offering specialised programmes.

A 'Pathfinder' partnership has flourished between Tonyrefail Comprehensive School and Willows High School in Cardiff, where the schools shared areas of work that is regarded as excellent practice. Both schools achieved their highest ever Key Stage 4 results in the summer of 2014. The Headteachers of both schools were asked to present on the benefits of their collaboration at a recent Welsh Government conference

The Council, with the CSC, has actively supported the development of school-to-school working as a key element in raising standards. All the schools in RCT are placed in School Improvement Groups (SIGS), along with other schools from across the region, and these meet regularly to focus on a set areas of school improvement that are priorities for the schools. In addition, a number of our secondary schools are partnered with another secondary school, which are called 'Pathfinder' schools, and this close liaison is designed to share good practice and accelerate improvement between the schools.

Support and challenge sessions have continued to take place between the headteacher, chair of governors and senior LA officers with those schools identified as needing additional support. Procedures to identify schools requiring support and challenge are now sharper. They draw on the outcomes of the Welsh Government school categorisation, criteria relating to standards, provision, leadership and the Council's wider knowledge of schools. Arrangements for the appointment of headteachers and senior leaders have been strengthened in partnership with school governing bodies, which is contributing to the change of culture, expectations and an improved focus on raising standards.

For the 59 schools that have had inspection results published by Estyn over the last three years, 42 were graded at 'least good' and 16 as 'adequate' for leadership, and 1 school was judged 'unsatisfactory'. We didn't reach our ambitious target of 90.0% of schools being graded at 'least good', but we have improved to 71.2% compared to 69.0% in the previous year, and better than the all Wales average of 69.1%. Where leadership was judged 'adequate' or 'unsatisfactory' more rigorous monitoring has taken place to ensure activities to promote improvements are quickly adopted.

Case study: **Excellent leadership**

St John Baptist High School was recently inspected by Estyn and invited to prepare a written case study to describe the practices in the school which result in excellent standards. They said that there is "*consistent high level of expectation by the entire community of the school*" (Estyn 2014)

Improving leadership will remain a key priority in our 2015/16 plan as effective leadership is at the heart of school improvement. Strong leadership will provide clear vision for schools and the aspiration to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. Next year's plan will also focus on improving school governance as governing bodies have a key role in challenging school performance, and have the responsibility for recruiting staff including headteachers therefore they are accountable for the quality of leadership and management.

Provide high quality teaching

It is important that we have the best teachers in our schools, in doing this we have recruited our third group of participants as part of the 'Teach First' scheme, where the staying on rate has been very high and schools report that the initiative has been successful in finding high quality staff to fill posts where there are

national shortages. We have continued to roll out the 'Outstanding Teacher Programme' (OTP)¹ in more schools building on the 36 trained teachers in Secondary. This year Treorchy Comprehensive became an accredited centre for the delivery of the OTP', this shows that we have some first-class practice in our schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The use of technology to improve the quality of learning and teaching using IRIS Connect is gathering momentum.

As part of a joint initiative with Microsoft we are the first Council in the UK to join forces with Microsoft IT Academy, enabling schools to develop innovative and exciting IT work that focuses on improving teaching and learning through IT.

Case study: **Success through technology**

One of our pupils from Mountain Ash Comprehensive School came 1st in the UK first qualifying round for the World Wide Microsoft Office Competition, where he had to undertake a timed Microsoft Word assessment demonstrating his skills in utilising all aspects of the programme. The final takes place in Texas in August 2015.

Other IT improvements in schools include wireless internet connectivity, significantly increased broadband width capacity, and access to the 'Hwb' virtual learning environment, in 129 schools, all of which will ensure our pupils and teachers have access to the latest digital learning resources, and information.

The work being undertaken across schools, internal and regional services to integrate data systems so that the quality and accessibility of data to drive improvement have progressed as planned with several data bases now feeding into, or replaced by the Capita One Database. This centralised platform has enabled more detailed information to be collected and shared between central services, schools and CSC. The system has the ability not only to record attendance and attainment data at pupil level, but it can support other functions such as enabling practitioners to record assessments and provision, as well as supporting improved planning of other services such as school transport routes. Having one central data system enables us to effectively identify, track and target where intervention and support is needed to ensure all our pupils get the help they need.

The Council is confident that there are robust plans in place for using technology and data effectively to aid school improvement, therefore further developments will be captured and monitored within service operational plans.

The focus on raising standards in literacy will remain a priority for the Council for the foreseeable future, as good communication, reading and writing skills are fundamental in raising attainment across all subject areas. Approximately 59% of pupils in RCT achieved a reading score that is around average or above for

¹ Outstanding Teacher Programme - Is designed for teachers who are, or have the potential to be outstanding. OTP helps them to develop practices that will enable them to carry out whole school responsibility for teaching and learning

their age. We need to build on this through continuing to ensure schools focus on the actions, with support from the Consortium, that have an impact on literacy skills. This year, eight schools in the County Borough have received targeted literacy support through the 'Success for All'² programme, and an additional 14 schools provided with tailored programmes of literacy support. 392 pupils have been supported through the 'Catch-up' literacy intervention programme, resulting in an average ratio gain of 2.29³ during the five month programme. 62 schools received a visit from a LA central team member for two terms to support those children identified through the national reading test as requiring additional literacy support. 15 members of staff in 12 schools received training in the 'Cumbria Reading Intervention'⁴ programme; the average reading gains for the pupils on the programme was 20.3 months and an average improvement of 13 months in spelling. The CLIC⁵ project has been implemented in 107 schools across the County Borough to assist in the identification and improve with interventions and support for children with speech, language and communication difficulties. A total of 1,663 foundation phase pupils have been assessed and 134 school staff trained in the use of language link and speech link assessment tools. The impact of this intervention has been very positive with over 60.75% of pupils with moderate to severe difficulties and 58.37% of pupils with mild to moderate difficulties showing significant improvement. The pilot has enhanced the capacity of mainstream schools to meet the ALN of learners.

We are working with the CSC in delivering their literacy and numeracy strategy interventions to support schools to improve and identify those schools that are in need of additional training and involvement. Cross phase moderation of teacher assessments have been completed to ensure consistency in both delivery and grading of pupils work. All schools have been supported in developing an action plan detailing how they are going to improve outcomes in core subjects. Our latest attainment results show that 86% of key stage 2 and 3 pupils achieved at least the expected levels in mathematics, compared to 83% in the previous year, and 85% in English compared to 82% in the previous year.

Although our ambitious target of 90% of schools being graded at 'least good' by Estyn for teaching has not yet been achieved, we continue to drive schools forward in supporting them to achieve this, with 44 out of 59 schools being graded at 'least good', 13 'adequate' and 2 'unsatisfactory' over the last three years. Improvement in teaching is being achieved, this is evident from our last academic year's performance, with key stage 2 core indicator results improving and are now at least equal to that of the Welsh average. The same picture is presented for key stage 3, where the rate of improvement is greater than the Welsh average for all the core key indicators. Yet, even with these improvements there are still too many children not making sufficient levels of progress at Key Stage

² Success For All Programme - Is a whole-school reform strategy that features research-proven tools, cooperative learning to engage pupils and collaborative leadership for continuous improvement

³ Professor Greg Brooks in his research paper 'What works for Children in Wales with Literacy Difficulties (2009) states that average ratio gains of 2.0 have a useful educational impact and average ration gains of 3.0 have a substantial educational impact

⁴ Cumbria Reading Intervention - is an intensive, research-based programme that is highly effective at speeding up the development of children's early literacy skills.

⁵ CLIC (Communication & Literacy Inclusive Classrooms)

3, therefore this will remain a focus for us in the year ahead. We need to ensure the majority of pupils achieve at least a level 5 at the end of Year 9 (14 years of age) so that they are well equipped for the final stage of compulsory schooling.

Good progress has been achieved at key stage 4, with all key indicator results improving against the previous year. This has been achieved through the relentless focus on improving the accuracy of ongoing assessments to feed much improved pupil tracking systems, together with more skilled and precise targeting of pupils for intervention. More pupils achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or equivalent (84.6%), better than the all Wales average (82.3%). Both level 2 threshold key indicators⁶ improved, and for the first time performance for the indicator including English or Welsh and maths passed the 50% mark. When compared to the Welsh Government free school meal benchmarks that are, set for local authorities, the Council is one of only two local authorities to meet its Key Stage 3 & 4 benchmarks for the past two years. Despite the progress made, based on the data, not taking into account the socio-economic context, we still remain in the bottom quartile of the 22 local authorities in Wales. If we are to continue to close the gap against the all Wales average, we have to continue work to maximise pupils' performance in key stage 2 and 3 to see greater improvements in key stage 4. Therefore improving teaching and learning will remain a priority in our 2015/16 improvement plan.

Work with others in the community to help families to learn together

Improving numeracy and literacy is not just a priority for our schools but for our communities as well, as the benefits of improving these essential skills impact on improving personal satisfaction and wellbeing, which create safer and stronger environments and lead to better economic success. In helping to deal with this we are working with our partners, including, 'Communities First' who run literacy and numeracy projects to help families to engage in their children's education, and to support the young people themselves to do well in school. Our adult education provision worked with 93 individuals, since April 2014, who between them achieved 42 literacy and 57 numeracy accredited qualifications. Our Youth Engagement and Participation team worked with 920 young people through providing 76 literacy activities such as creating DVDs, use of Wicid.tv and on-line surveys. Our Library service has also supported learning through facilitating the 2013 Summer Reading Challenge that 1,574 children took part in; they also held 106 'Story and Craft' sessions attended by 1,701 children, and provided creative writing groups and reading groups for young people.

⁶ % of pupils aged 15 who achieved the L2T including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh (first language) and mathematics, and % of pupils aged 15 who achieved L2T in each English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science

Make sure more of our children attend school

With attendance being one of the Council's key priorities it has been pleasing to see the continued overall progress made by schools over the 2013/14 academic year. Last year every one of our schools improved their attendance rates compared to the year before and current 2014/15 Autumn term attendance results show that 63% of primary schools and 76% of secondary have improved against the same period of the previous year. Gains have been made through carrying out 85 statutory prosecutions, 47 'first response' and 194 'meet and greet' visits to tackle lateness and absenteeism. We have also provided 229 'Super Attender Challenge' in 112 schools, and attended 9 community events with our Supper Attender mascot to help raise the profile of the importance of good attendance in improving attainment results for our young people. As a last resort we have initiated 85 prosecutions against parents for their child's persistent poor attendance.

Case study: Improving attendance together

Attendance at Ynysboeth Community School in the 2013/14 autumn term was 91.8% (ranked 106 out of 110). Following a package of support provided by the Attendance and Wellbeing service it improved to 95.8% (ranked 17 out of 105) this autumn term. The headteacher reports a significant shift in culture in the whole school community with regards to attendance

Despite this continuous progress in attendance the Council is still 0.3% (ranked 17th of 22) and 0.4% (ranked 18th of 22) behind the Welsh average for primary and secondary schools respectively. Together with our schools we plan to continue to improve attendance over the next few years, through continuing to change expectations of pupils and parents, and maintaining our campaign to improve attendance rates. There were fewer fixed term exclusions in secondary schools in our last academic year. However, there were more fixed term exclusions in primary schools, with some schools using a one-day-exclusion as a means of dealing with inappropriate behaviour. The general exclusion trends are however favourable with a reduction of 5.05% in fixed term exclusions from 2012/13 – 2013/14. The number of days lost through fixed term and permanent is increasing and requires continued focus. The LA continues to undertake support and challenge visits in relation to bullying incidents and there has been a 35% reduction in incidents in bullying in secondary schools (2012-13-2013/14) and a 22% reduction within the same period in primary schools.

Many of our schools have pupils that start school with low levels of communication and social skills. Our best schools take this into account, developing appropriate intervention and rigorously tracking the pupils' progress in evidencing outcomes and the impact the school has had on these young people. Some of

these interventions include the CLIC programme, now in its second year, which aims to support schools in tackling communication issues, and the SEAL⁷ programme is used to support the development of social and emotional skills. The Restorative Approaches in Schools (RAIS) pilot has been implemented in 4 pilot schools in conjunction with Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership. A good practice event is planned for June 2015 and phase 2 schools will be selected in June 2015. Also 15 schools have participated in the FAST⁸ programme designed to improve outcomes for those less advantaged children through family learning, and developing better home-school relationships. The programme also focuses on reducing social isolation through helping families to develop trust and confidence so that they are able to participate in the community and support their children to have stronger life changes.

Case study: Sector Leading Leadership:

Partnership working in Miskin Primary School

- Attendance on the FAST project has exceeded our expectations and its success led to another roll out of the project in January 2014. Parents reported that difficulties with their children decreased by 53% and that the support they received from other families increased by 31%. The project empowered parents to support the pupils.
- Within an academic year the percentage of pupils achieving outcome 5+ for Personal and Social Development at end of Foundation Phase increased from 60% to 91.3%. The school believe this to be, at least in part, as a result of FAST.
- There is now an active PTA within the school and parents attending events and training sessions on a regular basis. These include weekly family learning sessions, 'Bring a Parent' 90% attendance, and Parent's Evenings 85% attendance.
- As a direct result of FAST, two families have been supported by Team Around the Family and have stepped down from the interventions and support they needed.
- Credit Union is now established and run by community volunteers within the school, with many pupils saving on a weekly basis.

⁷ SEAL - is a comprehensive, whole-school approach to promoting the social and emotional skills that underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance, staff effectiveness and the emotional health and well-being of all who learn and work in schools

⁸ FAST - Families and Schools Together is an award-winning project that supports parents to improve their children's learning and development at home, to help them to reach their full potential at school. A 12 week programme funded through 'Save the Children'

- School attendance has improved by 2%. Pupil questionnaires used by Estyn in its recent inspection stated that 100% of pupils – feel safe; feels that the school deals well with any bullying; state that they know who to talk to if they are worried or upset and that they are doing well in school. FAST has contributed to the positive ethos of the school. Estyn 2014

Since the start of the year our early intervention team has supported 205 young people who had disengaged from learning back into education, employment or training, signposted another 70 young people to further training, and helped a further 58 to secure employment. It is essential that we have early intervention practices in place to identify and support those young people who are experiencing difficulties at transitional times in their life. By using alternative curriculum and extended programmes we have been able to reach those young people needing self-awareness support, in order for them to improve their future prospects. Our recently developed Wellbeing and Behaviour Strategy will help schools to identify and provide preventative interventions that improve the emotional wellbeing of our children and young people, and help strengthen their resilience and ability to learn.

Case study: **Reaching out**

One of our learners on the ‘Your Future First’ programme said “I was supported in many ways during the programme. I was supported with my feelings, my future, my life and loads more. The course made me happier and more confident”. This young person is now studying youth work and has secured part-time employment at Hirwaun YMCA as a trainee youth worker.

The attainment of our vulnerable learners have progressively improved with more children with additional learning needs (ALN), and looked after children (LAC) achieving the expected grades in core subjects at both key stage 2 and 3. More children who are entitled to free school meals also achieved the required level at key stage 3 and achieved grade A*-C at GCSE, including English or Welsh and Maths. Additionally, 77.3% of looked after children achieved five or more GCSEs (A*-G) - not one child left education without an approved qualification. These gains in performance have been achieved despite the pressures experienced by schools and services because of the increase in the LAC and ALN population. The reshaping of special needs classes in mainstream schools is being implemented to balance primary and secondary provisions, and accommodate an increase in the number of pupils with more complex needs. A three year plan is currently being implemented to realign services; this included a new satellite provision that has been set up to support post 16 year olds with severe or profound Autistic Spectrum Disorder and complex learning needs. The establishment of this provision has resulted in the avoidance of out of county placements for 9 of our most vulnerable learners with ASD and generated savings of around £450K. A 3 year plan to realign learning support class provision in RCT entered its final phase over 2014/15. This ambitious plan has entailed the closure of 12 Learning Support Classes, the establishment of 4 new classes, 6 re-designations and 4 relocations of existing provisions. A total of 3 new secondary specialist provisions for complex needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorder were opened in September 2014 and a

further secondary provision for learners with social, emotional and behavioural needs is planned for September 2015, subject to Cabinet approval and consultation.

Over the last three years, 59 schools have had inspection reports published by Estyn, and 45 of these were graded at least 'good' and 14 as 'adequate' for wellbeing. To further improve on this we will be implementing the 'Wellbeing & Behaviour Strategy' to support schools to remove those barriers that some children and young people face which can impact on learning. Further detail will be provided in next year's plan under Outcome 2 which will focus on promoting wellbeing and engagement of all learners.

Renew and improve our school buildings

Through the school modernisation projects we have continued to focus on the removal of surplus school places and align catchment areas to manage the demand for places in areas where school capacity has been an issue. Throughout the year, over 810 surplus school places have been removed, with an additional 600 to be achieved by the end of the year when Aberdare Community School is opened. We have done this through the realignment of 6 schools⁹ and the completion of major works at 5 schools¹⁰. The catchment area realignment proposals for Y Pant Comprehensive School have been approved to address the oversubscription issues, whilst at the same time removing surplus capacity at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, which will result in the removal of 200 surplus places over the next five years. Primary school catchment areas in Llanharan, Brynna, Dolau and Bryncae have been reviewed and approved to address issues of oversubscription at Dolau Primary School, whilst utilising surplus capacity at Llanharan Primary School more effectively.

Delivering the best possible educational facilities for our children is a crucial element in inspiring them to learn and achieve their potential, the Council has supported this through carrying out £4.753M¹¹ of capital minor works programmes to improve school buildings and facilities, including, a new school hall and extension at Trerobart Primary School, a new lift to improve access, adaptations to classrooms and safe route to school works at Parclewis Primary School and a new satellite Autistic Centre for secondary aged pupils created in the former Glanffrwd Infant School. The next stage of projects has commenced, including two major extensions at Llwynocrwn Primary and Treorchy Primary, and a £24M investment for a replacement school for Y Pant Comprehensive School.

Our commitment to the 21st Century Schools programme is long term therefore will remain one of our key priorities in our 2015/16 improvement plan and beyond.

⁹ Glantaf Infants, Ynyswen Infants, Glanffrwd Infants, Aberdare High, Aberdare Girls and Blaengwawr

¹⁰ Treorchy Primary (Phase One), Williamstown Primary, Ysgol Yr Eos, Parc Primary and Trerobart Primary

¹¹ This actual figure will not be finalised until the end of April 2015. The figure above is the projected outturn figure

Take every opportunity to improve by learning from what we do

In next year's planning we need to establish more effective interventions to support schools to promote wellbeing and engagement to help our learners to overcome emotional and socio-economic barriers. We will continue to do this in collaboration with our schools and CSC by continuing to focus on further improving leadership, the quality of teaching, ensuring wellbeing and engagement and providing first class facilities that will inspire our children and young people to succeed and reach their potential.

The creation of the new Youth Engagement and Participation Service providing activities and extended provision beyond the school day has ensured that all young people have access to their entitlements. Good use has been made of Vulnerability Profiling to target those most at risk which has resulted in improved attendance and better levels of engagement with education. The levels of participation are being closely monitored and reports will be presented to Scrutiny on the anniversary of its creation.

Going forward into 2015/16 (2014/15 Academic Year) -

The changes proposed for Nursery education will be monitored to measure the impact on standards for learners as pupils move through the Foundation Phase of learning, which will be developed in line with Welsh Government requirements. This will include attainment and attendance measures.

The restructured School Music Service will also be available from September 2015 and an evaluation of its effectiveness and value for money will be closely monitored.

There are measures in place to mitigate against the impact of the closure of libraries in Rhondda Cynon Taf to ensure continued compliance with the Welsh Public Library Standards.

Our aims for 2015/16 and beyond are to continue to improve educational standards for all children in our schools, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups, so that every child achieves their potential and every school is a 'great' school. We are aiming to enhance the capacity within the school system so that schools can support each other with a commitment to self evaluation, development and learning from each other. Improved partnership working with the CSC and between schools will remain a key priority which is fundamental to the efforts of schools to improve, and provide the necessary challenge and support where needed.

For this reason 'Providing a top quality education - Every school a great school' remains one of the Council's priorities and our key themes that will be addressed in 2015/16 are to:

- Build great school leadership and governance
- Ensure high quality teaching and learning in every setting
- Promote wellbeing and engagement of all learners
- Provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.

DRAFT

**Wales Programme for Improvement
Education 2014/15 Action Plan - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School A Great School"**

What we aim to achieve:

The focus on education is to continue to drive up standards in both early years' settings and schools and improve the outcomes for all children. If we are to break the cycle of deprivation, a top quality education that meets the

Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?

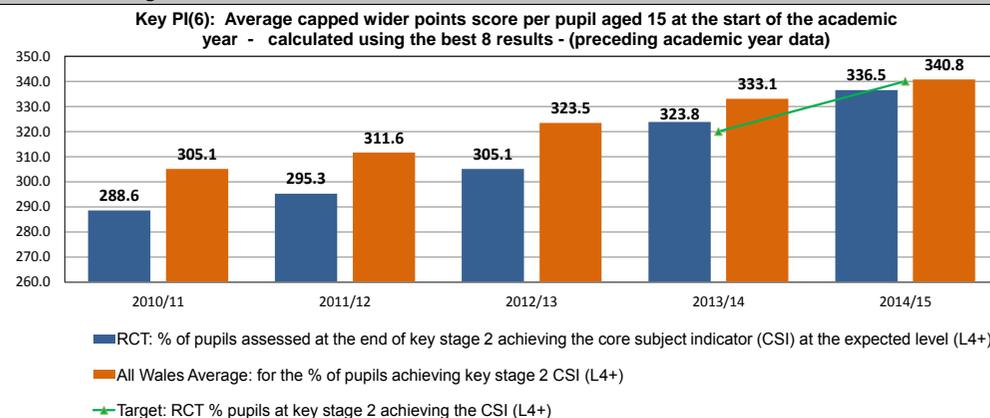
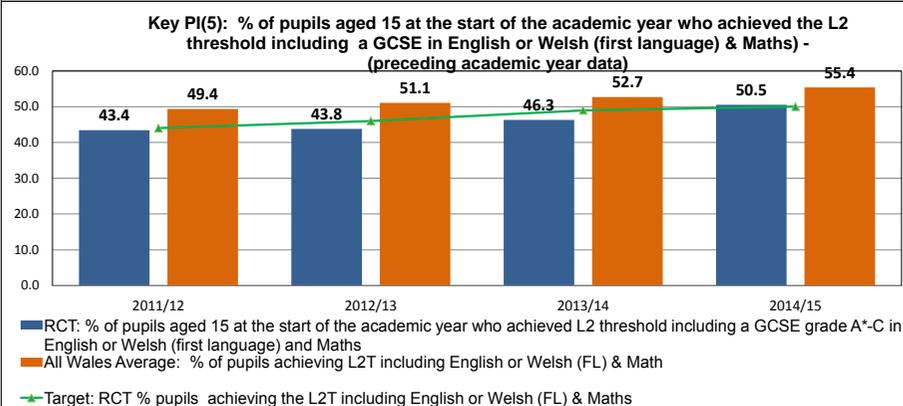
Risk Description:	Outcome Reference:
If projects are not delivered on time and/or budget then this could impede the delivery and intended (positive) impact of the 21st Century Schools Programme within the Council.	6
With the greater delegation of school budgets and the expectation from Councils and Welsh Government for school improvement to be led and driven by schools working together, it is essential that all school Headteachers and governing bodies commit to work in partnership with various groups of schools in the best interests of improving the educational outcomes and wellbeing of all pupils, not just in the best interests of their school and their pupils.	1,2,3 & 4

How will we know if we are making a difference:

<p align="center">Key PI(1): % of pupil attendance in primary school (annual academic year - current termly YTD)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Primary School Attendance Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>RCT % of pupil attendance in primary school</th> <th>Wales average primary school attendance</th> <th>Target: RCT % of pupil attendance in primary school</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2010/11</td> <td>92.4</td> <td>93.3</td> <td>93.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011/12</td> <td>93.1</td> <td>93.9</td> <td>93.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012/13</td> <td>93.4</td> <td>93.7</td> <td>93.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>94.5</td> <td>94.8</td> <td>94.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014/15 (Autumn Term)</td> <td>95.0</td> <td>-</td> <td>94.9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Legend: ■ RCT % of pupil attendance in primary school ■ Wales average primary school attendance —▲— Target: RCT % of pupil attendance in primary school</p>	Year	RCT % of pupil attendance in primary school	Wales average primary school attendance	Target: RCT % of pupil attendance in primary school	2010/11	92.4	93.3	93.1	2011/12	93.1	93.9	93.4	2012/13	93.4	93.7	93.7	2013/14	94.5	94.8	94.5	2014/15 (Autumn Term)	95.0	-	94.9	<p align="center">Key PI(2): % of pupil attendance in secondary school (annual academic year - current termly YTD)</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Secondary School Attendance Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>RCT % of pupil attendance in secondary school</th> <th>Wales average secondary school attendance</th> <th>Target: RCT % of pupil attendance in secondary school</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2010/11</td> <td>90.7</td> <td>91.4</td> <td>90.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011/12</td> <td>90.7</td> <td>92.1</td> <td>91.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012/13</td> <td>91.9</td> <td>92.6</td> <td>92.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>93.2</td> <td>93.6</td> <td>93.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014/15 (Autumn Term)</td> <td>93.7</td> <td>-</td> <td>93.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Legend: ■ RCT % of pupil attendance in secondary school ■ Wales average secondary school attendance —▲— Target: RCT % of pupil attendance in secondary school</p>	Year	RCT % of pupil attendance in secondary school	Wales average secondary school attendance	Target: RCT % of pupil attendance in secondary school	2010/11	90.7	91.4	90.7	2011/12	90.7	92.1	91.9	2012/13	91.9	92.6	92.6	2013/14	93.2	93.6	93.2	2014/15 (Autumn Term)	93.7	-	93.7
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<p>Story behind the data: Primary school attendance data for the autumn term 2014 indicates that the school attendance rate is currently 95.0%, which is slightly above the new 2014/15 target of 94.9% and is 0.3% points higher than the same period in 2013/14. A data-led deployment of resources and support offered by the Attendance and Wellbeing Service has supported 56 schools in meeting their agreed target, and 66 schools improved attendance compared to the autumn term in the previous year. Further data analysis will be used during the 2014/15 academic year to ensure schools requiring additional challenge will be supported to further improve attendance. The differentiated packages of support will allow for a timely and specific response to the needs of the school and the community they serve.</p> <p><i>Note: 2013/14 data above is provisional and will not be confirmed until August 2015</i></p>	<p>Story behind the data: Secondary school attendance data for the autumn term 2014 indicates that the school attendance rate is currently 93.7%, which is the same as the new 2014/15 target and 0.45% higher than the same period in 2013/14. A data-led deployment of resources and support offered by the Attendance and Wellbeing Service has supported 5 schools in meeting their agreed target, and 13 schools improved attendance compared to the autumn term in the previous year. Further data analysis will be used during the 2014/15 academic year to ensure schools requiring additional challenge will be supported to further improve attendance. The differentiated packages of support will allow for a timely and specific response to the needs of the school and the community they serve.</p> <p><i>Note: 2013/14 data above is provisional and will not be confirmed until August 2015</i></p>																																																

Chris Bradshaw (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning) - December 2014

How will we know if we are making a difference:



Story behind the data: The attainment data for the 2013/14 academic year (shown as 2014/15 on the above graph) is 50.5%, which is slightly better than the target we set ourselves of 50.0%, but still remains 4.9% points below the all Wales average of 55.4%. The picture of performance over the past 5 years is one of continuous improvement. In addition, 15 out of 19 schools improved their outcomes for this measure resulting in the best ever outcome for RCT. A significant element of supporting schools to achieve the RCT ambition for improvement has concentrated on improving outcomes at key stage 4, with a particular focus on the Level 2 threshold. Advice has been given on a set of high impact strategies, which over the short and medium term can significantly raise attainment. Data releases have also emphasised the need to track and intervene in supporting learners where progress is slower than expected.

Note: The data for this measure was provisional in quarter 2 and has now been finalised in quarter 3

Story behind the data: The attainment data for the 2013/14 academic year (shown as 2014/15 on the above graph) is 336.5, 12.7 points higher than the previous year but below the target that we set ourselves of 340.0 and 4.3 points below the all Wales average. In recent years secondary schools have been set a clear RCT ambition, which we are working in partnership to achieve. A significant element of this ambition has been to support and challenge schools to improve outcomes at key stage 4. As part of the RCT secondary school improvement strategy there has been a strong focus on assessment and tracking of pupil progress. This more refined tracking process has allowed schools to be more precise in the targeting of pupils, whose progress is a cause of concern, resulting in more pupils achieving higher grades and consequently an improved points score of 336.5 points per pupil compared to 323.8 in the 2012/13 academic year. To continue the curve of improvement, clear focus will be maintained on delivering the RCT secondary school improvement strategy.

Note: The data for this measure was provisional in quarter 2 and has now been finalised in quarter 3

Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Outcome 1: Building great school leadership and an ethos of aspiration, high achievement and accountability at all levels

Theme	Measures										
	Title	2012/13 (from April 2011 to March 2013)	2013/14[*1] (includes data from April 2012 to March 2014)			2014/15		RAG	Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	RCT Performance	CSC Average	All Wales Average	Target	Annual Performance			Annual Target	
Prosperity	Me01 - % of schools inspected by Estyn that were graded as at least 'Good' for leadership on a 3 year rolling basis[*2] i.e. between April 2012 and March 2015	73.2	72.7	71.4	69.8	90.0	71.2	●	↓	72.6	This equates to 42 out of 59 schools being graded at least good, 16 schools being graded adequate and 1 unsatisfactory

[*1] During this period this indicator was reported on a 2 year rolling basis but from 2014/15 it is being reported over a 3 year rolling basis

Draft

Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Outcome 2: High quality teaching and learning

Theme	Measures										Comment	
	Title	2012/13	2013/14[*1] (includes data from April 2012 to March 2014)			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16		
		Annual Performance	RCT Performance	CSC Average	All Wales Average	Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target		
Prosperity	Me01 - % of schools inspected by Estyn who were graded as at least 'Good' for standards on a 3 yr rolling basis[*2] i.e. between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	56.1	51.5	67.9	65.3	70.0	54.2	●	↓	58.1	This equates to 32 out of 59 schools being graded at least good, 25 schools being graded adequate and 1 unsatisfactory	
	Me02 - % of schools inspected by Estyn who were graded as at least 'Good' for teaching on a 3 yr rolling basis[*3] i.e. between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	48.8	78.8	73.2	68.5	90.0	74.6	●	↑	75.8	This equates to 44 out of 59 schools being graded at least good, 13 schools being graded adequate and 2 unsatisfactory	
		2012/13	2013/14 (2012/13 academic year)	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
	Me03 - % of Foundation Phase pupils, aged 7, who achieved outcome 5 or above in Language, Literacy & Communication Skills – English (Local) reported in Q1	80.9	83.2	4	20	86.6	83.2	82.9	●	↑	87.0	
	Me04 - % of Foundation Phase pupils, aged 7, who achieved outcome 5 or above in Language, Literacy & Communication Skills – Welsh (first language) (Local) reported in Q1	82.3	84.1	3	12	89.8	88.2	90.1	●	↑	94.0	
	Me05 - % of Foundation Phase pupils, aged 7, who achieved outcome 5 or above in Mathematical Development (Local) reported in Q1	84.0	85.9	4	21	88.7	86.7	86.1	●	↑	90.0	
	Me06 - % of pupils assessed at the end of Foundation Phase, aged 7, achieving outcome 5 or above in Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI)[*4] (Local) reported in Q1	77.2	80.6	4	21	85.2	81.9	81.8	●	↑	88.0	
	Me07 - % of pupils assessed at the end of Foundation Phase, aged 7, achieving outcome 5 or above in Social Development, Wellbeing & Cultural Diversity (PSD) (Local) reported in Q1	N/A	90.9	4	21	94.2	91.0	92.0	●	N/A	94.4	
	Me08 - % of primary schools pupils (yr 2 to yr 6) with a standardised score[*5] of 95 or more in English literacy tests (Local)	N/A	72.2	N/A			73.0	60.3	●	N/A	61.0	The national process for working out standardised scores was changed this year due to calculation errors being identified in the previous year's method, which has had a significant impact on primary school score results
*Note that the title of standardised score indicators for primary school pupils have been amended from Q3 to include the complete cohort i.e. age 7 to 11												

[*1] During this period this indicator was reported on a 2 year rolling basis but from 2014/15 it is being reported over a 3 year rolling basis

Theme	Title	2012/13	2013/14 (2012/13 academic year)	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data (relates to the 2012/13 academic year)			2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Prosperity	Me09 - % of primary schools pupils (yr 2 to yr 6) with a standardised score of 95 or more in Welsh (first language) literacy tests (Local)	N/A	82.8	N/A			84.4	53.9	●	N/A	54.0	The national process for working out standardised scores was changed this year due to calculation errors being identified in the previous year's method, which has had a significant impact on primary school score results
	Me10 - % of primary schools pupils (yr 2 to yr 6) with a standardised score of 95 or more in mathematics tests (Local)	N/A	60.8	N/A			63.5	57.4	●	N/A	57.4	
	Me11 - % of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, aged 11, achieving level 4 or above in the core subject indicator (Statutory) reported in Q2	79.3	82.6	4	17 [*6]	84.6	84.3	84.3	●	↑	86.0	2014/15 (84.3%) performance is worse than the 2013/14 all Wales average of 84.6%, but would take us from the bottom to the third quartile
	Me12 - % of secondary schools pupils (yr 7 to yr 9) with a standardised score of 95 or more in English literacy tests (Local) <i>*Note that the title of standardised score indicators for secondary school pupils have been amended from Q3 to include the complete cohort i.e. age 11 to 14</i>	50.43	61.4	N/A			63.0	59.3	●	↑	63.0	The national process for working out standardised scores was changed this year due to calculation errors being identified in the previous year's method, which has had a significant impact on secondary school score results
	Me13 - % of secondary schools pupils (yr 7 to yr 9) with a standardised score of 95 or more in Welsh (first language) literacy tests (Local)	63.01	61.4	N/A			63.0	60.0	●	↓	63.0	
	Me14 - % of secondary school pupils (yr 7 to yr 9) with a standardised score of 95 or more in mathematics tests (Local)	N/A	57.9	N/A			59.0	54.5	●	↓	59.0	
	Me15 - % of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, aged 14, achieving level 5 or above in the core subject indicator (Statutory) reported in Q2	66.9	73.6	3	16	77.2	75.0	78.4	●	↑	82.0	2014/15 data (78.4%) is better than the 2013/14 all Wales average of 77.2%
	Me16 - % of pupils, aged 16, who achieved the Level 1 Threshold (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A* - G or approved equivalent qualification (Local)	89.4	93.0	3	15	93.2	94.0	93.2	●	↑	95.0	
	Me17 - % of pupils, aged 16, who achieved the Level 2 Threshold (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A*-C or approved equivalent qualification (Local)	69.4	77.9	3	14	77.8	80.0	84.6	●	↑	86.0	
	Me18 - % of pupils, aged 16, who achieved grade A*-C or equivalent in English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science (Local)	43.3	45.3	4	18	49.2	49.0	48.7	●	↑	54.0	
Me19 - % of pupils, aged 16, achieving Level 2 Threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh (first language) and Mathematics (Statutory)	43.8	46.3	4	19	52.7	50.0	50.5	●	↑	55.0	2014/15 data (50.5%) is worse than the 2014/15 all Wales average of 55.4% (2013/14 academic year)	
Me20 - Average capped points score for pupils aged 15 at the preceding 31 August, in schools maintained by the local authority (Local)	305.1	323.8	3	16	333.1	340.0	336.5	●	↑	346.0		

[6] WG/LGDU ranked RCT as 19th across Wales for this indicator. However, due to the indicator being reported to 1 decimal place, the Council has recalculated the ranking. The ranking on this basis places RCT in 17th position

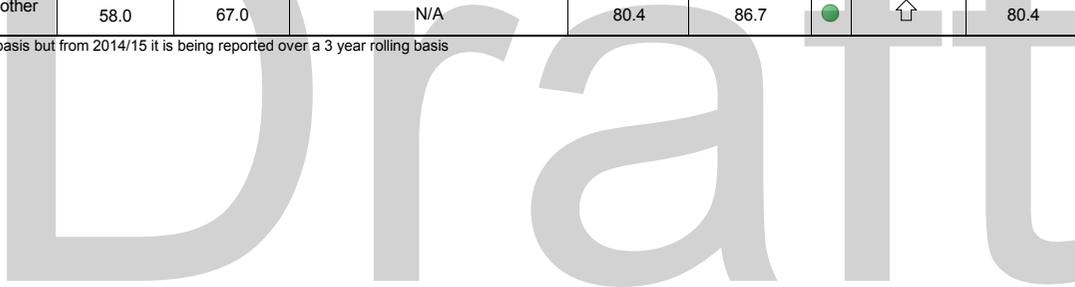
Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Outcome 3: Working in partnership to overcome the barriers to learning and safeguard the wellbeing of learners

Theme	Measures											
	Title	2012/13	2013/14[*1] (includes data from April 2012 to March 2014)			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment	
		Annual Performance	RCT Performance	CSC Average	All Wales Average	Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target		
Prosperity	Me01 - % of schools inspected by Estyn who were graded as at least 'Good' for wellbeing on a 3 yr rolling basis[*2] i.e. between April 2012 to March 2015	79.0	75.8	74.1	80.4	90.0	76.3	●	↓	77.4	This equates to 45 out of 59 schools being graded at least good and 14 schools being graded adequate	
	Title	2012/13	2013/14 (2012/13 academic year)			2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target	Annual Performance		RAG		Annual Target
	Me02 - % of pupil attendance in Primary Schools (Statutory)	93.1	93.4	3	16	93.7	94.9[*3]	95.0	●	↑	94.9	This data is from the start of the 2014/15 academic year to the end of the first autumn term
	Me03 - % of pupil attendance in Secondary Schools (Statutory)	90.7	91.9	4	21	92.6	93.7	93.7	●	↑	93.7	
Me04 - % of pupil attendance at (EOTAS) educated other than at school provisions (Local)	58.0	67.0	N/A			80.4	86.7	●	↑	80.4		

*1] During this period this indicator was reported on a 2 year rolling basis but from 2014/15 it is being reported over a 3 year rolling basis



Theme	Title	2012/13	2013/14 [*4]	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data - (relates to the 2012/13 academic year)			2014/15[*5]			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Prosperity	Me05 – No. of fixed-term exclusion incidents per 1,000 pupils in Primary Schools (Local) reported in Q2	10.9	6[*3]				5.9	7.7	●	↑	7.1	Although target has been missed the length of days lost through fixed term exclusions have decreased i.e. shorter exclusion times. 1 day was the most common duration for an exclusion, and it is likely that schools are using fixed term exclusions as a short-term measure for dealing with inappropriate behaviour when necessary. The local authority continues to challenge and support schools who are displaying concerning trends in relation to exclusions
	Me06 – No. of fixed-term exclusion incidents per 1,000 pupils in Secondary Schools (Local) reported in Q2	99.1	90.8				83.0	81.8	●	↑	80.9	
	Me07 – Average number of days lost through a fixed-term exclusion in schools (Local) reported in Q2	2.3	4.0			N/A	2.5	2.2	●	↑	<2.2	
	Me08 - % of pupils with special educational needs who achieved the core subject indicator at key stage 2 (Local) reported in Q2	45.1	49.1				50.3	55.3	●	↑	58.3	
	Me09 - % of pupils with special educational needs who achieved the core subject indicator at key stage 3 (Local) reported in Q2	20.1	27.6				29.2	38.0	●	↑	40.0	
	Me10 - % of looked after children assessed at the end of key stage 2, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the core subject indicator as determined by the Teacher Assessment (Local)	40.7	55.6				54.3	62.5	●	↑	57.1	
	Me11 - % of looked after children assessed at the end of key stage 3, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the core subject indicator as determined by the Teacher Assessment (Local)	20.0	27.8				35.1	36.4	●	↑	39.1	
	Me12 - % of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, aged 14, achieving level 5 or above in the core subject indicator (Local)	45.4	52.2			N/A	54.0	61.6	●	↑	62.0	
	Me13 - % of pupils entitled to FSM, aged 16, achieving Level 2 Threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh (first language) and Mathematics (Local)	21.5	21.4			N/A	25.0	25.5	●	↑	30.0	

[*3] This is different to what was reported last year as a more meaningful denominator has been used - Me05 Primary (8.2 and Me06 Secondary (89.1)

Theme	Title	2012/13	2013/14 [*4]	2013/14 All Wales Comparative			2014/15[*5]			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Prosperity	Me14 - % of looked after pupils who achieved 2 or more GCSEs (grade A*-G) (Local)	85.7	93.5	N/A			75.9	90.9	●	↑	To be discontinued	
	Me15 - % of looked after pupils who achieved the L1 threshold (5 GCSE grade A* - G or equivalent) (Local)	New	New	N/A			Baseline year	77.3	N/A	N/A	77.4	
	Me16 - % of all pupils, including those in care, in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at 31 August who left compulsory education, training or work based learning without a qualification (Statutory)	0.9	0.5	4	17 [*7]	0.3	0.5	0.1	●	↑	0.1	
	Me17 - % of pupils in local authority care and in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at 31 August who left compulsory education, training or work based learning without a qualification (Statutory)	2.86	3.2	4	17	2.0	3.0	0.0	●	↑	6.5	No pupils within the definition of the performance indicator left without a qualification. Of the 44 pupils in this specific cohort, 43 pupils left with at least one recognised qualification and one pupil remained in education
	Me18 - % of young people aged 16 leaving EOTAS provision without an approved qualification (Local)	22.5	23.6	N/A			12.0	16.0	●	↑	TBC	
	Me19 - % of 16 year olds (Yr 11) leaving school who are known not to be in education, training or employment (Local)	4.5	4.1	3	16	3.7	<4.1	3.9	●	↑	<3.9	
	Me20 - % of 17 year olds (Yr 12) leaving school who are known not to be in education, training or employment (Local)	3.7	3.2	4	21	2.1	<3.2	3	●	↑	<3.0	
	Me21 - % of 18 year olds (Yr 13) leaving school who are known not to be in education, training or employment (Local)	9	5.6	4	18	4.7	<5.6	5.9	●	↓	<5.6	

[*4] Data relates to 2012/13 academic year

Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Outcome 4: Embedding a culture of reflective practice to plan and drive school and service improvement

Theme	Title	Measures									
		2012/13	2013/14[*1] (includes data from April 2012 to March 2014)			2014/15		RAG	Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	RCT Performance	CSC Average	All Wales Average	Target	Annual Performance			Annual Target	
Prosperity	Me01 - % of schools inspected by Estyn who were graded as at least 'Good' for improving the quality of leadership and management on a 3 yr rolling basis[*2] between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	N/A	72.7	67.9	63.2	80.0	69.5	●	N/A	71.0	
	Me02 - % of schools inspected by Estyn that were judged, at the time on current performance as being at least 'Good' on a 3 yr rolling basis[*3] between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	57.9	51.5	67.0	64.9	70.0	54.2	●	↓	56.5	This equates to 32 out of 59 schools being graded at least good, 25 schools being graded adequate and 2 unsatisfactory
	Me03 - % of schools inspected by Estyn that were judged as presenting prospects for improvement as being at least 'Good' on a 3 yr rolling basis[*4] between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	79.0	75.8	72.3	70.0	90.0	72.9	●	↓	74.2	This equates to 43 out of 59 schools being graded at least good, 14 schools being graded adequate and 2 unsatisfactory

[*1] During this period this indicator was reported on a 2 year rolling basis but from 2014/15 it is being reported over a 3 year rolling basis

[*3] This measure relates to the overall judgement on school's performance of the Estyn Inspection Framework

[*4] This measure relates to the overall judgement on school's prospects for improvement of the Estyn Inspection Framework

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Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Outcome 5: Creating opportunities for the wider community to fully engage in lifelong learning

Theme	Measures											
	Title	2012/13	2013/14[*1] (includes data from April 2012 to			2014/15		RAG	Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment	
		Annual Performance	RCT Performance	CSC Average	All Wales Average	Target	Annual Performance			Annual Target		
Prosperity	Me01 - % of schools inspected by Estyn that were graded as at least 'Good' for partnership working on a 3 year rolling basis[*2] i.e. between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	New	93.9	92.9	91.7	96.0	93.2	●	N/A	95.2	This equates to 55 out of 59 schools being graded at least good and 4 schools being graded adequate	
		2012/13	2013/14	2012/13 All Wales Comparative Data (based on the 2012/13 academic year)		2014/15		RAG	Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target			Annual Performance		Annual Target
	Me02 - % of families reporting improvements in family relationships through participating in the FAST[*3] programme (Local)	New	New	N/A			Baseline to be established	35.6%		N/A	To be discontinued	
	Me03 - % of families reporting improvements in children's behaviour through participating in the FAST programme (Local)	New	New				Baseline to be established	18.8%	N/A	N/A		
Me04 - % of families who told us that they had benefitted from attending the Family Learning Programme (Local)	New	New	90.0	N/A		Not Available		Unable to evaluate service due to disruption to timescales caused by service closure as a result of the withdrawal of external funding for Family Learning Programmes in Wales				

[*1] During this period this indicator was reported on a 2 year rolling basis but from 2014/15 it is being reported over a 3 year rolling basis

[*3] FAST (Families and Schools Together) is an award-winning project that supports parents to improve their children's learning and development at home, to help them to reach their full potential at school. A 12

Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"
 Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
 Outcome 6: Providing a learning environment fit for the 21st Century

Theme	Title	Measures										
		2012/13	2013/14	2012/13 All Wales Comparative Data (based on the 2012/13 academic year)			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Prosperity	Me01 - % of children who secured their 1st choice for nursery placement (Local) - reported in Q1	99.4	99.0	N/A			99.4	98.5	●	↓		
	Me02 - % of Primary Schools with 25% or more surplus places - 30 or more (Local)	37.8	37.8				32.4	N/A				Data available mid June
	Me03 - % of Primary Schools oversubscribed, with 110% or more capacity (Local)	0	0.0				0.0	N/A				Data available mid June
	Me04 - % of Secondary Schools with 25% or more surplus places (Local)	47.4	57.9				41.2	N/A				Data available mid June

Draft

**Wales Programme for Improvement
Education 2015/16 Priority Plan - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School A Great School"**

What we aim to achieve:

The focus on education is to continue to drive up standards in both early years' settings and schools and improve the outcomes for all children. If we are to break the cycle of deprivation, a top quality education that meets the needs of all children is essential. A key priority is to improve standards across all key stages, to ensure all children attend school as a matter of course and can access a curriculum that meets their needs and prepares them for the world of work and other education pathways.

We will do this by focusing on the following outcomes:

1. Build great school leadership and governance
 - Improve the quality of leadership and its impact on raising standards across all key stages
 - Undertake effective joint working with Central South Consortium to support and challenge schools
2. Ensure high quality teaching and learning in every setting
 - In collaboration with In collaboration with the Central South Consortium increase the number of schools judged to be self-improving through the national categorisation model
 - To continue to improve the educational outcomes of pupils across all key stages
 - To increase the opportunities for more able young people across RCT to reach their potential
3. Promote the wellbeing and engagement of all learners
 - Continue to work with schools to ensure young people are supported to overcome barriers to learning
 - Reduce the number of young people (14-25 years old) not in education, employment or training through better use of information, early intervention and efficient provision of services
 - Work with schools, CSC and other partners to narrow the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and all other pupils
4. Provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century
 - Further develop and deliver the Council's 21st Century Schools Programme in accordance with the requirement of Welsh Government with particular focus on removing surplus school places
 - Meet the demands for Welsh medium provision
 - Ensure that buildings used to provide education are fit for purpose and provide a safe and secure learning environment

Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?

Risk Description:	Outcome Reference:
If projects are not delivered on time and/or budget then this could impede the delivery and intended (positive) impact of the 21st Century Schools Programme within the Council.	
With the greater delegation of school budgets and the expectation from Councils and Welsh Government for school improvement to be led and driven by schools working together, it is essential that all Headteachers and governing bodies commit to work in partnership with various groups of schools in the best interests of improving the educational outcomes and wellbeing of all pupils, not just in the best interests of their school and	

How will we know if we are making a difference:

To include historical data/graphs for the following 8 Key PIs (to include target and all Wales data):

1. % of pupil attendance in Primary Schools (Statutory)
2. % of pupil attendance in Secondary Schools (Statutory)
3. % of pupils assessed at the end of Foundation Phase, aged 7, achieving outcome 5 or above in Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI)[*4] (Local)
4. % of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, aged 11, achieving level 4 or above in the core subject indicator (Statutory)
5. % of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, aged 14, achieving level 5 or above in the core subject indicator (Statutory)
6. % of pupils, aged 16, achieving Level 2 Threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh (first language) and Mathematics (Statutory)
7. Average capped points score for pupils aged 15 at the preceding 31 August, in schools maintained by the local authority (Local)
8. % of pupils entitled to FSM, aged 16, achieving Level 2 Threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh (first language) and Mathematics (Local)
9. % of schools inspected by Estyn that were judged, at the time on current performance as being at least 'Good' on a 3 yr rolling basis[*3] between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)
10. % of schools inspected by Estyn that were judged as presenting prospects for improvement as being at least 'Good' on a 3 yr rolling basis[*4] between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)

Chris Bradshaw (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning)

Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

OUTCOME 1: Build great school leadership and governance	
What are we trying to achieve:	To promote an ethos of aspiration, high achievement and accountability at all levels
Why we need to do it:	In RCT we need to ensure we set high expectations for every child. A key driver to achieve this is to ensure school leaders at all levels are more effective in leading their staff to deliver high quality provision and outcomes for pupils. With one in four children living in poverty and one in five having special educational needs we need to ensure targeted support is provided to all pupils to enable them to achieve positive outcomes
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s):	Outcome: Prosperity Priority: People have the education and essential skills to secure employment
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users or residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf:	Effective governance and leadership is essential in securing school improvement, as well as bringing about a culture of high expectation in providing the best possible outcomes for children and young people

Title	Measures				Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	2014/15 (includes data from April 2013 to March 2015)			2015/16		
	RCT Perf.	All Wales Average	RCT Ranking	Target		
Me01 - % of schools inspected by Estyn that were graded as at least 'Good' for leadership on a 3 year rolling basis[*1] i.e. between April 2012 and March 2015	71.2	69.1	10	72.6	The data for the first two years of this PI is already known. Therefore the target has been set using this data along with the ambition of more schools being graded 'least good' for 2015/16	Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Me02 - % of schools inspected by Estyn who were graded as at least 'Good' for improving the quality of leadership and management on a 3 yr rolling basis[*2] between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	69.5	62.8	8	71.0	As above	
Me03 - % of schools inspected by Estyn that were judged, at the time on current performance as being at least 'Good' on a 3 yr rolling basis[*3] between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	54.2	62.5	15		The data for the first two years of this PI is already known. Therefore the target has been set using this data along with the ambition of more schools being graded 'least good' for 2015/16	
Me04 - % of schools inspected by Estyn that were judged as presenting prospects for improvement as being at least 'Good' on a 3 yr rolling basis[*4] between April 2012 and March 2015 (Local)	72.9	68.9	9			

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

[*1] This measure relates to Key Question 3 (Leadership & Management of the Estyn Inspection Framework)

[*2] This measure relates to Key Question 3 (Leadership & Management) of the Estyn Inspection Framework)

[*3] This measure relates to the overall judgement on school's performance of the Estyn Inspection Framework

[*4] This measure relates to the overall judgement on school's prospects for improvement of the Estyn Inspection Framework

Critical Improvement Action 1: Improve the quality of leadership and it's impact on raising standards across all key stages

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - In collaboration with CSC strengthen the current leadership intervention programme to ensure the effective challenge of the quality of leadership and management within schools:		
i. Introduce an Executive Headship programme in Primary and Secondary Schools	Primary - April 2015 Secondary - October 2015	Head of Primary School Achievement &
ii. Provide a mentoring and coaching programme for all new head teachers for at least the first year of headship for primary and secondary schools	As and when required	Head of Secondary School
iii. Deliver the 'Transforming Leadership' Programme for aspiring head teachers across all schools	From Sep-15 to Jul-16	Achievement

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Critical Improvement Action 2: Undertake effective joint working with Central South Consortium to support and challenge schools

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Further develop 'hubs', school Improvement Groups (SIGs), specialist centres, pathfinder pairing schools, executive headship, senior and middle leadership programmes to support and challenge schools	Review Jul-2016	Head of Primary School
M02 - Maintain the rigour and further strengthen the challenge and support for schools categorised as amber and red schools to ensure they make rapid progress across all areas that need improving	Review October 2015 and March 2016	Achievement & Head of Secondary School Achievement
M03i - Provide support, challenge and high quality training for our school governors to strengthen school improvement		Head Of School
M03ii - Develop a cadre of experienced governors to work with other governing bodies to further improve school management	Review Mar-16	Organisation, P lanning And Governance
M04 - Undertake joint support/challenge interventions and reviews in settings where ALN/SEN practice requires improvement	Sep-15	Head of Access & Inclusion

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered Risks to be managed/highlighted. These are the things that will/could impact on the service's ability to achieve it's priorities	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - Recruitment of leaders and managers in Welsh sector and Faith sector	Through succession planning and HR and Senior Officer involvement in recruiting of headteachers and deputy headteachers
R2 - Recruitment and retention of high quality leaders and managers	Introduction of the 'Executive Headship Programme'
R3 - The number of School Governors accessing mandatory and optional training	See Actions M04i and ii
R4 - Number of vacancies on governing bodies in particular of red schools	See Action M02

Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

OUTCOME 2: Ensure high quality teaching and learning in every educational setting	
What are we trying to achieve:	Improve the educational outcomes for all our learners to help to achieve their potential and improve their future prospects
Why we need to do it:	To ensure we have first-class teachers that are able to engage and motivate pupils in securing good progress and learning. They need to be able to identify the learning needs of pupils and track and support improvement
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s):	Outcome: Prosperity Priority: People have the education and essential skills to secure employment
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf:	Excellent teaching is a key component of any good school, and is essential if we are to raise standards and to tackle educational underachievement, ensuring pupils have the right resources, and are encouraged and supported to learn and succeed

Title	Measures				Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	2014/15[*1] (includes data from April 2013 to March 2015)			2015/16		
	RCT Perf.	All Wales Average	RCT Ranking	Target		
Me01 - % of schools inspected by Estyn who were graded as at least 'Good' for standards on a 3 yr rolling basis[*2] i.e. between April 2013 and March 2016 (Local)	54.4	63.2	16	58.1	The data for the first two years of this PI is already known. Therefore the target has been set using this data along with the ambition of more schools being graded 'least good' for 2015/16	Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Me02 - % of schools inspected by Estyn who were graded as at least 'Good' for teaching on a 3 yr rolling basis[*3] i.e. between April 2013 and March 2016 (Local)	73.7	66.1	4	75.8	As above	

	2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)	2014/15 All Wales Comparative Data			2015/16 (2014/15 academic year)	Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	Annual Perf.	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target		
Me03 - % of pupils assessed at the end of Foundation Phase, aged 7, achieving outcome 5 or above in Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI)*4 (Local)	81.8	4	21	85.2	88.0	Target calculated by considering an aggregated target agreed by CSC and schools, and actual RCT past and All Wales performance data.	Head of Primary School Achievement
Me04 - % difference between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and Non-FSM who were assessed at the end of Foundation Phase, aged 7, who achieved the expected outcome in the FPI (Local)	New	N/A			Baseline data to be established	As above	

[*1] During this period this indicator was reported on a 2 year rolling basis but from 2014/15 it is being reported over a 3 year rolling basis

[*2] This measure relates to Key Question 1 (Education Outcomes) of the Estyn Inspection Framework

[*3] This measure relates to Key Question 1 (Education Provision) of the Estyn Inspection Framework

[*4] FPI represents the percentage of pupils achieving outcome 5 or above in Language, Literacy & Communication (LCE/LCW), Mathematical Development (MD and Personal and Social Development, Wellbeing and Cultural Diversity (PSD) in combination

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Title	2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)	2014/15 All Wales Comparative Data (relates to the 2013/14 academic year)			2015/16 (2014/15 academic year)	Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	Annual Perf.	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target		
Me05 - % of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, aged 11, achieving level 4 or above in the core subject indicator (Statutory)	84.3	4	16	86.1	86.0	RCT target calculated by considering an aggregated target agreed by CSC and schools, the D measure of the Family Fischer Trust estimate, and actual RCT past and All Wales performance data. Consideration also given to the robust support and challenge process in place targeting Amber/Redschools. Also improved tracking and support provided through SIGs	
Me06 - % difference between pupils eligible for Free School Meals and Non-FSM who were assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, aged 11, who achieved level 4 or above in the CSI	New	N/A			Baseline data to be established	N/A	
Me07 - % of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, aged 11, achieving level 4 or above in English or Welsh (FL) and maths combined	New				Baseline data to be established	N/A	

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Title	2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)	2014/15 All Wales Comparative Data (relates to the 2013/14 academic year)			2015/16 (2014/15 academic year)	Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	Annual Perf.	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target		
Me08 - % of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, aged 14, achieving level 5 or above in the core subject indicator (Statutory)	78.4	3	16	81.0	82.0	Target calculated by considering an aggregated target agreed by CSC and schools, the B measure of the Family Fischer Trust estimate, and actual RCT past and All Wales performance data. Consideration also given to the robust support and challenge process in place targeting Amber/Redschools. Also improved tracking and support provided through SIGs	Head of Secondary School Achievement
Me09 - % of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, aged 14, achieving level 5 or above in the core subject indicator (Local)	61.6	N/A		61.3	62.0	Target set against previous performance and consideration Dedicated 'hub' and SIGs work to improve. Also used FFT B: 73.0, FFT D: 69.0	
Me10 - % of pupils, aged 16, who achieved the Level 1 Threshold (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A* - G or approved equivalent qualification) (Local)	93.2	4	19	94.0	95.0	Target calculated by considering an aggregated target agreed by CSC and schools, the B measure of the Family Fischer Trust estimate, and actual RCT past and All Wales performance data. Consideration also given to the robust support and challenge process in place targeting Amber/Red schools. Also improved tracking and support provided through SIGs	
Me11 - % of pupils, aged 16, who achieved the Level 2 Threshold (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A*-C or approved equivalent qualification) (Local)	84.6	3	12	82.3	86.0	As above	
Me12 - % of pupils, aged 16, who achieved the Level 2 Threshold including in English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science grade A*-C (Local)	48.7	4	18	52.6	54.0	As above	
Me13 - % of pupils, aged 16, achieving Level 2 Threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh (first language) and Mathematics (Statutory)	50.5	4	19	55.4	55.0	As above	
Me14 - % of pupils entitled to FSM, aged 16, achieving Level 2 Threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh (first language) and Mathematics (Local)	25.5	N/A		25.8	30.0	As above	
Me15 - Average capped points score for pupils aged 15 at the preceding 31 August, in schools maintained by the local authority (Local)	336.5	4	17	340.8	346.0	As above	

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Critical Improvement Action 1: In collaboration with the Central South Consortium increase the number of schools judged to be self-improving through the national categorisation model

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Further enable the network of 'hub' schools to drive excellence in learning and teaching, and support one of these schools to be a centre for co-ordination and support for teachers participating in the Teach First Scheme within RCT	As and when throughout the 2014/15 academic year	Head of Primary School Achievement & Head of Secondary School Achievement
M02 - Employ participants from the 'Outstanding Teacher Programme' to coach and develop teachers within and across schools, on a consortium basis, which will include encouraging some teachers to participate in the 'Improving Teacher Programme'		
M03 - Continue to identify the most effective teachers and specialist schools and use their expertise to build capacity and share best practice within and between schools		
M04 - Improve the robustness, consistency and accuracy of teacher assessment	From April 2015	

Critical Improvement Action 2: To continue to improve the educational outcomes of pupils across all key stages of learning

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Providing challenge and support for primary schools to raise standards and to meet the demands of the new curriculum	Review Mar-16	Head of Primary School Achievement & Head of Secondary School Achievement
M02 - Providing challenge and support for secondary schools to raise standards and to meet the demands of the new GCSE and GCE examinations	From Sep-15	
M03 - Steer the implementation of the national 'Schools Challenge Cymru Programme' to break the link between poverty and educational attainment		
M04 - Guiding secondary schools in successfully implementing the curriculum changes in Key Stage 4 and 5 through the Consortium's Qualified for Life Team (funded by Welsh Government)		

Critical Improvement Action 3: To increase the opportunities for more able young people across RCT to reach their potential

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Lead the Seren partnership 'Hub' funded by Welsh Government between schools and colleges in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf that seeks to target our most able Key Stage 5 students and support them to access Oxbridge and the Sutton Trust 30 top universities	From Sep-15	Head of Secondary School Achievement
i. Deliver a support programme to 200 of our most able Year 12 students to secure places at Oxbridge and the Sutton Trust top 30 universities, by providing stimulating and challenging tutorials and other events, delivered by high quality academics from across the UK		
ii. Further develop this programme through a Year 9 student more able and talented programme that seeks to raise aspiration and expectations of high achievement before the start of Key Stage 4		

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
Risks to be managed/highlighted. These are the things that will/could impact on the service's ability to achieve its priorities	
R1 - Introduction of the new curriculum changes	Included above CA 5 M03ii
R2 - Recruitment of teachers in the Welsh medium sector	Encourage more teachers who are bilingual to apply for teaching positions
R3 - Shortage of high quality teachers in mathematics	Implement 'Teach First' Scheme

Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

OUTCOME 3: Promote wellbeing and engagement of all learners	
What are we trying to achieve:	To ensure all pupils attend schools regularly and provide a learning environment that meet the needs for our all our learners
Why we need to do it:	To improve standards to ensure all our learners achieve their potential and have good outcomes to improve their future prospects
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s):	Outcome: Prosperity Priority: People have the education and essential skills to secure employment
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf:	Support our emotionally literate schools, and that our young people with feel safe, valued and motivated to learn

Measures

Title	2014/15[*1] (includes data from April 2013 to March 2015)			2015/16	Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	RCT Perf.	CSC Average	All Wales Average	Target		
Me01 - % of schools inspected by Estyn who were graded as at least 'Good' for wellbeing on a 3 yr rolling basis[*2] i.e. between April 2013 to March 2016 (Local)	76.3	76.6	12	77.4	The data for the first two years of this PI is already known. Therefore the target has been set using this data along with the ambition of more schools being graded 'least good' for 2015/16	Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Me02 - % of schools inspected by Estyn that were graded as at least 'Good' for partnership working on a 3 year rolling basis[*2] i.e. between April 2013 and March 2016 (Local)	93.2	92.0	10	95.2	As above	

	2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)	2014/15 All Wales Comparative Data			2015/16 (2014/15 academic year)	Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	Annual Perf.	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target		
Me03 - % of pupil attendance in Primary Schools (Statutory)	94.5	Unknown until Aug 15 (previous year we were ranked 16th in the third quartile, with an all Wales average of 93.7)		94.8 provisional	94.9	<p>The formula selects that highest value of the figures calculated using the following four rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.4% added to 2013/14 actual; • Median % for the most recent FSM group; • 0.10% added to 2013/14 target; • 0.05% added to 2012/13 actual. <p>This ensures that ALL schools are assigned a target of at least the value of their median or above & have at least a 0.4% increase to make on their achievement last year, however, a decision has been taken to cap targets at 97.0% for 2014-15 to provide the small number of schools who secured high attendance rates last year the opportunity to maintain them this year. These targets result in an average LA target of 94.9% for the year</p>	Head of Engagement And Participation
Me04 - % of pupil attendance in Secondary Schools (Statutory)	93.2	Unknown until Aug 15 (previous year we were ranked 21st in the bottom quartile, with an all Wales average of 92.6)		93.6 provisional	93.7	<p>To reflect the progress schools have made over the last two years, the formula has been reviewed to provide appropriate differentiation between FSM group bands. Last year the overall All Wales secondary attendance average increased by 1%. As this is the only indication we have to base potential increases in each FSM band's quartile threshold, this basis has been applied to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each school was ranked within their FSM band by actual FSM pupil percentage; • 1% increase has been applied to the upper quartile attendance percentage of each FSM band, in line with the rate of the All Wales average increase; <p>• The upper quartile threshold was initially used as the baseline for the target, with incremental reductions applied in line with the actual FSM percentage within each groups (i.e. as the rate of FSM pupils increased throughout the group, the required level of improvement on 2013/14 actual reduced in comparison to the other schools within the same group).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools are required to make a minimum 0.3% improvement <p>ALL schools are assigned a target of at least the value of their median or above, with a focus on driving performance towards quartile 1 for attendance. These targets result in an average LA target of 93.7% for the year</p>	

	2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)	2014/15 All Wales Comparative Data			2015/16 (2014/15 academic year)	Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	Annual Perf.	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target		
Me05 - % of pupil attendance at (EOTAS) educated other than at school provisions (Local)	80.4	N/A			80.4	Due to the nature of the pupils enrolled with EOTAS provision, the overall attendance levels will not be as mainstream establishments. EOTAS pupils are often the most hard to reach individuals with or those with the most significant barriers to overcome to engage with provision. Target set against the previous year's performance with the ambition of improving	Head of Access & Inclusion
Me06 – No. of fixed-term exclusion incidents per 1,000 pupils in Primary Schools (Local)	7.7				7.1	Already have data for the first two school terms and estimated the last term figures against the previous year performance	
Me07 – No. of fixed-term exclusion incidents per 1,000 pupils in Secondary Schools	81.8				80.9	Already have data for the first two school terms and estimated the last term figures against the previous year performance	
Me08– Average number of days lost through a fixed-term exclusion in schools	1.0				TBC		
Me09 - % of pupils with special educational needs who achieved the core subject indicator at key stage 2 (Local)	55.3				58.3	Identified through evaluating current cohort ability with consideration of trend data	
Me10 - % of pupils with special educational needs who achieved the core subject indicator at key stage 3 (Local)	38.0				40.0	As above	
Me11 - % of looked after children assessed at the end of key stage 2, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the core subject indicator as determined by the Teacher Assessment (Local)	62.5	N/A			57.1 (equates from 12/21)	Identified through evaluating current cohort ability, review of PEP plans and dialogue with schools	
Me12 - % of looked after children assessed at the end of key stage 3, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving the core subject indicator as determined by the Teacher Assessment (Local)	36.4				39.1	Identified through evaluating current cohort ability, review of PEP plans and dialogue with schools	
Me13 - % of looked after pupils who achieved the L1 threshold (5 GCSE grade A* - G or equivalent) (Local)	77.3				77.4	Identified through evaluating current cohort ability with consideration of trend data (high number of pupils with special educational needs)	
Me14 - % of looked after pupils who achieved the L2 threshold (5 GCSE grade A* - C or equivalent) (Local)	New				Baseline data to be established	N/A	

	2014/15 (2013/14 academic year)	2014/15 All Wales Comparative Data			2015/16 (2014/15 academic year)	Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	Annual Perf.	Quartile	Rank	Average	Target		
Me15 - % of all pupils, including those in care, in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at 31 August who left compulsory education, training or work based learning without a qualification (Statutory)	0.1 4 pupils left without a qualification	2013/14 all Wales data, 2014/15 not available until Aug 15				To maintain the improvement achieved in 2014/15	Head of Secondary School Achievement
		4	17	0.3	0.1		
Me16 - % of pupils in local authority care and in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at 31 August who left compulsory education, training or work based learning without a qualification (Statutory)	0.0 No pupils left without a qualification	2013/14 all Wales data, 2014/15 not available until Aug 15				The ability of the current cohort have been evaluated and it is anticipated that 2 out of 31 will not achieve as they refuse to engage	Head of Access & Inclusion
		4	17	0.3	6.5		
Me17 - % of 16 year olds (Yr 11) leaving school who are known not to be in education, training or employment (Local)	3.9	To be confirmed			<3.9	Ambition of at least maintaining improvement of 2014/15	Career Wales Data
Me18 - % of 17 year olds (Yr 12) leaving school who are known not to be in education, training or employment (Local)	3.0				<3.0	As above	
Me19 - % of 18 year olds (Yr 13) leaving school who are known not to be in education, training or employment (Local)	5.9				<5.6	Applied 2014/15 target as this wasn't achieved	

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Draft

Critical Improvement Action 1: Continue to work with schools to ensure young people are supported to overcome barriers to attendance, wellbeing and engagement

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01i - Implement the 'Wellbeing and Behaviour Strategy' to further improve behaviour management approaches	From Sep-15	Acting Service Director For Access, Engagement And Inclusion
M01ii - Devise a robust action plan to ensure effective implementation of the 'Wellbeing and Behaviour Strategy'	From Sep-15	
M02 - Remodel secondary PRU/EOTAS provision, including home tuition	Mar-16	
M03 - Undertake a review of special school provision so as to ensure that existing provision is appropriate to inform future strategic planning and development	Mar-16	

Critical Improvement Action 2: Reduce the number of young people (14 – 25 years old) not in education, employment or training through better use of information, early intervention and efficient provision of services

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Develop the scope of Vulnerability Profiling to facilitate its wider use across the Council and partners to drive improvements in planning, delivery and review of targeted services, including the following:		Head of Engagement And Participation
i - Undertake work with Children's Services to use vulnerability profiling to support the prevention agenda as part of the imminent Social Services and Wellbeing Act	Mar-16	
ii - Extend vulnerability profiling to KS5 pupils as well as support the work of Post 16 providers	Mar-16	

Draft

Critical Improvement Action 3: Work with schools, CSC and other partners to narrow the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and all other pupils

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Reduce the impact of poverty on educational achievements by narrowing the gap between the outcomes of pupils eFSM and non-eFSM pupils:		Head of Primary School Achievement & Head of Secondary School Achievement
i - Support and challenge schools to ensure the effective planning of the use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant		
ii - Work with service areas to identify best practice in schools that contribute to closing the gap between attainment results	Review Mar-16	
iii - Provide professional development and strategies to help schools to raise expectations, resilience and life skills of eFSM learners		

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered Risks to be managed/highlighted. These are the things that will/could impact on the service's ability to achieve it's priorities	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - Revised curriculum changes at KS 4 with fewer opportunities for less able pupils	Supported by school leaders and School Improvement Groups (SIGs)
R2 - Schools lack of engagement in the 'Wellbeing and Behaviour Strategy'	Promote through School Improvement Groups
R3 - Lack of buy-in to traded services	Carrying out regular monitoring and evaluation

Draft

Key Priority: Education - A Top Quality Education for All; "Every School a Great School"

Lead Officer: Chris Bradshaw - Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

OUTCOME 4: Providing a learning environment fit for the 21st Century

What are we trying to achieve:	To provide the best possible educational facilities for our children that will inspire them to learn and achieve their potential. Also to remove surplus school places and align catchment areas to manage the demand for places in required areas
Why we need to do it:	To make sure accommodation provides a stimulating and well-maintained learning environment to support teaching and learning, and that there are enough resources that are well matched to pupils' needs
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s):	Outcome: Prosperity Priority : People have the education and essential skills to secure employment
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf:	Impact on schools and surrounding communities. Provide state-of-the-art facilities to support learning and encourage good attendance rates. Also support community learning and leisure activities, and ensure a safe and secure learning environment

Title	Measures				Target Rationale	Responsible Officer
	2014/15 Annual Perf.	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data				
		Quartile	Rank	Average		
Me01 - % of children who secured their 1st choice for nursery placement (Local)	98.5				TBC	Head of 21st Century Schools
Me02 - % of Primary Schools with 25% or more surplus places - 30 or more (Local)	Available in May				TBC	
Me03 - % of Primary Schools oversubscribed, with 110% or more capacity (Local)	Available in May				TBC	
Me04 - % of Secondary Schools with 25% or more surplus places (Local)	Available in May				TBC	

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Critical Improvement Action 1: Further develop and deliver the Council's 21st Century Schools Programme in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government, with a particular focus on removing surplus school places

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Complete the school modernisation projects in line with the 21st Century Schools reorganisation of primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision plan, including:		Head of 21st Century Schools
> Aberdare Community School (new school and community leisure facilities)	Sep-15	
> Treorchy Primary School - phase 2 (extend school to accommodate Pentre Primary school pupils)	Sep-15	
> Llwynrcrwn Primary School (new junior block)	Jan-16	
> Y Pant Comprehensive School (remodelling/expansion of school)	Jan-17	
> Treorchy Comprehensive School (improve sixth form facilities) - currently going through consultation	Review Mar-16	
> Porth County Community School (new and refurbished buildings for a new 3-16 school) - currently going through consultation		
> Tonypandy Community School (new and refurbished buildings for a new 3-16 school) - currently going through consultation		
> Tonyrefail Comprehensive School (new and refurbished buildings for a new 3-16 school) - currently going through consultation		
> Ferndale Community School (remodel to become a 11-16 school) - currently going through consultation		

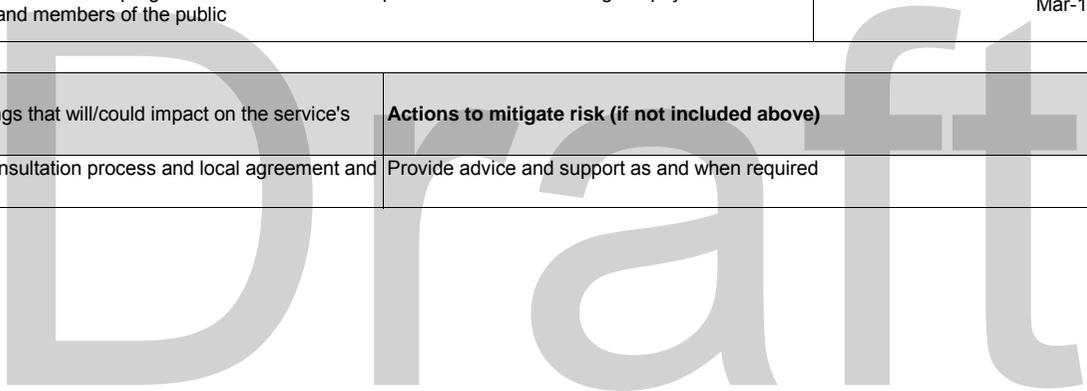
Critical Improvement Action 2: Meet the demand for Welsh medium provision and evaluate the need for Welsh medium provision for pupils with additional learning needs

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Undertake an audit of SEN in the Welsh Medium Sector in order to inform strategic planning for SEN provision	Mar-16	Head of Access & Inclusion
M02 - Increase the number of Welsh medium school places through the following projects:	Review Mar-16	Head of 21st Century Schools
i. YGG Llwynceilyn (extension, remodelling and refurbishment) - subject to consultation		
ii. Relocate YGG Tonyrefail to the current Tonyrefail Primary - subject to consultation		

Critical Action 3: - CA03 - Ensure that buildings used to provide education are fit for purpose and provide a safe and secure learning environment

Title	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
M01 - Deliver Education Directorate £5.407M capital minor works programme to contribute to improvements in a wide range of physical environments benefiting pupils, staff, young people and members of the public	Mar-16	Head of 21st Century Schools

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
Risks to be managed/highlighted. These are the things that will/could impact on the service's ability to achieve it's priorities	
R1 - Heavily reliant on the outcomes of statutory consultation process and local agreement and Welsh Government approval	Provide advice and support as and when required



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING AND COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group held at the Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Tuesday, 28th April 2015.

Present:

County Borough Councillor (Mrs) C Leyshon - in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

C Davies
(Mrs) S Rees
D Weeks

Co-opted Members:

Mr J Fish
Mr J Horton
Ms C Jones

Officers in Attendance:

Mr C Bradshaw – Director, Education & Lifelong Learning
Ms E Thomas – Service Director, Schools & Community
Mr A Gwynn – Service Director, Children's Services
Ms Lesley Lawson – Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning
Ms A Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer
Ms J Nicholls – Scrutiny Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors (Mrs) A Calvert and D W Weeks.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of personal interest relating to the agenda.

3. CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S EVALUATION OF ITS PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERING ITS 2014/15 PRIORITY PLANS AND THE CHALLENGE TO THE DRAFT PRIORITY PLANS FOR 2015/16

The Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning provided the Working Group with an understanding of the Council's statutory obligation to secure

continuous improvement and she explained that Members were being asked to challenge both the performance evaluation of the 2014/15 action plans for Education and Children's Services and the content of the draft plans for 2015/16.

The Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning drew Members' attention to the recommendations at 2.2 of the report and the list of possible points for consideration set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

Points 4 and 5 refer to Top Quality Education

6. **CHALLENGE OF THE DRAFT EVALUATION OF THE 2014/2015 PRIORITY PLAN – 'Keeping all children and young people safe'**

The Working Group reminded the Service Director, Children's Services of the concerns expressed previously by the Scrutiny Committee in relation to the performance in some areas such as the timeliness of assessments and care plans and expressed the hope that the ongoing restructure of the service would see improvements.

In response, the Service Director, Children's Services outlined the re-modelling of the service which included work force planning and the introduction of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Members commented that the increasing demands placed on the service during the year made it difficult to evaluate performance.

The Service Director, Children's Services explained that the re-modelling of Children's Services was being based on a 'whole system' approach with the aim of reducing the numbers of children entering the system.

In relation to performance against targets as set out at page 63 of the agenda pack, Members questioned whether the targets had been realistic.

The Service Director, Children's Services reported that for the most part they were reasonable targets but that all targets would be reassessed for 2015/16. However, he pointed out that there were a number of measures which were not particularly helpful and were focused more on process.

The Working Group referred to the CSSIW's inspection of safeguarding services and their remarks in relation to there being a gap in appropriate services for children and young people suffering with emotional and psychological health and development needs. It was questioned whether there needed to be more emphasis given to the fact that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is struggling.

The Service Director, Children's Services explained that it was an issue that was out of the control of the Council but also affected other areas such as Education. However, he explained that the Looked After Children Scrutiny

Working Group were due to meet with CAMHS the following week which would provide an opportunity to raise concerns.

The Director of Education & Lifelong Learning suggested that the issue needed to be taken up with the Local Health Board and he pointed out that Education funded the speech therapists and school nurses.

The Service Director, Children's Services explained that in the past some of the services provided had been grant funded but that these grants had now either disappeared or been reduced.

The Service Director, Schools & Community suggested that the introduction of the MASH could act as a trigger point to identify the gaps in provision.

The Working Group commented on the high workload and the impact this could have on staff.

The Service Director, Children's Services explained that as part of the re-modelling of the service, processes were being mapped to try and streamline them and reduce bureaucracy and whilst there is still a way to go there are indications that performance is moving in the right direction. He also explained that the new Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act will come into force in April 2016 which has a focus on early intervention and prevention.

It was asked whether the increase in multiagency work had led to difficulties with regard to funding.

The Service Director, Children's Services reported that whilst all agencies were under financial pressure, in terms of efficiency, the multi agency teams had seen the most improvement. However, in some areas such as CAMHS, there have been issues for a number of years although it should be pointed out that front line staff work well together.

The Working Group suggested that perhaps the evaluation could include commentary on the signs that the re-modelling is beginning to positively influence performance figures.

The Working Group also considered the introduction of the case studies as an improvement to the evaluations. It was also suggested that the positive performance of the Youth Justice Service should be mentioned.

In relation to the Regional Adoption Service, the Working Group asked for an update with regard to the appointment of a regional manager.

The Service Director, Children's Services reported that a Regional Manager had been appointed and that the service was ready for operation subject to the signing off of the necessary legal agreements. Members commented on the good work undertaken by staff at a time of great pressure and the Service

Director informed Members that the Council's own Adoption Manager had been appointed as Regional Manager.

Again Members commented positively on the inclusion of case studies and it was proposed that the inclusion of a case study in relation to the adoption service might be helpful. Members also suggested that a key to the acronyms used should be provided at the start of the evaluations.

In conclusion, the Working Group determined that it was difficult to evaluate performance based on the information provided and in light of the increasing demand that the service experienced during 2014/15. The Working Group recommended that further work be undertaken around the key developments / progress made during 2014/15 and how this has impacted, or is starting to impact, on performance.

**7. CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2015/16 PRIORITY PLAN -
'Keeping all children and young people safe'**

The Working Group was asked to consider the draft 2015/16 priority plan for Children's Services but it was pointed out that the plan was currently less well developed than the draft Education plan in terms of data.

The Working Group questioned whether the education performance of Looked After Children was included and it was explained that this was not specifically mentioned. Following further discussion it was agreed that this could be adequately reported through separate reports to the scrutiny committees or Corporate Parenting Board.

In conclusion, the Working Group **AGREED** that further up dates were required to the Action Plan to inform effective scrutiny of progress during the year.

(Mrs) C Leyshon
Chairman The meeting closed at 11.50 am.

Performance Evaluation - Keeping all children and young people safe.

Why was this a priority in 2014/15?

- The Council has a legal responsibility to safeguard and protect vulnerable children and young people from harm. In meeting this commitment our goal is to keep children with their families when it is in their best interest, to help secure more positive outcomes in terms of the child's health, well being and life chances. We aim to provide appropriate help quickly to those who are vulnerable, to help families with the most complex problems and to find permanent alternative care for those children who need it;
- Despite our work to keep children with their families when in the child's best interest, demand for our help continued to grow between April 2013 and March 2014:
 - 3,441 children were referred to us as needing help in 2013/14 compared to 3,017 in 2012/13;
 - 471 children were on the Child Protection Register in 2013/14, 108 more than 2012/13. This was one of the highest levels in Wales.
 - 650 children were in our care in 2013/14, 29 more than 2012/13 and is one of the highest levels in Wales.
- Our performance information told us that we don't always assess children as quickly as other councils, nor are as many of our assessments undertaken by social workers. We also recognised that the area of Children's Services represented one of the biggest financial and service risks to the Council;
- The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a public organisation in Wales with responsibility for independently reviewing the performance of Children's Services in each local authority. We took into account the latest CSSIW evaluation available at the time of setting our plan for 2014/15; this said that the service had a "good track record to taking an innovative approach" to improvement and that the service had areas of good practice including social workers working with families facing problems early so that problems can be prevented if possible, or don't get any worse. It also found areas for improvement. These included the high number of children on the child protection register and also in our care and the associated cost, children not being allocated a qualified social worker and assessments not being completed quickly enough;
- The Council spends more on adult and children's social care, per head, than other Local Authorities in Wales. This is linked to the deprivation within the area and the need to support different groups of the population. However, as we seek to shift the emphasis from managing crisis to earlier intervention and preventing escalation and in response to the requirements of the Social Service and Wellbeing (Wales) Act both adult and children's social services in Rhondda Cynon Taf need to be reshaped.

During 2014/15 we have been continuing to tackle these local and national challenges across our services as well as in our Priority Plan for ***Keeping all Children and Young People safe.***

In 2014/15 we said we would focus on

- Providing children and their families with the support they need as early as possible to help prevent problems getting worse
- Improving our decision making for children that are in our care

Having considered the information available to us including progress, current, trend and comparative data, complaints and feedback from the Regulators and our own self assessment, overall our progress in the two Outcomes in this Priority Plan has been generally ***** and details of our progress are outlined in detail below. Also, the five key measures we had indicated would help to evidence success have been achieved.

What we said at the start of 2014/15	How did we actually perform?
Based on the significant increase (30%) in the number of children on the CPR during the 2013/14 period it was deemed likely that numbers would continue to rise during 2014/15. However while forecasting, based on trends, that the numbers would increase, the target of a 20% increase was set with the purpose of slowing down the rate of growth during year.	Year end position 447 children on CPR as at 31/03/15 (provisional data). This represents an overall decrease of 5% in the number of children on the CPR during the year (provisional)
The number of children becoming looked after will be maintained at around 218	227 children became looked after during 2014/15. (provisional)
70% of initial assessments will involve a social worker seeing the child. This represents improvement and compares to 68.7% in 2013/14	73.94% of initial assessments will involve a social worker seeing the child (provisional)
65% of initial assessments of children's needs will be carried out within 7 working days. This represents improvement and compares to 48.9% in 2013/14	59.47% were completed in 7 working days (provisional data) It is anticipated that the introduction of the MASH in April 2015 and the reconfiguring of the Intake and Assessment teams as part of the remodelling of services will positively impact on performance in this area. For those assessments that took longer than 7 working days to complete, we took an average of 25.7.8 days to complete an initial assessment. (provisional data)
61% of looked after children placed with in-house and more cost effective foster carers. This represents improvement and	63.5% of children in foster care as at 31/03/15 were placed with in-house

compares to 59.06% in 2013/14	foster carers (provisional data)
70% of initial assessments will involve a social worker seeing the child. This represents improvement and compares to 68.7% in 2013/14	73.94% of initial assessments will involve a social worker seeing the child (provisional)
65% of initial assessments of children's needs will be carried out within 7 working days. This represents improvement and compares to 48.9% in 2013/14	59.47% were completed in 7 working days (provisional data) It is anticipated that the introduction of the MASH in April 2015 and the reconfiguring of the Intake and Assessment teams as part of the remodelling of services will positively impact on performance in this area. For those assessments that took longer than 7 working days to complete, we took an average of 25.7.8 days to complete an initial assessment. (provisional data)
61% of looked after children placed with in-house and more cost effective foster carers. This represents improvement and compares to 59.06% in 2013/14	63.5% of children in foster care as at 31/03/15 were placed with in-house foster carers (provisional data)

We said we would enable children, young people and families to access appropriate support as early as possible, to help them

maintain their quality of life, prevent any problems escalating and reduce the demand for high cost, specialist support services.

We remain committed to protecting and supporting the wellbeing and achievement of young people and continue to provide support to children and young people experiencing the highest levels of problems and vulnerabilities. With this in mind the Council wants to work with its partners and communities to intervene early to help children and young people achieve their full potential and to prevent children becoming looked after.

In order to tackle this growing demand and to enable families to access support, a critical action for us was improving our capacity to prevent the need for statutory intervention by co-ordinating early intervention and prevention services in a better way. The Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy has informed the wider remodelling of Children's Services, bringing Early Years and Early Intervention and Prevention Services under the leadership of one Head of Service. One such service is the Team Around the Family (TAF) model, rolled out across Rhondda Cynon Taf during 2013/14, which aims to provide co-ordinated services to families, preventing the need for statutory intervention. Despite an 'Everyone's Business' model being adopted, a local evaluation at the end of that year found that the majority of TAF assessments were being carried out by services directly commissioned through Families First, with limited capacity within mainstream services to undertake assessments and the key worker role.

As a result, in 2014/15, we worked closely with partners in strengthening the TAF model, revising the documentation and simplifying assessment to ensure that effective referral pathways are in place. A revised model based around three hubs (Rhondda, Cynon and Taf) will be operational from April 2015. This will enable greater engagement with TAF by providing additional key worker and assessment capacity, as well as mentoring and support to local services engaging with vulnerable families. The model has been designed to meet the potential increased demand due to the introduction of the MASH.

Case Study

This case study demonstrates how the Team Around the Family (TAF) assessment and support planning enables support to be co-ordinated and delivered based on the families needs.

This family of five is made up of Dad, who was made redundant; Mum, who suffered spinal damage in an accident and their three daughters. The eldest child has recently left home to attend university, but she finds elements of student life challenging due to her dyslexia and dyspraxia. Their 15 year old daughter has poor mental health and is socially isolated. The youngest daughter has enuresis and acts as a carer to both her sister and mum. The family were in significant rising debt and were under threat of losing their home, which was increasingly not appropriate for the family's needs, particularly Mum's disability.

To support this family a number of agencies were engaged through the TAF process to co-ordinate support, including:

- **Adult Services** - ensured the house is adapted to support Mum. The Community Occupational Therapist is also working alongside Mum to assess what further support she might need as she gets older.
- Dad is in receipt of support from the **Parent and Carers Network** and is on the waiting list for counselling from **First Response**.
- A number of money advice services were accessed to try and ascertain what support could be provided. **Local solicitors** were spoken to and an agreement was made for the family to receive low cost specialist advice due to the issues surrounding this family, this was funded by TAF. This advice allowed the family to fully understand the position they were in and how they could challenge some of their debts. After receiving this advice the local housing provider, **RCT Homes**, agreed to act as the conduit between the mortgage company and the family to support them in making a case to their special circumstances department.
- **CAMHS** and **Eye to Eye Counselling** has been accessed to support their daughter in dealing with mental health and previous self harm/suicidal attempts. The Youth Engagement and Participation Service have also enabled her to access after-school activities and opportunities to socialise and build her social network.
- **Housing Solutions** are supporting the family to look for alternative accommodation.
- **School nursing and the Enuresis clinic** are supporting the youngest child. TAF funded appropriate resources to support the plan. The **Young Carers service** are supporting her to ensure she has support within her own right.
- The eldest child attending university is receiving support from **Citizens Advice Bureau** to explore whether she is entitled to financial support as a full time student with additional learning needs and subsequent budgeting support to manage her student benefits/loans. She is working with the **Disability Student Support Officer in the University** to ensure appropriate support is provided on campus after a series of falls trying to access main stairs/corridors. In addition, training is being provided to use the voice recognition computer and Dictaphone which has been provided. On-going support is being explored to look at a support mentor at the University so that the young person has contact on site for help/advice and support on an as and when basis.

Case Study

This case study demonstrates the benefits of joint working following assessment.

Two young carers were referred who were caring for their Mum. She was waiting for a heart and double lung transplant and was very weak. She couldn't walk to the front door, couldn't get upstairs and often needed to use her oxygen tank. Mum was relying on her daughters to do everything for her. They were carrying her upstairs, taking it in turns to stay awake at night to ensure she was breathing, helping her to wash and dress and doing the household chores, all while trying to attend school. The family weren't aware that they could have any support and were wary of people coming into the home. School staff had become aware that things were difficult at home but weren't aware of the extent of caring being carried out. The assessment worker gradually built a relationship with the family and supported Mum through an assessment of her needs. Since then, a stair lift has been installed, Telecare has provided sensors and monitors, direct payments have been set up so that Mum has a PA to help her and the girls are receiving the emotional support they need.

During 2013/14, CSSIW undertook a national inspection on safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviours. This inspection demonstrated areas of good practice, including the focus of the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board on risky behaviours; the Council's investment in training for staff in sexual exploitation and sexually harmful behaviour; and the positive work being undertaken by staff in the Local Authority and the third sector to help children and young people understand their lives, such as the Miskin Project. However, the inspection highlighted locally, and on a national level, where we need to continue to focus on improvement. This includes a gap in appropriate services for children and young people suffering with emotional and psychological health and development needs and lack of a clear pathway for care leavers to access and sustain commitment to universal adult services. We had recognised these areas for improvement and volunteered as a pioneer authority in the Welsh Government's 'When I'm ready' scheme. This allows care leavers to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18. When the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act comes into force on 1 April 2016, local authorities in Wales will have new duties towards young people in foster care who wish to continue living with their foster parents once they turn 18.

We said we would improve assessment, planning and decision-making for those children who will require long-term permanent care in accordance with legislative requirements.

Children and young people who are looked after by their local authority, rather than their parents, are amongst the most vulnerable groups in our society. As corporate parents, it is our responsibility to keep them safe, make sure their experiences in care are positive, and look to the future, in creating a successful pathway that allows them to improve their overall wellbeing and life chances. We must approach this parenting role with as much commitment as any family would and ensure that our looked after children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

In addition to the above, our performance in relation to core assessments has improved this year. Last year, we completed 80.4% within timescale compared to 87.8% in quarter 3 of 2014/15. This surpasses the average across Wales of 81.2% of core assessments carried out within 35 days.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) provided the Council with its Performance Evaluation Report (2013/14) in October 2014, having last inspected elements of Children's Services during May 2013. The inspectorate's overall assessment of Children's Services was that progress has been made in a number of areas but some areas still require attention. In particular, CSSIW found that some areas of improvement identified in the 2012/13 evaluation

remain an issue, such as performance around some aspects of assessment and ensuring looked after children have an allocated social worker. However, the Council has effectively acted upon other areas for improvement, such as ensuring all children on the child protection register have an allocated social worker and improving communication between frontline teams to clarify their roles around preventative services.

The Council is particularly praised by CSSIW for its mature partnership relationship with Cwm Taf University Health Board and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, noting the establishment of a joint Youth Offending Service, Integrated Family Support Team and joint safeguarding structures across the Cwm Taf region. Furthermore, collaboration with three Local Authorities will result in a regional adoption service during 2015-16. These effective partner relationships have also contributed to the development of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Children's Services element of which will become operational during 2015.

Over the last few years, the Assessment and Care Planning Services have felt the greatest impact from the significant increase in demand for our services and this area of Children's Services has also been the most difficult to recruit and retain staff.

A key aspect of improving our performance is developing a new operating model. We have worked with the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University (IPC) to develop a new operating model for Children's services. This was approved by Cabinet in February 2015.¹ The revised children and family centred operating model will enable the service to deliver improvements in assessment, planning and decision making for those children who will require long term permanent care in accordance with legislative requirements.

Many previous areas of improvement focus have now been incorporated into the implementation plan for the new operating model. For instance, with regards to quality assurance, we have completed initial work on the Quality Assurance Framework and this will be progressed for implementation next year in our 2015/16 plan. The working of our placement related panels has been completely reviewed and revised. Alongside this a multi agency Looked After Children Quality Assurance Panel has been established. It commenced from January and now meets every 2 weeks. One of the key tasks this panel performs is to quality assure the new Safe Arrangements for the Care of Children process to ensure more robust decision making. Working closely with our partners within the South East Wales SWIFT Consortium to ensure business processes are fit for purpose. We have implemented the new combined initial and core assessment module, and will implement the expected child plan module when developed by the Consortium.

As above, recruiting and retaining staff within this division of service has been a challenge and a critical action for us moving forward with remodelling the service. A task and finish group was set up to review key workforce areas and contribute to an overall strategy. We have revised our induction processes, offered the opportunity for staff to be seconded into the Assessment Care Planning teams to experience working within the service and we have already achieved improved recruitment and retention of staff.

¹ <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/councildemocracy/democracyelections/councillorscommittees/meetings/cabinet/2015/02/12/cabinet12-feb-2015.aspx>

In conjunction with partners we have also made significant progress on implementation of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), a joint system that will facilitate the most efficient and effective safeguarding service for children and adults across partner organisations. The completion of the MASH will provide a physical hub for sharing information and concerns on child and adult referrals into safeguarding services. The pathway has now been agreed for the Children's Service MASH model, with referrals being progressed through a threshold system. In line with our aim that more families receive early help and the need for statutory intervention is lessened, staff will divert the referral to universal services or TAF, where appropriate. Those referrals that need to be progressed through the MASH information sharing process will be rated and information will be shared using the bespoke MHub package. Further work will be allocated to Children's Services and our partners outside of the Hub based on decisions made by MASH.

We said we would agree and implement a model for services for young people aged 16 years old and over, that ensures a consistency of approach that achieves the best possible outcomes for the young person involved. In 2014, CSSIW found that two thirds of care leavers (68.4%) are in education, employment or training at age nineteen and are very likely still to be in contact with us. Care leavers were positive about the support they had received. CSSIW also praised the marked improvement in 2013/14 in 16 year olds in the care system attaining qualifications. Improvements in secondary school attendance for looked after children are also noted, as this is slightly above the Wales average. Work on the 16 plus service has been completed and will be implemented as part of the wider Children's Services remodelling.

In order to continue to provide sufficient, suitable and cost effective care placements to meet the needs of children looked after and care leavers, we said we would, with three partner Local Authorities, establish a regional adoption service. Considerable work has been undertaken to drive forward the changes required to implement the 'Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative' and, despite delays due to recruitment, this service will become operational during 2015/16. This collaborative is one of five regional arrangements that will form a National Adoption Service, in line with requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. It is envisaged that the three co-located teams will provide a specialist focus that will improve service delivery and outcomes, particularly with respect to the recruitment and assessment of potential adopters and increase placement opportunities for children.

The fostering service has also undergone a restructure to take account of the growing numbers of relative foster carers and the need to provide them (and mainstream carers) with appropriate support. We have worked with an external provider to increase our number of in house foster carers. Although only 23 new applications for mainstream Foster Carers have been presented to the Panel by December 2014, the provider is confident of meeting the target of sixty additional carers over two years and we have exceeded our target with regards to the number of new mainstream Foster Carers approved (our target was 95% and actual performance 100%). Our performance has also been improving with regards to the percentage of children looked after who have had three more placements during the year. Clearly, we wish to minimise this figure to avoid disruption for children and young people. During current performance of 6.4% exceeds the average across Wales of 8.3% and places us in the top quartile of Councils. We are also exceeding our targets of percentage of looked after children placed with in-house foster carers (62.9% compared to a target of 61%) and those children placed with external foster carers (37.1% compared to 39%).

The Looked After Children Action Group aims to safely bring down the number of children looked after and provide suitable placements to meet the needs of care leavers. We have reviewed and challenged the commissioning mix of looked after children placements, in order to achieve the best outcomes for children and make

best use of resources in the Local Authority. Furthermore, the new Safe Arrangements for the Care of Children (SACC) have been introduced in January 2015, to ensure more robust decision making. In addition, a Quality Assurance Panel for Looked After Children has been established to ensure quality for the SACC process. This panel meets every two weeks and increases the robustness of our decision making.

What this means for 2015/16?

We have reviewed our progress during 2014/15 and determined the following critical actions for 2015/16:

- Need to include the three out comes from the plan - currently not there

**Wales Programme for Improvement
Keeping all children and young people safe**

What we aim to achieve:

Our focus will be on safeguarding and supporting children and young people in need, including those that are carers; significantly improving the range and effectiveness of services designed to support children and families in their own homes;

Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?

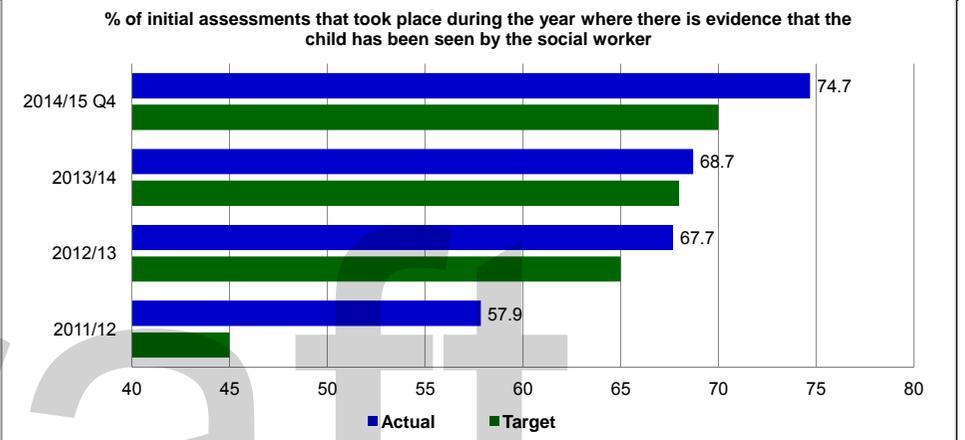
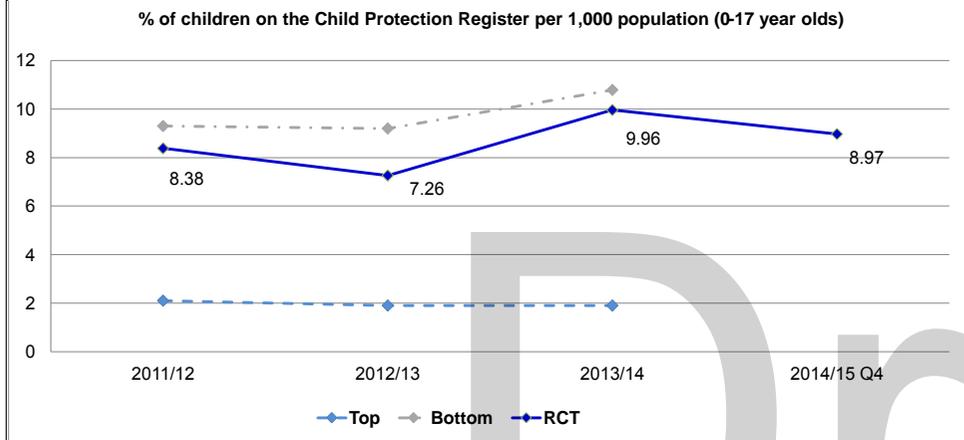
Risk Description:

If the demand for Children's Services (Children in Need, Child Protection and Looked After) continues to rise then the ability of the Council to safeguard vulnerable children and families may be

Outcome Reference:

1

How will we know if we are making a difference:



Story behind the data:

There has been a continuation of the increasing trend in child protection registrations: 471 as at March 2014, 495 as at June 2014, 519 as at September 2014, 528 at December 2014 and 449 at March 2015.

Ensuring that all children who require safeguarding are subject to safeguarding arrangements is a high priority. Heads of Service have reviewed initial child protection decision making processes and are progressing the findings of this work. In the longer term, work is underway to implement a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in conjunction with partner agencies.

Story behind the data:

A number of social workers were appointed during quarter 1 and started in their roles during quarter 2. These appointments are increasing the capacity of the service to meet continued high levels of demand and is also supporting a steady improvement in performance overall: at March 2013, 67.7% of initial assessments took place where the child was seen by a social worker; at March 2014 it was 68.7%; at September 2014 it was 72.8%; December 2014 it was 74.5% and March 2015 it was 74.7%. For those children not seen by a social worker we ensure that children are allocated to unqualified but suitably experienced workers. When we compare our quarter 4 performance with the 2013/14 all Wales data, this represents quartile 3 performance.

Andrew Gwynn - Service Director, Children's Services - March 2015

Key Priority: Keeping all children and young people safe
 Lead Officer: Andrew Gwynn - Service Director, Children's Services

Outcome 1: Enable children, young people and families to access appropriate support as early as possible, to help them maintain their quality of life, prevent any problems escalating and reduce the demand for high cost, specialist support services

Theme	Title	Measures										Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Qtr 4 Performance	RAG		Target	
Safety	Me01 - No. of children on the Child Protection Register (Local)	363	471				565	449	●	↓		
	Me02 - No. of referrals made to Children's Services (Local)	3,017	3,441				3,923	3,102	●	↓		
	Me03 - No. of children becoming looked after (Local)	N/A	218				218	228	●	N/A		
	Me04 - % of referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months (Local)	21.4	22.5	3	13	22.2	21.0	20.1	●	↑		
	Me05 - % of TAFs completed that result in family goals being achieved (Local)	N/A	N/A				N/A	47.4	N/A	N/A		For information only

Key Priority: Keeping all children and young people safe
 Lead Officer: Andrew Gwynn - Service Director, Children's Services

Outcome 2: Improve assessment, planning and decision making for those children who will require long term permanent care in accordance with legislative requirements

Theme	Title	Measures										Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Qtr 4 Performance	RAG		Target	
Safety	Me01 - % of first placements of looked after children during the year that began with a care plan in place (Statutory)	96.7	98.9	3	12	90.0	99.5	97.4	●	↑		
	Me02 - % of initial assessments that took place during the year where there is evidence that the child has been seen (Local)	92.7	91.8				93.0	93.8	●	↑		
	Me03 - % of initial assessments that took place during the year where there is evidence that the child has been seen by the social worker (Statutory)	67.7	68.7	4	18	78.9	70.0	74.7	●	↑		
	Me04 - % of initial assessments carried out within 7 working days (Statutory)	51.7	48.9	4	21	71.9	65.0	60.1	●	↑		Performance during the last Quarter of 2014/15 was much improved & at 75% exceeded target & overall performance for the year has improved when compared to the 2013/14 position. However despite this marked improvement during Q4 the problems experienced earlier during the year in relation to high demand & staffing pressures in key teams resulted in the target not being met for this indicator.
	Me05 - Average time taken to complete initial assessments that took longer than 7 working days to complete (Statutory)	24	23	4	19	19.0	20.0	26.0	●	↓		Although performance has improved during the final Quarter of the year & was improved over the year as a whole in respect of Initial Assessments being completed within 7 working days, those out of time have taken longer to complete
	Me06 - % of core assessments carried out within 35 working days (Statutory)	85.1	80.4	3	15	81.2	86.0	85.7	●	↑		
	Me07 - Average time taken to complete core assessments that took longer than 35 working days to complete (Statutory)	91.4	68	4	21	58	65	80	●	↑		Despite a 40% increase in the number of Core Assessments required during 2014/15 (from 679 to 954) we managed to improve performance in relation to Core Assessments completed within timescales. However the increase in demand has meant that when Core Assessments have been out of time they have taken longer to complete
	Me08 - No. of new applications for mainstream Foster Carers presented to Panel during the year (New) (Local)	N/A	20.0				30.0	20.0	●	N/A		Additional external support has been secured to provide increased numbers of in house carers but it has taken longer than originally anticipated for it to impact on this PI. We expect to see an improvement in performance during the forthcoming year
	Me09 - % of new mainstream Foster Carers approved by Panel during the year (New) (Local)	N/A	N/A				95.0	100.0	●	N/A		
	Me10 - % of children looked after on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year (Statutory)	6.9	6.6	2	7	8.3	7.0	5.8	●	↑		
	Me11 - % of looked after children placed with in-house foster carers (Local)	57.1	59.1				61.0	62.9	●	↑		
	Me12 - % of looked after children placed with external foster carers (Local)	42.9	40.9				39.0	37.1	●	↑		

Council Key Priority:

Lead Officer:

Andrew Gwynn

1. What we are trying to achieve:	<i>Ensure that children remain within their families when it is in the child's best interest</i>
Why we need to do it:	<i>Safeguarding is a collective responsibility of all public organisations and will continue to be a priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf</i>
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Priorities (s)	<i>People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe and feel safe</i>
What difference will delivery of this objective make to the service users/residents of RCT? (? internal services)	<i>Children at risk are protected from harm by provision of support or, when necessary, intervention</i>

How will we measure our success *Performance Indicators, where applicable, or other measures e.g. survey feedback*

Measures <i>Insert key PIs or other information that will demonstrate improvement against 'What we were trying to achieve'</i>		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Q3 Data	Annual Target	Target Qtr 1	Target Qtr 2	Target Qtr 3	Annual Target Provisional
1	ME04 Number of referrals made to Children's Services	3,441				2,303	3,923				3,923
2	Number of children becoming looked after (local)	218				186	218				218
3	% of referrals that are re-referrals within 12 months	22.5	3	13	22.2	20.5	21.0				20%
4	% of TAFs completed resulting in family goals being achieved (new local)	N/A				41.7	N/A				

2015/16 Actions & Milestones

Critical Improvement Actions <i>Insert key priority actions that will deliver 'What we are trying to achieve'</i>		Way Forward/Milestones <i>Insert key milestones i.e. sub-actions - where relevant) that will deliver your key priority actions</i>	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer	Officer/Scrutiny Working Group Comments
1	Ensure that interventions are proportionate and timely	Implement the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) using agreed multi agency threshold document	April 2015	Andrew Gwynn	
		Evaluate the effectiveness of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	January 2015	Andrew Gwynn	
		Using a sample of children referred to MASH that meet the threshold for Children's Services, review on an individual basis to establish whether earlier intervention could have prevented escalation	January 2016	Andrew Gwynn	

Key Risks that have been considered <i>Risks that will stop you achieving your Key Objectives</i>		Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
1		
2		
3		
4		

Council Key Priority:

Lead Officer: Andrew Gwynn

2 What we are trying to achieve:	<i>Ensure that our statutory assessment and care planning duties are delivered in accordance with legislative requirements and prescribed targets to consider the requirements of the Social Care, Health & Wellbeing (Wales) Act.</i>
Why we need to do it:	<i>Safeguarding is a collective responsibility of all public organisations and will continue to be a priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf</i>
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Priorities (s)	<i>People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe and feel safe</i>
What difference will delivery of this objective make to the service users/residents of RCT? (? internal services)	<i>Children at risk are protected from harm</i>

How will we measure our success *Performance Indicators, where applicable, or other measures e.g. survey feedback*

Measures <i>Insert key PIs or other information that will demonstrate improvement against 'What we were trying to achieve'</i>		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Q3 Data	Annual Target	Target Qtr 1	Target Qtr 2	Target Qtr 3	Annual Target Provisional
1	Me02 - No. of children on the Child Protection Register (Local)	471				528	565				500
3	Me01 - % of first placements of looked after children during the year that began with a care plan in place (Statutory)	98.9	3	12	90.0	97.4	99.5				99.5%*
7	Me05 - % of initial assessments that took place during the year where there is evidence that the child has been	91.8				94.0	93.0				95%

How will we measure our success <i>Performance Indicators, where applicable, or other measures e.g. survey feedback</i>											
Measures <i>Insert key PIs or other information that will demonstrate improvement against 'What we were trying to achieve'</i>		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Q3 Data	Annual Target	Target Qtr 1	Target Qtr 2	Target Qtr 3	Annual Target Provisional
	seen (Local)										
8	Me06 - % of initial assessments that took place during the year where there is evidence that the child has been seen by the social worker (Statutory)	68.7	4	18	78.9	74.5	70.0				75%
10	Me08 - % of initial assessments carried out within 7 working days (Statutory)	48.9	4	21	71.9	55.4	65.0				65%
11	Me09 – Average time taken to complete initial assessments that took longer than 7 working days to complete (Statutory)	23	4	19	19.0	24.8	20.0				20 days
12	% of core assessments carried out within 35 working days (Statutory)	80.4	3	15	81.2	87.8	86.0				88%
13	Average time taken to complete core assessments that took longer than 35 working days to complete (Statutory)	68	4	21	58	66	65				65 days

2015/16 Actions & Milestones

Critical Improvement Actions <i>Insert key priority actions that will deliver 'What we are trying to achieve'</i>	Way Forward/Milestones <i>Insert key milestones i.e. sub-actions - where relevant) that will deliver your key priority actions</i>	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer	Officer/Scrutiny Working Group Comments
Agree an operating model and Staffing structure that is effective in achieving the outcomes required to deliver the vision for Children's Services and meet the requirements of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act;	Consult Stakeholders regarding the proposed operating model and Staffing structure	June 2015	Ann Batley	
	Implement the approved revised model, per function, in stages, across Children's Services including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intake Service; • Intensive Intervention Service • 16+ Service 	August 2015 January 2016 March 2016	Ann Batley	
	Implement a new risk model across Children's Services statutory functions	March 2016	Ann Batley	
	Monitor compliance with business processes and systems that support the revised model	March 2016	Ann Batley	

Key Risks that have been considered <i>Risks that will stop you achieving your Key Objectives</i>	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
1	
2	
3	
4	

Council Key Priority:

Lead Officer: Andrew Gwynn

1. What we are trying to achieve:	<i>Ensure a shared understanding and vision to safely reduce the looked after children (LAC) population with Partners</i>
Why we need to do it:	<i>Safeguarding is a collective responsibility of all public organisations and will continue to be a priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf</i>
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Priorities (s)	<i>People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe and feel safe</i>
What difference will delivery of this objective make to the service users/residents of RCT? (? internal services)	<i>Children at risk are protected from harm by provision of support or, when necessary, intervention</i>

How will we measure our success *Performance Indicators, where applicable, or other measures e.g. survey feedback*

Measures <i>Insert key PIs or other information that will demonstrate improvement against 'What we were trying to achieve'</i>		2013/14	2013/14 - Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16			
		Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Data (latest please state)	Annual Target	Target Qtr 1	Target Qtr 2	Target Qtr 3	Annual Target Provisional
1	The number of looked after children (LAC) (new local)	NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	NEW	NEW				
2	Children who have ceased to be looked after during the quarter. (new local)	NEW	N/A	N/A	N/A	NEW	NEW				
3	Me02 - % of children looked after on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year (Statutory)	6.6	2	7	8.3	6.4	7.0				6%

2015/16 Actions & Milestones

Critical Improvement Actions <i>Insert key priority actions that will deliver 'What we are trying to achieve'</i>		Way Forward/Milestones <i>Insert key milestones i.e. sub-actions - where relevant) that will deliver your key priority actions</i>	Delivery Date	Responsible Officer	Officer/Scrutiny Working Group Comments
1	Safely reduce the looked after children (LAC) population year on year	Promote more rigorous challenge mechanisms within Children's Services statutory functions		Liz Pearce	
		Develop clear and robust systems to ensure that the Team Around the Family (TAF) step up and step down processes are available to provide for families in need of a targeted service		Ann Batley	
2	Ensure that prevention and early help services evolve and integrate to become a coordinated and coherent network of provision available to children and young people and their families	Map existing prevention and early help provision, how this links together and the overlaps and gaps in current services		Ann Batley	
		Identify how current services can be further developed, adapted, streamlined and integrated to form the basis of a coordinated network		Ann Batley	

Key Risks that have been considered <i>Risks that will stop you achieving your Key Objectives</i>		Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
1		
2		
3		
4		

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****MEDIUM TERM SERVICE PLANNING SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP**

Notes of the Scrutiny Working Group held on Thursday, 23rd April, 2015 at 2 p.m. at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale.

Present:

County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner – Chairman

County Borough Councillors

P.Griffiths, M.A.Norris and R.W.Smith

Officers in Attendance

Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services
 Mr.C. Lee – Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services
 Mr.P.Griffiths – Service Director, Performance & Improvement
 Ms.K.May – Head of Democratic Services

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of personal interest relating to the agenda.

2. CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S EVALUATION OF ITS PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERING ITS 2014/15 PRIORITY PLAN – "MAKING THE BEST USE OF OUR BUDGET"

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, the Service Director, Performance & Improvement provided Members with an understanding of the Council's statutory obligation to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions. As part of discharging this legal duty, local authorities are required to make a public assessment of their performance for each financial year, and in the case of this Council, the 2014/15 performance evaluation would provide the basis for this. The Working Group were therefore being asked to review and form a view the draft performance evaluation for 2014/15.

He also drew Members attention to the recommendations at 2.2 of the report and to the list of points for consideration as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

Making Best use of Our Budget – Delivering within our Means – Performance Evaluation

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services provided the Working Group with an overview of the draft evaluation of the 2014/15 performance of “Making the Best Use of our Budget” priority plan. He reported on the revenue budget gap for the 2014/15 financial year which was £14.4M rising to an estimated gap over the next four years of £63.4M and to meet this unprecedented position, an ongoing programme of work was necessary to identify service efficiency, change and cut proposals over the short, medium and long term. Members were mindful that it was highly probable that a significant proportion of future budget savings would come from workforce related areas and there was therefore a need for effective workforce planning to enable the size of the workforce to be reduced in a managed way and at the same time continue to retain highly skilled employees.

A Member commented that further clarity was needed within the evaluation to set out how the Council bridged the budget gap for 2014/15 and what the forecasted funding position is into the medium term; the Group Director, Corporate and Frontline Services confirmed that this detail would be added to the evaluation.

Members referred to the Council’s portfolio of land and property where it was recognised that during 2014/15 a number of properties became and would continue to be surplus to requirements, and as a result there would be opportunities for them to be provided to external groups to operate replacement services or sold. A member queried whether the Council was achieving ‘value for money’ through the sale of assets. The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services indicated that the Council is required to obtain ‘best consideration’ when disposing of assets and as such carefully considers the most appropriate approach for ‘sale’ on an individual case by case basis. The Group Director added that capital receipt projections are currently lower than anticipated, with a potential shortfall of £1.9M in resources to fund the capital programme over the next 3 years (as reported to Council in March 2015), with a key contributory factor to this position being external market conditions impacting on property values.

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services provided Members with a ‘backward look’ on the service change/cut proposals that were considered by Cabinet. Many of the changes were implemented and included:

- Phase 1 - the reduction of the number of Day Centres from 19 to 9; the number of branch libraries reduced to 12 along with the enhancement of the mobile library van service; Meals on Wheels – provision of chilled meals during weekends and a more targeted Youth Service;
- Phase 2 - Adult Social Care Charges; Paddling Pools and Arts and Culture Services.

In addition, within the Budget Strategy report that was presented to Council in March, 2015, a further programme of service efficiency and service change/cut proposals were set out and will be implemented during 2015/16.

At the meeting the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services informed the Working Group that during the next two financial years the Council is facing a forecasted budget gap of in excess of £40M and this will require further comprehensive service reviews.

Members queried what mechanism is in place to monitor the impact service changes have had / are having on service users. The Group Director indicated that following service changes being implemented and having sufficient time to ‘bed in’, evaluative work is / will be undertaken and reported back to Members.

Reference was made to the rise in sickness absence percentage rates and whilst Members noted that a revised sickness absence policy and maximising attendance strategy was currently being consulted upon with the Trade Unions and Senior Management (to be in place during the early part of 2015/16), they were of the view that more robust workforce planning arrangements should be put in place. In response the Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services highlighted the range of workforce planning activity that is currently applied within the Council, for example, apprenticeship and graduate programmes to 'grow our own employees' particularly where workforce information highlights areas that are difficult to recruit to now and / or in the future; internal training, shadowing and mentoring arrangements; links with colleges and schools to foster placement and 'gap year' opportunities; and periodic 'expression of interest' exercises to help reduce the workforce in a managed way. The Group Director acknowledged that the current performance evaluation does not provide this picture and agreed that this detail would be included.

The Group Director, Corporate & Frontline Services gave his observations in respect the annual review (2013/14) of the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) in achieving priorities in partnership with representatives on the Local Service Board (LSB). He further stated that as a result of the introduction of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Bill there would need to be a review of the LSB scrutiny arrangements.

The Group Director further highlighted that Medium Term Service Planning would remain the single most important programme of work within the Council with up dates being provided to Cabinet and Members during the year, and this built into all areas of the Council's work. Therefore, it was considered a priority action plan for 2015/16 setting out the Medium Term Service Planning framework that is already well embedded will add little value to the Council's existing arrangements. Therefore, it is proposed that the Medium Term Service Planning priority area, for the statutory purposes of the Local Government Measure, no longer applies.

Following consideration of the draft evaluation, it was **AGREED** that further work was needed in order for the evaluation to fully set out the extent and impact of the Council's work in this area. This included:

- Further clarity on the extent to which service change budget savings in 2014/15 contributed to funding the budget gap for that year;
- Further clarity on the medium term financial outlook i.e. the estimated savings that the Council will need to deliver and how it intends to achieve this;
- More detail that sets out the Council's workforce planning arrangements.

3. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman stated that this would be the last meeting of a Scrutiny Working Group that he would be chairing as he would be standing down as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the Council's Annual Meeting on the 20th May, 2015 and he wished to thank Officers and Members for the support that they had given to him over the years.

**ROGER K.TURNER
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting closed at 3.15 p.m.

Making the best use of our budget

Why was this a priority in 2014/15?

- The revenue budget gap for the 2014/15 financial year was £14.4M rising to an estimated gap over the next 4 years of £63.4M (as per the report to Council on 26th February 2014). To meet this unprecedented position, an on-going programme of work was necessary to identify service efficiency, change and cut proposals over the short, medium and long term;
- Due to approximately 60% of the Council's net revenue budget (i.e. total budget less income budgeted to be received) comprising of staff costs, it was considered highly probable that a significant proportion of future budget savings would come from workforce related areas. The need for effective workforce planning arrangements was considered fundamental to enable the size of the workforce to be reduced in a managed way and at the same time continue to retain highly skilled employees;
- With a significant portfolio of land and property, it was considered important to continue to ensure their efficient and effective use through energy efficiency schemes and developing the capability to generate green energy. In addition, with a range of likely service changes and cuts being proposed, and if agreed by Cabinet implemented during 2014/15, a number of properties would become surplus to requirements; as a result, opportunities would need to be provided to external groups to operate replacement services;
- Following the first full year of working toward the Single Integrated Plan outcomes (Safety, Health and Prosperity) throughout 2013/14, it was deemed necessary to 'look back' and consider what progress had been made to inform future planning;
- The Council, along with the Wales Audit Office, identified during 2013/14 that further work was needed in a number of areas to further strengthen governance arrangements. In particular this was in respect of establishing a strategic risk register and reporting and monitoring risks, and also improving the quality of Corporate Planning arrangements.

Evaluation of performance for 2014/15

Our evaluation tell us that overall the Council's medium term service planning arrangements were robust; however, the scale of the financial challenges ahead will mean the speed of change will need to be accelerated to enable balanced budgets to be set and delivered in the future. We have come to this conclusion because the arrangements:

- Have consistently supported the setting and delivery of balanced budgets over a number of years, and also the forecasting of medium term financial projections that calculated the level of budget savings the Council needed to find; however the on-going scale of year on year savings over the next 3 years will mean the pace of change will need to be further accelerated;
- Have helped the efficient management of resources in terms of the workforce and buildings generally well; however, further work is needed to improve staff absence levels;
- Have played a central role in the coordination and delivery of a long term plan for the County Borough, with our partners, that enabled Council services and outcomes to be prioritised;
- Have supported improvements to governance arrangements; however, opportunities remain for improvement to the quality and range of information provided to Councillors to further reinforce scrutiny arrangements.

Performance evaluation

We said we would continue to focus on stability and sustainability in terms of our finances through an effective financial management framework

In our 2014 Corporate Plan we set out a key performance indicator that we would use to gauge our progress:

What we said at the start of 2014/15	Did we meet the target we set?	How did we perform?
Maintain an adequate amount of money in reserve to deal with unexpected events. The level, and whether it is adequate, will be determined at the end of the financial year.	Yes	The Section 151 Officer in his 2015/16 Budget Strategy report to Council on 4 th March 2015 indicated that it remains his view that the Council should hold a minimum of £10M as General Fund Balances (i.e. its working balance). Based on the latest full year financial position for the 2014/15 financial year, forecasted as at December 2014, it is considered that the Council will still be able to hold the level of General Reserve balances in line with this requirement.

The Council has placed fundamental importance in robust financial planning and management to help it focus on financial stability and get the most from the resources available. Key elements of the arrangements include, along with questions we ask ourselves:

- Robust budget setting – did we set a budget that will enable the Council to live within its means in 2014/15 and allocate resources in line with its priorities?
- Robust in year budgetary control – did we spend within the budget allocated and also maintain general reserves at an adequate level?
- Robust medium term financial planning – did we set a medium term forecast of likely spending requirements against likely funding levels to inform current and future decision making?

An overview of how the Council performed during 2014/15 is set out below.

Budget Setting

The funding we received from the Welsh Government fell by 3.7% for 2014/15 and after taking account of a 4.5% increase in Council Tax, the Council was required to find £14.4 million in savings during the year. A proposed plan to deliver this level of saving and allocate appropriate resources to services was compiled, called a budget strategy, and was approved at a meeting of Full Council on 26th February 2014. The Budget Strategy would meet the level of savings through the delivery of efficiency savings (i.e. those that do not impact on front line services), the part year effect of 'Phase 1'¹ cuts to front line services and the use of one-off funding.

Further to Council approving the 2014/15 Budget Strategy, one 'Phase 1' service change decision was subject to legal challenge in respect of revised admission arrangements for Nursery provision. On the 23rd May 2014 a Court quashed the Council's decision to change admission arrangements on the basis that additional information should have been presented to Cabinet as part of the decision making process.

In addition, for another of the 'Phase 1' service change decisions agreed by Council i.e. reduction in the number of libraries, on the 10th June 2014 a decision was also taken to re-open Rhydyfelin Library and to undertake further dialogue with the community in that area. This process is currently on-going.

The combined impact of these changes was the removal of savings amounting to £1.95million and required the Council to find alternative savings from other areas to balance its budget. It was proposed this would be achieved through the delivery of 'Phase 2' service cuts and charges² that would be

¹ Phase 1 cuts – reported to and agreed by Cabinet on 8th January 2014

² Phase 2 cuts – reported to and agreed by Cabinet on 14th May 2014

implemented during the year, and increasing the amount of one-off funding; this was agreed by Council at its meeting on 25th June 2014 - link. A summary of how the Council delivered £14.4M of savings in 2014/15 is shown in Table1 below.

Table 1 – Summary of savings delivered by the Council in 2014/15

	£ Million	£ Million
Total savings required for 2014/15		14.4
Efficiency savings i.e. those that do not affect front line services	(4.0)	
Phase 1 service cuts i.e. Libraries, Day Centres, Youth Service and Meals on Wheels (excluding savings from changes to Nursery admission arrangements)	(3.2)	
Phase 2 service cuts and charges i.e. Adult Social Care Charging, Heritage Service, Arts and Culture Service, Supported Bus Routes and Paddling Pools	(0.8)	
One-off funding	(6.4)	
Total savings		(14.4)

More detailed information on the service cuts introduced to help bridge the 2014/15 budget gap, all of which were subject to public consultation, can be found at:

- Phase 1 – link to 8th January 2014 Cabinet report
- Phase 2 – link to 14th May 2014 Cabinet report

After taking account of the above savings, the Council's 2014/15 revenue budget totalled £466.779M and was allocated as set out in Table 2:

Table 2 – Summary breakdown of 2014/15 revenue budget

	2013/14 Revenue Budget	2014/15 revenue budget	2014/15 Increase / (Decrease)
	£M	£M	£M
Schools' budgets	140.896	140.371	(0.525)
Education and lifelong Learning Services	37.846	35.160	2.686
Community and Children's Services	124.178	125.450	1.272
Environmental Services ³	61.285	63.588	2.303
Corporate Services and the Chief Executive's Division	32.327	32.571	0.244
Authority Wide Budgets	72.671	68.463	(4.208)
TOTALS	469.203	465.603	(3.600)

In Year Budgetary Control

Against an amended budget of £466.779M, the Council spent £465.968M resulting in a year end underspend of £0.811M.

It is too early to establish if there have any unplanned or unintended consequences as a result of the service cuts introduced in 2014/15. Service areas are currently collecting information to evaluate impact to date and will report these to designated scrutiny committees during 2015/16 for review.

Medium Term Financial Planning

Throughout 2014/15, we updated our medium term financial forecasts on an on-going basis in line with changing service needs, changing inflationary estimates and likely changes in the level of funding we could expect to receive. This information was also subject to sensitivity analysis to test what the likely impact would be if one or a number of our assumptions were incorrect. The clear picture from all our forecasting was that the Council was facing a budget gap of over £30M in 2015/16, rising to approximately £60m up to 2017/18.

³ Environmental Services – in December 2014 the Environmental Services Group was disbanded as a self-standing service group and the individual service areas within it were re-allocated to one of the remaining three Service Groups. The Corporate Services Group was also renamed Corporate and Frontline Services, reflecting the areas transferred in from the former Environmental Services Group

This position was similar to the forecasts we calculated in the previous year and meant that our ability to make the majority of future savings through efficiency alone was not feasible. Instead we will need to focus our efforts on reviewing everything we do as a Council to become even more efficient and ask if every one of our current activities needs to be done, if there are better ways of delivering the same outcomes or if other organisations could work with us to deliver better or the same for less. It will also mean delivering services in different ways and where absolutely necessary reducing or stopping services and there would be a need to continue to make cuts or changes to front line services.

In October 2014 we received provisional information from the Welsh Government around the funding level we were likely to receive for the 2015/16 financial year; this enabled us to confirm the saving requirement as £30.4M for this period. To address this, a series of service changes and efficiencies were planned together with the requirement to use one-off funding of £4.396M to meet the full target – link to report. The programme of service changes also included revision to admission arrangements of nursery education amounting to £1.259M for 2015/16 following the Council again initiating public consultation on a proposal for this area in October 2014 (link to report).

When our performance in the areas we deem fundamental to securing and maintaining financial stability are considered together, it is our view that overall our financial management and planning arrangements remained fit for purpose in 2014/15. We have concluded this because:

- Budget setting – we set a balanced budget and allocated resources in line with our priorities; we recognise that £6.4Million was one-off funding with the requirement for permanent budget savings to be delivered in 2015/16 to meet this;
- In year budgetary control – we were able to deliver a balanced budget overall; we recognise that there are a small number of activities that significantly under / over spent and will require on-going attention in 2015/16;
- Medium term financial planning – the medium term forecasts we have prepared have proven to be accurate and have provided the impetus to drive a fundamental programme of change within the Council. We recognise that further work is needed to meet the unprecedented budget saving requirements over the net 3 years.

In addition, the Wales Audit Office issued its latest report to us in June 2014. Whilst primarily relating to the 2013/14 financial year, it is also relevant to 2014/15; one part of the report said that:

"The Council's strategic financial planning arrangements remain sound but improved communication and engagement with citizens is needed around the scale of the Council's improvement ambitions and the impact of service changes in its priority areas. The Council is likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in 2014-15." The full report can be viewed at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/WAO-Air2014

We have gained invaluable experience from the above programme of work over the past 12 to 18 months and will be using this to fine tune how we go about service changes into the future. This includes undertaking more public engagement events so that we can discuss the scale of the financial challenges

facing the Council, identify opportunities to work together more with local communities, and also help and support communities / groups as early as possible to operate services themselves.

Other important work in this area included:

- The development of our online services to help people access the information and services they need more quickly and deliver customer services more efficiently. For example, an online map for reporting streetlight problems was developed so residents can click on any streetlight in the County Borough and report dim or no light, lighting during the day or flickering lights;
- At One4aLL Centres, we promoted the use of appointments for more complex enquires including Transport 'permits' (Bus Pass and Blue Badges) and Council Tax/Housing Benefit enquiries, to increase convenience for our customers and make the best use of staff time. As at December 2014, 10% of advice visits were via booked appointments;
- With decreasing budgets, gaining and using external funding has become increasingly important and we have worked to secure external funding to support key Council projects;
- Training was provided to relevant staff to help them secure and manage the best value contracts for goods and services. 'Best practice' guides are also being produced although their introduction has been delayed slightly so they can link with a new IT system.

We said we would ensure that effective workforce planning arrangements were put in place and that services would receive the necessary support and guidance to secure best value from their staff resources

In our 2014 Corporate Plan we did not include performance indicators to gauge our performance. Instead we would concentrate on the delivery of key activities to support this area of work.

We continued to focus on our workforce planning arrangements to further improve the flexibility of the workforce to meet the changing needs of those who use Council services and in managing changes to services as a result of significant reductions in funding. During 2014/15 we have used our workforce planning arrangements to:

- Support a series of service changes, in consultation with staff and Trade Union representatives, that has enabled officers to be re-trained to move into other jobs where their old job was no longer required;

- Provide opportunities for officers to leave under the Council’s Voluntary Redundancy or Voluntary Early Retirement Schemes where in the best interest of the service and individual concerned;
- Recruited 17 new Council apprenticeships and appointed 4 new graduate officers as part of our strategy to ‘grow our own’ employees, particularly in difficult to appoint to jobs. Our performance in previous years’ has shown positive results: 94% of apprentices meeting the required standards at the end of their courses and 100% of graduates completing the programme and also finding employment within a year after the programme ended. We hope that our 2014 cohorts will also achieve similar positive outcomes;
- Provide targeted support to children leaving care through a ‘Step in the right direction’ programme. During 2014/15 this has enabled 3 young people access this programme that aims to provide a solid foundation for their future development.

We also continued our work to improve the skills of the workforce through ‘on the job’ training, external courses and mentoring arrangements, and also worked with schools and local colleges to create ‘temporary’ placements and ‘gap year’ placements. Whilst the impact from our placement work may not be apparent in the short term, it is intended that these opportunities will encourage young people nearing working age to strive to work for the Council in the future.

The health of our workforce and their attendance at work was also a high priority for us. We delivered a range of occupational health initiatives to help improve this by supporting staff to make healthy lifestyle choices such as through the cycle to work scheme, and providing targeted support to help individuals recover from illness and injury. 'Fast tracking' for external medical diagnosis was extended to additional conditions including mental health, enabling officers to access support and treatment more quickly. Injection therapy as a targeted early intervention treatment for Musculoskeletal Disorders was introduced in May 2014, with guided injection therapy under ultrasound. This has significantly reduced the number of physiotherapy appointments required per person and reduced recovery times.

Case study - injection therapy

"S" presented to the OHU with a four week history of insidious onset, right elbow pain with gradual deterioration. The pain was described as an underlying “ache” which became “sharp” with certain aggravating activities such as gripping, lifting and tasks involving fine motor skills. S reported increasing difficulty with normal working activities, to the point that she felt a period of sickness absence may well have been imminent. A provisional diagnosis of chronic lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow) was confirmed via an ultrasound scan performed by the Occupational Health Physiotherapist. Following screening to check for any contraindications a corticosteroid injection was administered under ultrasound guidance. S was given a patient information leaflet detailing appropriate after-care advice and treatment record detailing medication used, dosage and injection site. S was reassessed approximately 10 days later. At this time she was asymptomatic, exhibiting a full range of motion, strength and normal function, and was discharged from the OHU. As a result of the treatment S did not require any time off work due to the condition.

Prior to the introduction of injection therapy and ultrasound scanning, lateral epicondylitis was, on average, accounting for six physiotherapy appointments per episode of care. The introduction of injection therapy and ultrasound scanning has seen this average reduced to two appointments per episode of care.

An ear irrigation service (primarily for employees with manual based roles) was introduced in October 2014 to help accelerate treatment required following hearing tests. Flu vaccinations were offered to all staff and over 1,500 vaccinations were administered. Over 500 case reviews were held for employees on long-term sick to ensure that appropriate support was being provided to help them return to the workplace.

A revised sickness absence policy and maximising attendance strategy is currently being consulted on with Trade Unions and senior management, and is anticipated to be in place in the early part of 2015/16. It will include areas such as policy changes, early interventions and fast tracking treatments.

Despite these interventions, during April to December 2014 the percentage of days/shifts lost to sickness absence was 4.90%, compared to 4.18% for the same period in 2013/14 (and 4.34% for the whole year 2013/14). The number of days / shifts lost to sickness absence per employee between April and December 2014 (based on headcount) was 8.77, higher than the 8.03 in the same period in 2013/14 (the full year position for 2013/14 was 10.7). The main reasons for sickness absence were similar to previous years, with mental health issues accounting for 29% of all absences from April to December 2014 (an increase from 27% in 2013/14), and musculoskeletal problems the second highest reason for absence (27% compared to 25% in 2013/14). It is anticipated that the introduction of the new sickness absence policy, maximising attendance strategy and measures such as fast tracking external diagnosis will have a positive impact on future performance.

We produced a strategy to tackle Hate Crime in Rhondda Cynon Taf. A Hate Crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender. In 2014 there were 491 reported incidents of Hate Crime in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Reported offences involving the protected characteristics of race and disability have gradually increased since 2006, with reported levels for other types of Hate Crime appearing to remain similar year on year. Our local strategy focuses on supporting victims and reducing repeat victimisation; improving confidence in our communities to report hate crime; and taking action against the perpetrators of hate crime and reducing reoffending. It also contributes to a number of higher level regional and national plans⁴. We are already actively working to support the victims of hate crime, and this work will continue and form part of the 'Protecting People from Harm' plan for 2015/16.

Case Study - Supporting Victims of Hate Crime

A 17 year old victim with both physical and learning disabilities was being made fun of by local youths when playing in a park near her address. The incidents then escalated and the youths would attend her address shouting abuse and throwing items at the property. Both of the girl's parents also have learning disabilities.

Social workers, teachers, housing officers and the Hate Crime Officer jointly met with the family to discuss how they could support them. A number of

⁴ The Rhondda Cynon Taf Hate Crime Strategy links to the delivery of the Welsh Government Strategy - Tackling Hate Crime and Incidents: A Framework for Action, and the Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan 2014-16 as well as 'Delivering Change', the Single Integrated plan for Rhondda Cynon Taf

actions were agreed including providing counselling for the victim in school due the emotional impact of the incidents; installation of CCTV to identify the offenders; providing a referral to victim support and implementing an action plan to safeguard the victim; and, following the family's decision to move, to provide support for their new housing application.

While the family were waiting for appropriate housing to become available in the specific areas they wished to move to, local neighbourhood officers patrolled the area and weekly reassurance visits were carried out. A follow up visit confirmed that no further incidents had occurred and the parents expressed they were much happier and their daughter was receiving ongoing support. Since this visit, new housing has been found for the family.

The findings of Women Adding Value to the Economy (WAVE) project on Gender pay equality were evaluated and a number of themes were identified. These included barriers to women in casual or temporary jobs increasing their working hours and/or progressing to permanent employment, and a lack of women within senior management roles.

Recommendations included undertaking a skills audit of employees in part time roles to explore their aspirations and perceived barriers to progress; and investigating alternatives to multiple job holding, where employees make up their hours from a number of part time or casual roles. To start to address these areas, the Council has produced an action plan for delivery in 2015/16.

We said we would improve the efficiency of our buildings through reduction of carbon emissions and improved property management processes

40 energy saving projects were undertaken during 2013/14 and with all the schemes fully operational a review was undertaken to determine their impact. From a review of the technical information this equates to approximately the same amount of energy as is needed to run 190 typical domestic households for a year.

21 Invest to save energy projects were delivered during 2014/15, including installation of voltage optimisers, internal and external LED lighting schemes and the installation of solar panels on Council buildings to generate renewable energy. Each scheme was carefully considered to ensure that energy savings would be achieved, both lowering our CO2 emissions and providing cost savings.

Case Study – Troedyrhiw Home for the Elderly

In 2013/14, three energy saving initiatives were installed at Troedyrhiw Home for the Elderly. A new hydrogen fuel cell which contributed to heating the building as well generating electricity is the first of its kind in Wales. An LED lighting upgrade improved the interior environment of the home and a 20kW solar panel array further reduced the electricity consumption of this building. These changes should reduce running costs by over £10,000 per year.

We have continued with work to assess the viability of renewable energy projects on Council land. To date, the estimated pay back periods have all been in excess of 10 years for the locations examined and as a result feasibility work will be undertaken at other locations during 2015/16 to identify the possibility of more viable options.

Carbon dioxide emissions from all the Council's buildings decreased by 6.20% between 2012/13 and 2013/14. Due to the complexity of this data, up to date information on emissions for 2014/15 will be reported later in the year.

New legislation required the expansion of Display energy certificates (DECs) to eligible buildings over 250m². Display energy certificates show the actual energy use of a building and help the public see the energy efficiency of a building. An additional 67 DECs were required, 66 of these were completed during the year with the final one completed in April 2015.

Following phase 1 and 2 service changes, 29 properties were no longer required by the Council for their previous purpose and were carefully reviewed to determine future action. 24 of the properties were owned outright by the Council. Where possible, these have been offered to Community organisations to continue to provide services. As of February 2015, 4 properties had been leased to community organisations, namely Beddau, Penrhiwceiber and Ynyshir Libraries and Pontyclun day centre. Leases on a further 6 buildings have been offered to interested Community groups. Of the remaining buildings, 8 were sold and 1 is due to be auctioned in May 2015; and 5 are being put to alternative uses within the Council.

5 surplus properties were being leased by the Council. Of these 4 leases were surrendered, sold or a break clause invoked. The final building, which has a long lease in place, is being considered for alternative uses.

Case Study - Former Ynyshir Library

Following the closure of this facility, two local artists presented a Business Plan in support of their proposals to reopen the premises as a "Workers Gallery". This was supported by the Council and a formal lease has been granted to enable the project to open. The space was renovated by volunteers from the local community and the proprietors added new fittings and fixtures to provide a professional art exhibition space. The gallery offers a free art reference library, pick up point for recycling bags, display area for local news and events plus a space to show and see local art. One of the proprietors commented "With the support of local people and the local council we have been able to retain this unique building for the local community and visitors to the area." This is an example of new and innovative methods of delivering services in partnership with other organisations.

As additional transfers of community assets have taken place, we have recognised the need to provide more structured advice and support to organisations and community groups wishing to deliver Council services or take over Council assets. With this in mind, we have established a Voluntary sector liaison committee to assist in co-ordinating the approach, consisting of representatives from across the Council, as well as partners such as Interlink and Wales Co-operative Centre. A launch event for 'RCT Together' was held on 25th March 2015 to inform local community groups and inspire them to get involved. A £100,000 Enabling Fund for Community Led services has also been established, providing one off grants to support communities in establishing alternative community based delivery for traditionally Council led services.

We said we would strengthen local public service leadership to tackle service delivery challenges from a citizen perspective by working in partnership

Our Annual Review of the Single Integrated Plan was undertaken in June 2014, and confirmed that our current priorities of Safety, Health and Prosperity would be continued. This Annual Review for 2013/14 summarises all of the work done by partners towards achieving our priorities and can be viewed at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/singleplan

In line with the Annual review of the SIP we continued to review our partnership arrangements. Traditionally, partnership working has been directed through strategic partnership boards but, more and more, partners are working together directly, as a team, to achieve better outcomes for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf. We decided that now these good relationships and ways of working were established that partnership boards were no longer the most effective way of co-ordinating our work. Instead, frontline staff will continue to work together to deliver the priorities of 'Delivering Change'. '*Delivering Change*' will still be at the heart of our organisational plans and continue to be monitored by the LSB. In addition, there will be a focus on the key issue of 'Skills and Jobs', with geographically focussed task and finish groups targeting resources where they are needed most and working with local communities to improve outcomes for local people.

The Cwm Taf Data Observatory (<http://cwmtaf.infobasecymru.net>), a local information system for Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil, is now being used to report our progress against the population measures within 'Delivering Change', making data much more accessible and timely and less resource intensive to produce. This means we can get the information we need more easily and act on it more quickly.

The planned introduction of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill will require us to focus on long term and sustainable solutions in our decisions. The Bill will require all public organisations in Wales to work towards national wellbeing goals, taking a preventative approach to reduce the impact on communities in the future. It requires us to work closely with local people and communities in setting our own local goals. We are involved in a local research project which is looking at how prepared organisations are to implement the Bill and we are liaising with the Welsh Government on their plans for the future to make sure that the changes they propose will help us to deliver lasting and sustainable change for local people. Due to these changes we are postponing a review of the LSB scrutiny arrangements, as the role of scrutiny is likely to be influenced by the Future Generations Bill.

Partner organisations are working closely together on joint projects to improve the Health and wellbeing of people within Rhondda Cynon Taf. Working with partners to lower rates of smoking, we progressed the introduction of smoke free outdoor spaces. This included development of policies for smoke free grounds for the premises of partner organisations and developing a campaign for smoke free play areas. We have established Stop Smoking Groups across a number of offices and depots, as well as developing a brief intervention and referral pathway, to provide the best possible support for staff who want to quit smoking. We have also begun work with schools to develop 'Smoke Free Zones' around school gates.

As part of lowering the rates of obesity, we are promoting healthy environments which maximise the opportunities for physical activity by making it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle. Sustrans, Four Point Mapping and Local Transport projects are supporting us to identify and assess current routes.

Working towards lowering the rates of suicide in Rhondda Cynon Taf, partners organised a suicide and self harm prevention conference in July 2014, identifying key priorities such as data and information sharing, training and awareness training, communication and signposting and prevention and intervention.

A Welsh government European Social Fund project was undertaken to bring together Communities First, Flying Start, Families First and the Integrated Family Support Project across Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil to better meet the needs of local children, young people, families and communities. This brought together practitioners and encouraged them to work in partnership to deliver shared outcomes. As a result of this work, the projects supporting families are now more closely aligned so people are more able to access the support they need.

We have worked in collaboration with Merthyr Tydfil CBC to improve the IT Infrastructure in schools, to provide pupils and teachers access to the latest technology and information to enhance teaching and learning. 123 of our 132 schools now have increased broadband capacity and wireless technology, with the remainder due to be completed by March 2015.

We said we would improve the Council's Governance arrangements to support the delivery of efficient and effective services

The major risks which could prevent the Council delivering its priorities, including reduction in Welsh Government funding, delivery of the 21st Century schools project and changing demographics placing increased challenges on social services, were set out in a Strategic Risk Register and reported to the Audit Committee on 30th October 2014. These risks were also included within the Council's priority plans for the first time, so that risks and performance could be considered together on a quarterly basis. Alongside this work, targeted training was carried out to improve managers' understanding of risk management and a manager's guide produced, to ensure risks are fully taken into account when planning and delivering services.

The Council's key documents demonstrating performance and progress (the 'Corporate Plan' and 'Annual Delivery Report') were made more user friendly in 2014/15. Documents were made shorter, simpler language was used to allow the public to engage more with the information and links were provided to more detailed information. In addition, there was more involvement of Councillors in scrutinising the information included.

Lessons learned from 2014/15 are informing the approach for 2015/16 through further simplifying our planning by combining a review of performance in the last year and our plans for the future into a single document. This will make information on our performance available to people much more quickly and we hope will be more informative and easier to understand.

We continue to improve information management practices. To make sure that personal information is kept safe but at the same time staff can access information they need to do their jobs, we have developed a number of agreements which set out how and when we will share certain information with other organisations (Information sharing protocol or ISP). These agreements are now in place with RCT Homes and Cwm Taf Youth Offending Team.

What does this mean for 2015/16?

Medium Term Service Planning will remain the single most important programme of work within the Council with up dates being provided to Cabinet and Members during the year, and this built into all areas of the Council's work. Based on this, it is considered a priority action plan for 2015/16 setting out the Medium Term Service Planning framework that is already well embedded will add little value to the Council's existing arrangements. Therefore, it is proposed that the Medium Term Service Planning priority area, for the statutory purposes of the Local Government Measure, no longer applies.

**Wales Programme for Improvement
Making best use of our budget**

What we aim to achieve:	
The Council will maintain its long term health via strong and accountable financial and performance leadership underpinned by robust in-year and longer term management reporting. In addition, we will continue to manage our finances very prudently and innovatively, throughout a period of sustained 'real term cuts' in revenue and capital funding, to support, within our means, the delivery of "Delivering Change." To achieve this, we need to continue to focus upon maximising the revenue we generate, become more efficient and effective in how we deliver services as well as provide services with partners, enhance the financial and other management skills of service managers, increase the level of external funding to support quality service delivery and further develop workforce planning and asset management arrangements.	
Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?	
Risk Description:	Outcome Reference:
If the financial settlements from the Welsh Government continue to mean significant reductions in funding year on year then the rate at which the Council will need to implement changes to bridge the budget gap over the medium term will need to be accelerated.	1/2/3/4
If the Council does not manage its information assets in accordance with requirements set down within legislation then it may be faced with financial penalties and possible sanctions that hinder service delivery.	5
How will we know if we are making a difference:	
Awaiting Update	

Chris Lee Group Director - Corporate and Frontline Services - March 2015

Draft

Key Priority: Making best use of our budget
Lead Officer: Chris Lee

Outcome 1: A continued focus on stability and sustainability in terms of our finances through an effective financial management framework

Theme	Title	Measures										Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2012/13 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Prosperity	Me01 - Budgetary control performance - Level of year end General Fund balances - (Local)	11.079M	11.204M (12/13 data)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.282M (13/14 data)				Audited data (amended from Q1 pre-audited figure). Data is reported 1 year in arrears.
	Me02 - Wales Audit Office judgement of the Council's financial management arrangements (as set out in public reports issued by the Auditor General for Wales) - (Local)											WAO Annual Improvement Report Issued June 2014. An extract in relation to financial management stated "The Council's strategic financial planning arrangements remain sound but improved communication and engagement with citizens is needed around the scale of the Council's improvement ambitions and the impact of service changes in its priority areas. The Council is likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2014-15."

Draft

Key Priority: Making best use of our budget
Lead Officer: Chris Lee

Outcome 3: Effectively manage our assets by reducing energy consumption and building our capacity to generate green energy

Theme	Title	Measures										Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2012/13 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Prosperity	Me01 - % reduction in the amount of energy consumed within the Council's portfolio	New	New	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.00	6.20	●			Awaiting Comment. Annual data. Data is reported 1 year in arrears
	Me02 - % of relevant Council sites with up to date Display Energy Certificates	New	96	N/A	N/A	N/A	100	86	●	↓		Awaiting Comment

Draft

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL REGENERATION SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP

Notes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group held at the Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Monday, 11th May 2015.

Present:

County Borough Councillor M Norris - in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

G Stacey
(Mrs) J S Ward
P Wasley

Officers in Attendance:

Ms J Cook – Director of Regeneration & Planning
Mr N Elliott – Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing
Mr P Griffiths – Service Director, Performance and Improvement
Ms H Morgan – Public Services Partnership Manager
Ms A Edwards – Scrutiny Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors (Mrs) J Cass, (Mrs) M Tegg, D Weeks and R Yeo.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of personal interest relating to the agenda.

3. CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S EVALUATION OF ITS PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERING ITS 2014/15 PRIORITY PLANS AND THE CHALLENGE TO THE DRAFT PRIORITY PLANS FOR 2015/16

The Service Director Performance and Improvement provided the Working Group with an understanding of the Council's statutory obligation to secure continuous improvement and he explained that Members were being asked to challenge both the performance evaluation of the 2014/15 action plan 'Improving our communities' and the content of the draft plan for 2015/16.

The Service Director, Performance and Improvement drew Members' attention to the recommendations at 2.2 of the report and the list of possible points for consideration set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

4. CHALLENGE OF THE DRAFT EVALUATION OF THE 2014/2015 PRIORITY PLAN - 'Improving our communities'

The Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing provided the Working Group with an overview of the draft assessment in relation to the social regeneration aspects. He reported on the positive work undertaken in relation to supporting people into employment especially the work being undertaken in the Communities First Cluster areas. He also reported on the success of the apprenticeship programme. He pointed out that one area which they had not been so successful related to providing more job opportunities for those with learning difficulties and the completion of the planned review and reconfiguration of the learning disability, employment and training service which will go forward into 2015/16 as part of a wider review in readiness for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. The Service Director reported on the work undertaken with CAB to ensure people have access to good financial and debt management advice. He explained that the preparation of the planned Financial Exclusion strategy had been delayed so that it could be incorporated into the work to develop a wider tackling poverty strategy and action plan during 2015/16. In conclusion he reported on the services to reduce homelessness and the positive performance of the service in relation to performance measures.

Members commented on the positive feedback they had received in respect of the Job Fair events and asked whether they would be continuing.

The Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing reported that it was intended to continue running these events which had been very successful in involving employers. However, he explained that it was likely that the events would be held in different locations based on targeted work with Jobcentre Plus and also to ensure as much as possible a spread across the County Borough.

A Member referred to certain apprenticeship schemes in the past which would include a percentage of disabled and spoke of the positive benefits this had.

In response the Director of Regeneration and Planning explained that one of the actions for 2014/15 had been to develop supplementary planning guidance for securing training, apprenticeships etc from private development. She noted that this was a good example of how social and physical regeneration work together. She explained that a draft supplementary planning guidance had gone out to consultation and would be put to Cabinet in the forthcoming months. She added that the case study included in respect of the Lido highlighted the positive impact which apprenticeship schemes could have.

The Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing also reported on the work with Elite Supported Employment Agency which had proved successful finding placements for those with learning disabilities given the financial climate.

The Chairman suggested that perhaps the assessment should include more success stories and the Service Director explained that the document could be reviewed and some of the wider positive outcomes included.

Reference was made to the merger of the Cynon Valley CAB and the Rhondda Taf CAB to form one Rhondda Cynon Taf organisation but which provided local advice services across the County Borough.

The Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing explained that the Council had helped to maintain CAB's funding levels in recent years linked to a service level agreement and he assured Members that the provision of services had not changed as a result of the merger. He would however provide a breakdown of activity across Rhondda Cynon Taf for Members information.

Reference was made to the statistics at the front of the document and officers were asked whether any inroads had been made in terms of reducing the worklessness numbers.

The Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing reported that the numbers claiming Jobseekers Allowance had decreased in line with the national picture. However, there had been no reduction in the numbers claiming Employment Support Allowance which remained a large number. He explained that those claiming ESA were categorised into those who were not fit to work and those who the DWP have deemed can be supported back to work and the focus now had to be on this large group of people who will need this support.

The Working Group asked whether it was known how many of those claiming JSA had been sanctioned and whether these numbers were rising.

The Service Director reported that he did not have this information but would ask the Jobcentre Plus Relationship Manager if it could be made available.

The Director of Regeneration and Planning provided an overview of the work undertaken in relation physical regeneration and in particular the development of the key town centres which included funding secured under the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places scheme to enhance the Pontypridd area and which has allowed the Council to purchase the lease of the Taff Vale site from the receivers. She reported that the development of a Business Improvement District for Pontypridd and the positive 'buy-in' from the traders was pleasing and this was reflected in the significant increase in the footfall for the town. Whilst the footfall figures for the other town centres were more mixed they reflected the national picture.

The Director of Regeneration and Planning reported on the regional partnership work being carried out through SEWDER (South East Wales Directors of Environmental and Regeneration) and the importance of the regional context for regeneration and economic development.

In terms of European funding she spoke of the challenges this brought, which had not been helped by the delay in the European Commission agreeing its budget and which had created a knock on effect in relation to the release of grant funding.

The Working Group referred to the situation with regard to Jobs Growth Wales and it was explained that the transition from Jobs Growth Wales to the new scheme should have been seamless. However, the funding delay had compromised this. The current position is that if someone is already on the JGW scheme they can complete but no-one is able to join the scheme which has now ceased, they will have to wait and join the new programme.

Members referred to the challenges facing the smaller town centres in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Director of Regeneration and Planning explained that the aim was to try and prioritise resources to those projects that will bring benefits throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf such as the Lido project which she explained is being marketed as a regional attraction. She also confirmed that the Lido project is on target to complete during the summer 2015.

Following consideration of the draft evaluation it was **AGREED** that:

- Overall the performance evaluation was fair and balanced; however, more emphasis should be included on the positive achievements during the year, for example, the support provided to businesses;
- Further narrative needed that provides clearer links between the 2014/15 evaluation and the 2015/16 priority plan.

5. **CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2015/16 PRIORITY PLAN - 'Improving our communities'**

The Working Group considered each of the outcomes contained within the draft priority plan for 2015/16 and the supporting actions and measures and discussed the balance between providing enough detail to enable effective scrutiny but without losing focus. It was suggested that some adjustments be made to enable effective monitoring of the delivery of key actions but that some of the underlying actions not necessarily included.

The Working Group was also made aware of the challenges facing the Council in 2015/16 in relation to the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit and the decision by Welsh Government to cut Communities First funding. The Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing explained that there were a number of pockets of deprivation which lie outside of the Communities First areas which also needed to be supported.

With regard to Outcome 3 and the aim to reduce homelessness, the Service Director, Direct Services, Business and Housing explained that there is an element of risk in delivering this outcome due to cuts to the Supporting People programme. He also pointed to the uncertainty of the operational impact of the new homelessness legislation.

In response to a query the Director of Regeneration and Planning outlined the scope of a Local Development Order for the Treforest Industrial Estate explaining that it would act rather like a blanket planning application which would provide permission for certain types of development in that area.

In conclusion, the Working Group **AGREED** that there was opportunity for the content of the plan to be streamlined to enable scrutiny to be more focussed on the most important areas during 2015/16.

M Norris
Chairman

The meeting closed at 5.53 pm.

Our improvement priority – Improving our Communities

Bringing together support for local people and places, this theme aims to support our communities by giving people opportunities to improve their employability and financial capability whilst also focussing on places - providing sustainable and vibrant communities and creating the right environment for businesses to grow and thrive.

Why was this a priority in 2014/15?

Rhondda Cynon Taf has some of the most deprived communities in Wales. In some parts of the County Borough, unemployment is high with nearly 24% of the households (17,800) being 'workless', which means the adults who live there do not work. In these areas, almost 23% of these 'workless households' have dependent children (9,200 workless households)¹.

- Even in areas where people are working, income is low in some areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Over a quarter of children in the County Borough live in a family on low income. At the moment, 'low income' means households earning less than £11,530 a year.
- We also have 2.7% of those residents aged 16-64 claiming out of work benefits, above the Welsh average (2.5%) and higher than the UK average (2.0%). 5.3% of our 18-24 year olds are claiming Job Seekers' Allowance and we are currently at 7.4% unemployment for all working age adults (compared to 6.8% for Wales)².
- But, Rhondda Cynon Taf is also a County Borough of opportunity, with lots of new businesses starting up each year and a growing housing market in some areas. We cannot influence the national and global challenges that we face but we can do our best to make the most of these opportunities by supporting people to gain skills and employment, encouraging businesses locally, improving our Town Centres and bidding for European funding to make more positive changes to the County Borough; all of which help to create more jobs and homes.
- When asked in our budget consultation exercise in early 2014, 73% of responses to our survey felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

Evaluation of performance for 2014/15

In 2014/15 Plan, we said we would focus on:

- **Supporting people to gain employment and take up training**
- **Helping people to better understand their finances**

¹ Data provided by StatsWales and relates to 31st December 2013

² Data provided by Nomis – Official Labour Market Statistics for March 2015

- **Reducing homelessness**
- **Continuing to develop Aberdare and Pontypridd town centres**
- **Supporting businesses to create jobs**

Having considered all the information available to us, our progress in the six Outcomes in this Priority Plan has been generally positive but we know there will always be more work to do.

Progress in the seven key measures we identified last year to evidence success is listed below.

- 620 people have gained employment following support from our work/enterprise clubs – above our target of 288
- 2,090 accredited qualifications have been gained by people attending our community learning programmes – above our target of 1,465
- 71% of people have a better understanding of their finances – above our target of 49%
- 95% of potentially homeless families were prevented from becoming homeless for at least six months – above our target of 88%
- Homeless families with children spent an average number of 4.67 days in bed and breakfast accommodation - above our target of 15.00 days
- 36 grants awarded to date to support property enhancements in Pontypridd and Aberdare - achieving our target of 36 *(Q4 data)*
- 116 jobs have been created in local business through RCT and Welsh Government grants, and 77 jobs have been created by companies chosen to deliver major contracts on behalf of the Council - above our targets of 40 and 30 respectively. *(Q4 data)*

Latest available data used Qtr 4 2014/15 unless stated otherwise

Progress against each individual Outcome is outlined in the detailed evaluation below.

We have provided opportunities for working age adults to enter employment, education and training

Statistically, 12.7% of working age adults in Rhondda Cynon Taf have no qualifications (December 2014) as compared to 10.0% in Wales. The number of people with no qualifications in Rhondda Cynon Taf reduced by 3.9% since 2010 compared to a 3.3% reduction for the same period in Wales as a whole. Our aim this year has been to support people to gain employment by taking up training and skills opportunities, as people with no skills or qualifications are among the most disadvantaged. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that 9 out of the 52 wards in the county with the lowest qualifications are also in the top ten wards for workless households.

The Communities First programme in Rhondda Cynon Taf supports the Welsh Government 'Tackling Poverty Programme', encouraging local action and supporting projects and initiatives which help to narrow the economic, health and the education and skills gaps between our most

deprived and more affluent communities. Our Delivery Teams work with residents, community organisations, businesses and other key agencies to address the long-term causes and effects of poverty in our most deprived areas. The support provided is wide and varied depending on individual circumstances, an example of which can be seen in the case study below.

Case Study

D in his late 30s had a successful job on a comfortable wage and had always worked to provide for his family (wife and two children). When his wife developed severe Post Natal Depression, D was forced to leave his job to look after his family. As well as struggling financially his wife's behaviour towards him changed and D suffered daily abuse and domestic violence to the point where he was forced to move out of his home.

D found a 3 bedroom house to rent from a Private Landlord enabling his children to stay on weekends. He had no means of transport, and was not eligible for social housing. His own health deteriorated and had to have an operation. His escalating problems led to insomnia and other mental health problems and he was prescribed antidepressants. The effects of the medication made him sleep all day and night and he was unable to deal with the mounting debt and paperwork. He was able to claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) but had to wait 3-weeks for this new benefit to start. During this period he visited his local Job Centre to ask for help and advice. Physical communication problems caused issues here and D became frustrated resulting in being escorted from the Job Centre by Security Guards. D had reached his lowest point and didn't know where to turn to seek advice.

D joined our community-based work club in Ynysybwl. Our prosperity staff could see he was in a bad place and gave him the time and space to tell his story. He told us that with the introduction of the 'bedroom tax' he had fallen into arrears with his Landlord and had been served with an eviction notice. He decided that he had to find a job - despite the recommendation of his doctor who advised him he was not quite ready to return to work. He felt comfortable with the Communities First Team and became a regular client. As time went on his financial situation and mental health depreciated further. D was in contact so regularly that when he dropped off the radar one of our staff felt compelled to go to his house and even phoned the police such was the concern.

D experienced many low points. On one occasion when he was between benefits he had no money or food and told us he had just sold some of his personal belongings to buy essential items which didn't last him very long. Communities First staff provided him with a food bank voucher so that he could eat. He felt humiliated at having to receive 'charity' but was also thankful to Communities First and the Food Bank that he wouldn't go hungry for a while. He continued to receive support and moved to a smaller property which has one bedroom. The flat was completely basic and bare. He had no fridge and he kept milk outside on his doorstep. He was also unable to accommodate his children's beds and toys and tried to cramp them all into one room so that they can still come and spend time with him. Over a period of several months D received support and started to rebuild his life, attending our Work Club and Adult Education & Mental Health Support Group. We helped him create a CV worked on his employability skills and signposted him to the services and resources he needed. He slowly rebuilt his confidence as

he could see light at the end of a very long and dark tunnel.

D is now back in employment, although on a salary nearly half of what he was on previously, in a job that he does not enjoy but which enables him to be socially active and gives him a sense of self-worth. D can now afford to run a car and sees his children as often as his shift work allows. D still keeps in touch and he knows we are always there for him.

“C and K at Communities First have been amazing. I don’t know where I would be without their help. They helped me in my darkest days when no one else would or could. They helped me find a home, furniture, a job, and best of all I can see my kids again which is the most important to me”.

This year we have continued to support people within our communities to learn new skills to improve their employment prospects, which will in turn, lead to reduced unemployment and dependency on benefits. The provision of community based skills development opportunities within our Communities First cluster teams across Rhondda Cynon Taf, has supported individuals through local Work/Enterprise Clubs to attain 2,090 accredited qualifications, and 620 to secure employment. These weekly programmed sessions have been developed with partners and include a range of activities from practical courses including ‘Computers for beginners’, ‘Internet and Email for Beginners’, ‘Working with primary school children – Level 2’, ‘Sign language’, ‘Counselling skills for beginners – Level 1’, ‘Help with CV writing’ and ‘Confidence building’, to introductory courses on specific career paths, e.g. a two week in depth course on working in the ‘hospitality’ sector covering: First Aid, Food hygiene, Health and Safety, Manual Handling and Customer care also information on basic book-keeping, cellar maintenance, stock replenishment and an insight into licensing.

Case Study

A and her plasterer husband have 3 young children her youngest child was just about to start school. She was sign-posted by ‘Want2work’ to attend the Upper Cynon Communities First Hospitality course in 2014, hoping that the course would enable her to add to her CV and apply for a part time role working behind a bar within the Cynon area as she was unable to drive.

What she did not foresee at that time was that within a few short months she would be appointed into the role of full-time Bar Manager at the local RFC undertaking the full range of managerial responsibilities that comes with such a role

It had been a long time since A had attended school and by her own admission she was initially very shy, but at the end of her training she pushed herself to work on a voluntary basis to gain the necessary practical experience to cement her learning and she soon became liked and valued by all the customers. This eventually led to her being employed on a part time basis and one thing led to another and not only is she

now fully responsible for all aspects of bar maintenance, stock purchasing and control, cash handling, banking etc. she currently has 5 members of staff that she trains and manages on a full time basis.

A says:

"I am so grateful for the opportunity provided by Communities First.....for without it I would neither have had the confidence or the ability to be able to apply for such an important and life changing position".

Not only has A been successful in taking this important step into employment, she has now gained so much more in confidence and is just about to embark on driving lessons which is something that she has always wanted to do to fully support her young family.

This year, to encourage employment in Rhondda Cynon Taf, a number of 'Job Fayre' events have been held to provide individuals with the opportunity to speak directly to potential employers, and gain helpful advice and support on how to progress their chosen career path. These events held in Gilfach Goch (May 2014), Porth (Sept 2014) and Aberaman (Sept 2014), were attended by over 1,000 people, and were supported by various businesses/employers including: Argos, Armed Forces, EE, Remploy, Rocialle and Western Power to name a few. From these events:

- 42 people were offered employment (40) or apprenticeships (2)
- 30 offered training opportunities
- 6 offered volunteering opportunities

Volunteering opportunities in our Communities First areas have also provided opportunities for individuals to gain experience, try something new, develop skills, improve career prospects, build confidence and meet new people. Volunteers have become invaluable as described here by a member of the Communities First Staff:

'Volunteers have become the backbone of the 'IT Club' provision offered by the Communities First Upper Cynon Cluster. Four regular volunteers have evolved from being learners to peer mentors and this transition has enabled them to willingly invest their time supporting other community members to gain important skills to empower them to be able to undertake job seeking and the ability to apply for previously unattainable employment opportunities.

This is supported by the following feedback received by Communities First volunteers themselves:

“Helped build my confidence, boosted my social life by meeting new people. Gained qualifications and new skills. It has given meaning and purpose to my life”. - Volunteer Perthcelyn.

“Given me confidence, experience to help me find work. Gets me involved in the community. Have made new friends. Makes me happy. Given me new skills and qualifications”. - Volunteer Lower Cynon Communities First.

Case Study

M has volunteered for Lower Cynon Valley Cluster for approximately 4 years. When he joined ‘Positive Steps’³, he was suffering from depression and his confidence and self esteem was at an all time low. He has since joined the committee and volunteers on a regular basis raising funds for the group. He also runs the Food Co-Operative. His confidence has grown to the point where he now helps others with their confidence and encourages them to come to the group and take part in Communities First activities.

‘I like volunteering because I believe you get out of life what you put in. Since volunteering my confidence, self esteem and personality has improved. I am a more outgoing person and am able to deal with problems better than ever before and like helping others to cope’.

M, Volunteer for Positive Steps Peer Support Group & Darran Las Food Co-op

The Council continues to support young people, including those disadvantaged and with disabilities, to increase their employability through a number of different programmes. 58 young people have been supported this year (Qtr 3) all of whom have been provided with the support they need to achieve their identified goals:

- **The Apprenticeship Scheme** - 17 new apprentices were appointed in September 2014. As well as providing valuable paid employment opportunities, the scheme provides investment in the individuals through the provision of support, expertise, training and the opportunity to gain qualifications, skills and experience in a trade that will be with them for life. From the apprentices appointed in the first cohort (2012/13), 91% have secured employment or gone onto further education. Jobsearch workshops covering CV updates, interview techniques and links to various employment recruitment organisations and employers have also been made available to all apprentices (especially to those with no destination outcome) to ensure that they are job ready.

Feedback received from apprentices supports the importance of this scheme:

³ A Peer Support Group for people with mild to moderate depression

'Since starting my apprenticeship it has opened a whole array of opportunities and first-time experiences for myself. I chose an apprentice as a way to learn new skills along with improving on the very little skills I possessed and also earning a wage the same time. Since then I have been given the most up-to-date technical training both in house and external; I have gained a Foundation Degree from the University of Glamorgan, I have worked along numerous experienced colleagues and members of staff throughout the authority and most important it has aided me in gaining a full time job within Rhondda Cynon Taf Council'.

'Apprenticeship Schemes are a great way to help people's job prospects and achieve their goals. This is why I chose to take the apprenticeship opportunity, to help develop my own skills and give me an insight to the working environment.... with more experience and knowledge about the design industry. I am continuing to develop key strengths which will help me in my future career.'

- **7** young apprentices have also been recruited into Vision Products⁴, Pontyclun this year, including **1** apprentice at Vision Products Newport. These apprentices comprised of young school leavers, college leavers and NEETs. Some of these apprentices had to leave the scheme prior to the end of the twelve months due to personal, medical reasons or the scheme was not for them. However, we continued to fill the vacancies as they become available. Feedback received:

'I have become much more confident and have learnt so much since being at Vision Products that it will help me get a job when I leave but I would love to stay if I could'.

Due to the success of the apprentice programme, we have extended our work opportunities and in addition, have **2** Job Growth Wales posts, **2** Corporate apprenticeships and been able to offer volunteering opportunities for young people from the traineeship programme. We have also worked with 2 local schools to provide **2** pupils with work experience placements and are also working with 'Elite'⁵ to provide 13-week paid work experience programmes at Vision Products. Initial feedback is positive:

'It is great that I have been given the opportunity to have some real work experience'.

- The Council's 'Care2Work' programme provides young people living and leaving care with encouragement and training opportunities to ensure they are work ready and able to provide for themselves. This year, **11** individuals from the Care2Work programme attended a

⁴ Vision Products provides employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and operates closely with employers to ensure that the needs of their employees are met through advice support and learning opportunities.

⁵ ELITE Supported Employment Agency Ltd was set up in Mid Glamorgan during 1994 to help adults with learning disabilities access and maintain paid employment in their area.

6-week Summer Employability Programme undertaking development activities, such as team building, interview preparation and presentations from employers and training providers. Positive outcomes from the attendance of this Programme include:

- 3 young people applied and attended interview for the RCT Traineeship Programme 'Step in the Right Direction'. 1 young person successfully secured a place on the Programme
 - 1 young person commenced full time training with A4E⁶
 - 2 young people enrolled on full time courses at Nantgarw College
 - 2 young people were referred to RCT Skills for level 1 Construction Training including CSCS⁷ Card Training
- The 'Step in the Right Direction' programme supports children leaving care and is aimed at providing a solid foundation for their future development. Between May and October 2014, 27 individual applications to join the programme have been received, resulting in 22 young people being interviewed. 7 new trainees have now been recruited and following a successful induction programme the new trainees moved into work placements of their choice within the Council. All trainees agree an individual learning plan at the start of the programme, and regular meetings are held to review progress and address any issues that may arise. Currently 6 out of the 7 recruits remain on the programme and are successfully working within their placements.
 - 9 people have taken up the 'Jobs Growth Wales'⁸ placements with the Council, to gain valuable work experience, examples include Data Entry Assistant; Support Worker for Looked After Children; Stores Operative and a Grant Support Assistant. Recent information from Welsh Government indicates that this scheme is currently being reviewed and may not progress in its current format.

Case Study

K joined Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC in June 2014 on a 6 month Jobs Growth Wales placement as a General Assistant. During his placement he gained many new skills and attended a number of training courses. After 3 months, he was successful in gaining a place on our

⁶ A4e – Action for Employment, work in partnership with governments, public sector organisations, private sector companies, voluntary and community groups to deliver a range of front line public services in the UK and overseas, including employment and welfare, skills and training, and money and legal advice.

⁷ Construction Skills Certification Scheme cards provide evidence that individuals working on construction sites have the required training and qualifications for the type of work they carry out.

⁸ The Jobs Growth Wales programme was introduced by Welsh Government to respond to the levels of youth unemployment being faced as a result of continued difficult economic conditions across the whole of the UK. Up to 10th August 2014 the number of job opportunities created by Jobs Growth Wales in Rhondda Cynon Taf was 1,389 and the number of job opportunities filled was 1,122. This is second only to Cardiff in respect of both jobs created and filled.

Apprenticeship Scheme for 2 years which he started in September 2014. He is now working as an Apprentice Salesperson in Vision Products which he thoroughly enjoys.

We did not manage to complete our planned review and reconfiguration of our learning disability employment and training service as intended, but this work will be completed as part of a wider review and transformation of our services in readiness for the implementation of the Act. Our work to date has identified that we currently provide range of work related opportunities mainly via our in-house day service function, however the number of people known to us gaining paid employment remain relatively low. Our aim for the future is to transform our existing services to create a greater range of employment opportunities; including paid work, work preparation training and meaningful work related development opportunities for people with learning disabilities to facilitate social inclusion and economic prosperity.

We said we would provide advice and information so that people better understand the financial choices that are available to them, and are able to improve their financial capability at earlier stages in their lives

We said we would complete a strategic review of information and advice services across the County Borough, but this has not progressed as planned because it is a bigger piece of work than originally thought. We are continuing to work on this and intend to incorporate within a wider piece of work linked to the implementation of the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act from 1st April 2016.

Notwithstanding this we have continue to provide individuals with financial advice and support through on-going funding of RCT Citizen's Advice Bureau. The funding of this service provides information and advice on how to manage debt, access support providers and more practically help in completing documentation to make claims for those in financial hardship. During the year, the RCT Citizen's Advice Bureau has supported 2,524 individuals with debt, money and advice services and secured £910.4k in additional income for some of our poorest households.

Case Study

Client circumstances

- *Lived alone in a 1 bedroom private property and receives housing allowance and council tax reduction.*
- *Evicted from her property as she could not continue with mortgage payments because of ill-health.*
- *Required to move a considerable distance from family which increased her worry.*

- *Not entitled to contractual sick pay; her income dropped immediately when she was not fit to work.*
- *In receipt of income-based employment and support allowance at £72.40 per week for many months without assessment.*
- *Deductions made from her benefit to reduce council tax arrears, unsecured loans, benefit overpayment (tax credits) and a telephone bill.*
- *Distressed and had anxiety; she could not afford to buy specialist food that was required due to suffering with celiac disease.*
- *Expects mortgage shortfall balance.*
- *requested a personal independence payment (PIP) application form around 6 months before visiting bureau but it was never received.*

Client contacted the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) for advice regarding debt.

CAB identified benefit concerns and made contact with Jobcentre. Without an assessment client was granted support and received a backdated payment. Her PIP form was received after we acted on her behalf; it has been submitted and client waits for response.

Outcome:

- *Client's income has increased so she is able to purchase specialist food improving her physical health and to pay for travel to meet family which has improved mental health.*

Mortgage shortfall balance will determine the appropriate formal method of insolvency; her increased income helps to meet the cost of debt relief order (DRO) or bankruptcy.

In addition, we continued to fund Age Concern Morgannwg to provide dedicated welfare benefits advice services to older people across the County Borough. Through this partnership we have been able to support over x residents gain access to good quality advice about their personal finances and entitlement to benefits, enabling some of our most vulnerable residents gain over £X million in extra entitlements.

We have also reviewed our working procedures to ensure that all adults accessing social care services receive access to high quality welfare rights information, advice and support via referral to a dedicated Council Welfare Rights Team. During the year around 500 adult service users were supported by the Team and provided with specialist information and support so that they claim all the benefits to which they are entitled.

We completed a needs analysis to assess the on-going impact of the welfare reforms on Rhondda Cynon Taf, as part of the wider tackling poverty agenda, to ensure targeted delivery of interventions on those most affected. We said we would also prepare a Financial Inclusion Strategy, but this has not progressed as planned because we wish to incorporate this work into the development of a wider tackling poverty strategy and action plan during 2015/16.

During the year, we have continued to provide training courses in 'Managing Finances' and 'Developing Weekly Budgets' to 425 local people in Communities First areas to help them manage their money better. 71% of those trained have told us that they now feel better equipped to manage their finances. Demand for the courses was less than in the previous year and resources have been provided to meet additional identified development needs, such as basic skills and digital exclusion.

We said we would provide services to reduce homelessness, and provision to meet the housing needs of individuals and families

There continues to be high numbers of people presenting themselves as homeless with more households in difficulty this year compared to last (558 compared to 473 in 2013/14). Despite this, we have continued to prevent homeless families becoming homeless for at least six months in 95% of cases, but the increasing numbers do impact on how timely homeless presentations are decided and the length of time families are required to spend in temporary accommodation.

Our housing solutions service continues to work closely with individuals and families presenting themselves as homeless or in need of housing advice. We are continually looking at the type of homeless presentations and our evidence base over the last few years has shown an increase in the number of young people presenting themselves as homeless. We also know that there is a lack of suitable housing provision in this area. This year, our focus has been on the accommodation needs of single homeless young adults. Our anticipated accommodation developments this year have been affected by delays in planning and funding. Despite this, some physical progress has been made and will be further progressed during 2015/16. An example of the benefits these facilities will bring is detailed below.

The Grange, Pontypridd – Emergency Accommodation for Young People aged 16-24

When young people present themselves as homeless they have specific and significant housing needs. Very few are equipped practically and emotionally for independent living, and if not dealt with quickly, could also find themselves exposed to additional risks such as long term unemployment and substance misuse, which in turn can cause dependency on benefits, mental health issues and possibly criminal offences.

The Grange will provide self contained furnished temporary accommodation for up to 10 young homeless people aged 16 to 24 in need of urgent care and support. It is centrally located, close to local services and amenities and accessible to all Rhondda, Cynon and Taf communities. It also has good transport links and allows for easy access to employment services.

Whilst here, tenants will receive intensive support to ensure that they develop their skills and confidence whilst complying with house rules and within the projects licence agreement. Each tenant will have a key worker who will help them with:

- Self-care and independent living skills*
- Managing money and personal administration.*
- Managing a tenancy and looking after your accommodation.*
- Motivation and taking responsibility.*
- Safety and security in the home and wider community.*
- Preparing for work, learning and making use of technology (digital inclusion)*
- Improving social networks, increasing support networks and maintaining positive relationships.*
- Improving physical health.*
- Improving emotional and mental health.*
- Meaningful use of time.*

As well as safety and shelter, this facility will equip these young people with the knowledge, skills, behaviour and values to enable them to progress to appropriate longer term housing solutions and ultimately independent living, with the support of the Council's Housing Advice Centre

It is intended this facility be operational during the summer of 2015. In partnership with United Welsh⁹ and Adref¹⁰

In addition to The Grange, a similar provision at Martins Close, Abercynon has not progressed as quickly as originally anticipated. Funding for this scheme has now been approved by Welsh Government and the provision is set to be operational by the end of 2015. Remodelling of our next stage 'step down' provision at the Old Bakery, Aberdare will commence in the summer of 2015, which will provide move on accommodation from the Grange. The project will also provide life skills to enable those who have experienced homeless at a young age to be

⁹ United Welsh is a not for profit charity, registered with Welsh Government, providing homes and related services in South Wales

¹⁰ Adref is a registered charity and limited company devoted to eradicating homelessness in the South Wales Valleys

able return to their local communities and live independently. It is anticipated that work here will increase the number of move on accommodation available for young people from 9 to 14 units. We have also worked with Hafan Cymru¹¹ to convert family accommodation in Penygraig to provide 3 units of supported accommodation specifically for vulnerable young men preparing them for independent living.

In September 2014, The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 made positive changes to homelessness law. For the first time local authorities can access suitable accommodation in the private sector to help comply with our duty to prevent homelessness. In preparation for this change, we have appointed an additional member of staff to deal directly with private landlords in order to increase the supply of decent, affordable properties in good condition; this in turn will assist in meeting housing need and prevent homelessness.

We have also worked with private landlords to develop shared housing in the Taff area which provide affordable permanent accommodation for single people under 35, who would not otherwise be able to afford to live in this part of the County Borough. Support is made available to the landlord to assist with the management of the property and to the residents to help them live independently and cope with any support needs.

We said we would develop sustainable town centres which contribute to the economy of the County Borough

Development of the key town centres in Pontypridd and Aberdare continues. A 'health check' was completed for Pontypridd and similar checks are under development for Aberdare and Porth. These key 'health check' documents provide information on economic activity within the town centres providing valuable intelligence to support the development of activities and initiatives. In Pontypridd, the restoration of the Grade II-listed Lido is currently underway, funded by £3m from the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government, £2.3million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a £900,000 contribution from Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, and a £100,000 contribution from Cadw. The restoration of the Lido is due for completion in summer 2015, when it will be a regional tourist attraction for Pontypridd and a great facility for the local community, encouraging local pride and contributing to the economy of the town centre and its wider communities.

The finished Lido design will include 3 heated pools, a state of the art adventure play area and a cafe and visitor centre. The dry play facility design has been agreed following input from local children on the type of play equipment they would like to see included. Planning permission for the play areas has been obtained and construction is now underway. At the pool, slab, blockwork and walls installation is underway, and the steelwork, blockwork and roofing are progressing at the Cafe and visitors centre. Following specialist restoration works, the original windows have been reinstalled in the entrance building and the original timber cubicles are being reconstructed.

¹¹ Hafan Cymru is a charitable housing association that provides housing and support to men, women, their children and young people across Wales.

Part of the funding awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Lido has provided workshops to inspire and educate the local community. For example, heritage skills workshops provided opportunities for local construction companies, volunteers and students to learn more about a range of traditional construction skills such as lime pointing, plastering, dry stone walling and traditional carpentry. Advice was also provided on opportunities for further training and accreditation in construction heritage skills. The community were invited to contribute their memories about the lido, and students at a local school were supported in oral history recording to capture their stories. Local schools worked with an artist to produce artwork inspired by the 1920s to cover the wooden hoarding protecting the site.

Construction work underway at Pontypridd Lido, including wall and slab construction for the 3 pools



Case Study - Pontypridd Lido Construction

The restoration of Pontypridd Lido has provided valuable work experience and employment opportunities for people in the local community. This has been an important part of the project design.

R, a 16 year old from Pontypridd, joined contractors Kier Construction Ltd as a construction team leader apprentice after finding out about the opportunity through the construction department of Pontypridd High School, where he was a student.

Working on the Lido project has given R the opportunity to learn a wide range of skills and gain practical experience. He commented "I...knew this was the area I wanted to pursue as my career. I enjoy learning both old and new techniques that people use to build and how computers and electronic devices can help us.

I am learning about surveying from the site engineer and have spent time with the site manager, using the opportunity to learn the different roles and responsibilities of everyone on the project. The thing I enjoy most is being able to go to site each day knowing that the site management team have something constructive and interesting for me to do. They give me the responsibility and their trust to get a task completed on time and correctly. That makes me feel as if I'm making a difference."

£5.9M funding was secured under the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) scheme to enhance the Pontypridd area. Despite a delay in the approval of our VVP schemes a start has been made in their implementation and work will continue as part of the 2015/16 Improving Our Communities plan. Significant progress has been made including 35 homes with improved energy performance; 174sqm of commercial floorspace created or refurbished; intrusive site investigations, Transport Assessments and other detailed analysis undertaken on the Lady Windsor site. Importantly, the Council secured further funding (£500k) from Welsh Government and secured the purchase of the Taff Vale site.

To help ensure that the renovation of existing buildings in our town centres is done to a high standard and in a way that enhances the local environment, supplementary planning guidance (SPG) has been introduced. Supplementary planning guidance aims to make planning easier and thus stimulate economic growth. It provides information and advice on what can and can't be done, promoting good development and avoiding the need for planning consultants. The shopfront guidance covers areas such as quality modern shopfront designs and the restoration of existing traditional shop fronts, and ways in which shops can be secured overnight without the use of solid roller shutter doors, which can create an unwelcoming environment.

Supplementary planning guidance for flats has been prepared and is currently out for consultation. The guidance provides information for property owners and developers on how the renovation of existing buildings or development of new flats can be achieved in a way which is sympathetic to the locality. This is particularly relevant as the vibrancy of our town centres is being enhanced by the development of residential accommodation such as the Old Town Hall in Aberdare.

Welsh Government approval has been received for the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) and a business plan is currently being developed with stakeholders. A BID is a business led initiative in a specific location where, following a successful ballot of the businesses, a levy of business rates funds projects in an agreed business plan to improve and promote the area, for example through additional marketing and events, loyalty schemes, business support, and enhancements like planting and street furniture. The BID development will be continued in 2015/16, with a ballot of local businesses undertaken to decide if the BID will be established.

Additional work in Pontypridd included targeted promotional campaigns such as Pontypridd's summer campaign and direct promotion of the town centre to students at the University. We also continued to encourage town centre visits through co-ordinating a programme of events with the Council's Events Team, and other stakeholders including the Town Council and Traders, which received excellent feedback from traders:

"The event and footfall was amazing and as market traders we made the effort this year to stay open later to support the event. A big thank you to the organisers - very professional organisation and seamless communication - the effect of stepping out onto Taff Street brought a smile to your face both as a trader and a member of the Pontypridd community"

Indoor Market Traders, Pontypridd Indoor Market

"Saturday [takings] was 41% up from previous Saturday"

National High Street Store Manager, Pontypridd

However, local traders felt that the traffic restrictions on the town centre were too strict and impacted on trade towards the end of the day. After listening to their concerns, the "through after three" initiative was introduced to allow motorist access to the town centre after 3pm, an hour earlier than previously. It is hoped that the scheme, which is being trialled for 18 months, will boost trade in the afternoon and help extend the trading day.

The Vice Chair of the Focus on Pontypridd Group said, *"I'm delighted that the partnership with us as traders and the Council is delivering results. It's positive that the Council are supporting the high street at such difficult times.*

"We feel by working together we can make Pontypridd a more vibrant and customer friendly town."

In Aberdare we continued the Townscape Enhancement Programme (TEP) and Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) to improve the physical condition and quality of business premises within the town, bringing floorspace back into use and supporting businesses to develop and grow. 36 businesses in Aberdare and Pontypridd were offered grants to support them in making improvements to their premises.

We also worked closely with traders to support trader run events in Aberdare including a Halloween market and Christmas skating rink.

The latest complete data for footfall in our town centres (2013/14) shows an increase in Pontypridd of 19.3%, which is testament to the success of the town centre regeneration and bucks the general trend for decreasing visitor numbers across the UK. There was a slight decrease in footfall in Aberdare (-3.4%). This is comparable with the picture across Wales, where footfall decreased by 3.1%. However, provisional data for 2015 shows an increase of 2.5% in Aberdare. Our other town centres showed a mixed picture. Footfall increased in Mountain Ash (+2.4%), fell slightly in Treorchy (-0.7%) and Porth (-5.3%), and showed a significant decrease in Ferndale (-12%) and Tonypany (-15%).

We continued to support businesses in our town centres, for example by development of a new mobile App for Tonypany town centre which allows businesses to promote themselves and attract visitors to the town centre using offers and deals.

We said we would encourage and facilitate investment in Rhondda Cynon Taf to strengthen the economy and create jobs

We are currently in the process of establishing the first Local Development Order (LDO) in Wales at Treforest industrial estate. The LDO is about making it easier to set up businesses, by providing blanket planning permission for an area which cuts out red tape, saves time and provides planning permission upfront. The site was selected due to its critical location within the Cardiff City Region area with excellent transport links and significant economic opportunity. The project has been part grant funded by the Welsh Government. Work is continuing on establishing the LDO and further actions will be included in the Improving Our Communities plan for 2015/16.

We implemented a new Community Infrastructure Levy, (CIL) which is a charge which will be incurred by new developments. The finances generated by the CIL will be used to fund new or improved infrastructure, for example funds to support the construction of new schools or transport links, which will support new development in the region. The benefits of the levy will be seen in the longer term.

We continued to support local Businesses through targeted grant support via the Council's own Capital Grant Scheme and the Local Investment Fund (LIF). Outside Aberdare & Pontypridd, 82 businesses were supported through the direct grant programmes leading to the creation of 116 new jobs. An estimated further 1,214 jobs were safeguarded. A final independent evaluation of the Local Investment Fund

confirmed that the delivery arrangements and engagement of businesses was fit for purpose and the project represents good value for money in the way that it engages with and supports businesses. The evaluation found that South East Wales LIF supported businesses have been much more likely to experience increases to their turnover and, to a lesser extent, their profit levels compared with non-supported businesses. Findings estimated the net cost for job creation as £6,425 per job and safeguarding as £5,166 per job and concluded this offered a good return on investment. Businesses reported very good satisfaction levels with the support they received, including the time taken to award the grants, although they felt that too much information was required from them during the application process. Analysis of changes to business turnover and profit has shown the scheme has positively benefited the businesses concerned.

Case Study - Industrial Building Solutions (Wales) Ltd

Industrial Building Solutions (Wales) Ltd is a start up company based in Llantrisant offering multi-disciplined commercial roofing and cladding services. The Company was set up by 3 Directors all of whom have vast experience in the Industry. Following a long period of recession there was only one major multi-disciplined roofing contractor in Wales and the Directors saw this as a good opportunity to exploit the market. The company secured grant supporting December 2014 through the Local Investment Fund. The grant was used for the purchase of various roofing tools and as a result the workforce increased

Case Study - With Love...Flowers & Gifts

A new florist has opened in Llantrisant with support from the Council's Business Support Grant, a flexible grant scheme aimed at assisting new and existing small to medium sized businesses to develop their growth potential.

L obtained funding which, along with her own savings, enabled her to open her florist With Love....Flowers & Gifts. This has brought a previously vacant property back into use and created employment. L said: "I'm so very excited to open my own business in my home town and am grateful to the support of the local authority in providing grant funding towards the venture. The response and support from people in Llantrisant has been overwhelming and it's great to bring an empty property back into use. As a town, the traders work in partnership to attract more people to visit Llantrisant and enjoy the wide variety of shops, restaurants, pubs and facilities here. During this period of austerity, it's important to work together for the greater good of the entire community and I hope my shop contributes in some way to its ongoing success."

The South East Wales Directors of Environment & Regeneration (SEWDER) have progressed work to support the Regional Partnership Board, under the themes of People, Place & Business as part of delivery of the South Wales Regional Strategic Framework. RCT is the regional lead authority for the Business theme. A significant study of regional growth clusters has been completed and agreed by the Regional Partnership

Board. This work has led to the identification of the ICT sector (hardware and software) as one of 5 priority sectors for further development across the region. ICT is therefore being taken forward as a pilot and we will be engaging with local businesses and providing focussed support to this business cluster during 2015/16. We will also be providing support to ICT businesses to maximise the benefits of improvements in the Superfast Broadband in the area. The business group are also undertaking a regional economic analysis study to identify potential opportunities across the region and to guide potential support activities and programmes.

The Council itself has a significant impact on the local economy through the goods and services it commissions on behalf of the community. We continued to support local firms to be competitive for Council contracts through local development workshops, which were attended by 447 local businesses. 74.45% of bids/tenders to the Council were submitted by local businesses. Contracts were awarded to 141 companies, of which 115 (81.56%) were Welsh companies, and 111 (78.72%) were from the local area (postcodes CA, NP and SA). 69.8% of Council payments were to businesses within the local area.

We said we would secure European funding to support the Council's priority for economic growth, through significant potential funding streams

We are currently still working to develop business support programmes and support for social enterprises for funding through the new EU funding Programmes in Wales. Progress in this area has been slower than anticipated due to significant delays in the approval of the new round of EU funding Programmes by the European Commission. This delay in approval has impacted on the development of all EU funding programmes in Wales, however we have worked regionally and with the Welsh European Funding Office, as well as supporting other Council Services, to try and develop appropriate funding opportunities, despite the complexity of this environment.

Our Business Club provided information, networking opportunities and advice to local businesses.

The winner of the RCT Gala award for manufacturing said of the awards evening “the atmosphere at the event was great and the presentation professional and to be part of it was fantastic”

We continued to develop our more flexible, targeted support to new businesses to maintain longer lasting relationships with the businesses we support to assist them to remain sustainable. Working with individual businesses, we can identify gaps in their knowledge or development and signpost them to specific support relevant to their situation, for example planning advice, information on grant support, specialist training, or information on property or land availability. We were also able to work with Council colleagues to secure a local business rate relief scheme to further support some of those new and expanding businesses we worked with during the year.

The latest available data, for 2013, shows there were 5,210 VAT registered businesses in RCT, an increase from the previous year (5,030). There were 785 new business start ups during this period and 480 business closures. The rate of business start ups (15.1%) exceeded closures (9.2%), a turnaround from the previous year when more businesses closed over the course of the year than were established. This suggests that new businesses in the area are becoming more sustainable and surviving longer. Start up rates exceeded those in the rest of Wales (12.6) and the UK (14.1), whilst business closures were similar to other regions (Wales 9.1; UK 9.7).

What this means for 2015/16

The nature of this priority is that the goals are longer term and we do not always see quick changes. A number of the areas in our 2014/15 plan are still under development or are part of longer term projects and we want to continue to focus on Improving our communities in order to bring about longer term, sustainable changes. Therefore, we recommend that Improving Our Communities will continue to be a key priority for 2015/16, with a continued focus on:

- Opportunities for work,
- Financial Inclusion and Capability
- Helping those at Risk of Homelessness
- Town centre regeneration
- Encouraging Investment to create jobs.

**Wales Programme for Improvement
Improving our Communities**

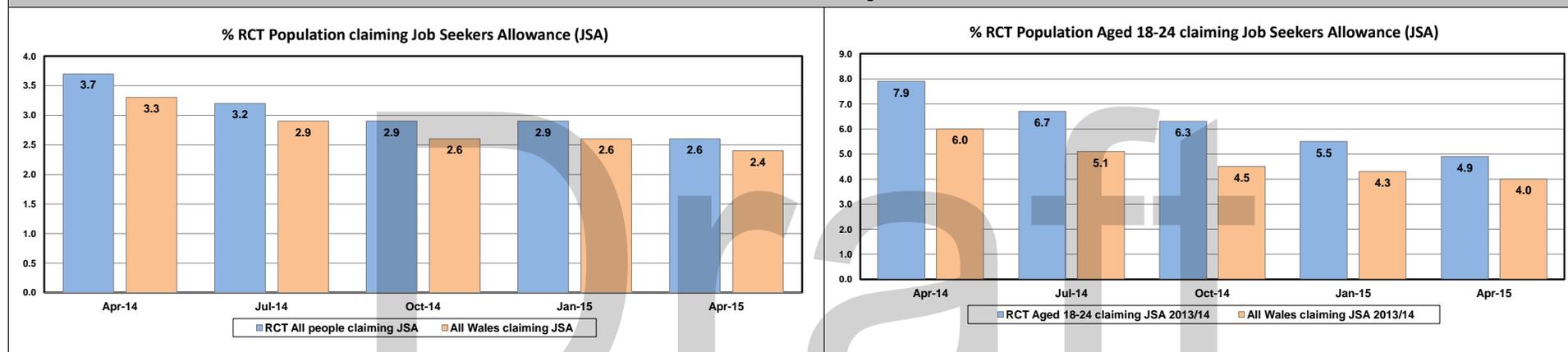
What we aim to achieve:

Supporting the Social and Physical Regeneration of Rhondda Cynon Taf by providing people with opportunities to improve their employability and financial capability.

Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?

Risk Description:	Outcome Reference:
If the Council does not continue to monitor the impacts of the Welfare Reform changes on its citizens there may be an unforeseen (and significant) increase in demand for support from Council services.	1/2
If externally funded projects are not planned, procured and managed effectively by the Council and its partners, then delivery could be severely compromised and the benefits lost.	6
If appropriate housing stock is not available then the ability to house citizens who are either homeless and/or are vulnerable to homelessness may be compromised.	3
If the anticipated reductions in grant funding used to deliver training and employment programmes are not properly planned for then the continued delivery of projects beyond the current financial year could be compromised.	5

How will we know if we are making a difference:



Story behind the data:

The above graphs provide an overarching picture of employment levels within Rhondda Cynon Taf, a key indicator of economic activity. We can see a gradual reduction in the those claiming Job Seekers Allowance throughout the year, but Rhondda Cynon Taf is still above the Welsh average in both instances.

Although the influence of the regional, national and global economy is very significant, within the regeneration priority we have continued to contribute to improving the opportunities for economic activity locally. We provide employment opportunities for young people through our apprenticeship scheme, traineeship schemes and provision of Jobs Growth Wales placements. All of these initiatives provide young people with valuable work experience, enhancing their skills and employability for the future, as well as a number leading directly to permanent employment. Our work with working age adults through Communities First clusters and the job opportunities created through grant funded support to business and community benefit contacts provide much needed opportunities for those wanting to work.

Neil Elliott (Service Director - Direct Services, Business and Housing) & Jane Cook (Director - Regeneration & Planning) - March 2015

Key Priority: Improving our Communities

Lead Officer: Neil Elliott (Service Director - Direct Services, Business and Housing)

Outcome 1: Increase opportunities for working age adults to enter employment, education and training

Theme	Measures											Comment
	Title	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG	Provisional Target		
Prosperity	Me01 - No. of apprentices recruited via the Council's Apprenticeship Scheme (Local)	33	11				13	17	●	↓	Awaiting CMT decisions	
	Me02 - No. of young people recruited onto the Summer Employability Programme as part of the Care2Work Programme (per year) (New) (Local)	28	22				5	11	●	↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	
	Me03 - % of young people completing the Council's "Step in the Right Direction" traineeship scheme securing employment or entering further education or training (New) (Local)	N/A	100				75	100	●	↔	Not being reported in 2015/16	
	Me04 - No. of trainees in sustainable employment within two months of completing the Vision Products traineeship scheme (Local)	4	3				N/A	1		↓	No Target Set	For information only
	Me05 - No. of people entering work following support from work / enterprise clubs (Local)	216	288				288	620	●	↑	521	
	Me06 - No. of accredited qualifications gained by people attending community learning programmes (Local)	726	1,465				1,465	2,090	●	↑	1,472	
	Me07 - No. of Job Growth Wales placements made available (New) (Local)	N/A	14				N/A	9		↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	For information only
	Me08 - % people completing Job Growth Wales placement (or planned leavers) (New) (Local)	N/A	100				N/A	78		↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	For information only

Population & Contextual Measures	2013/14	2014/15
PMe01a - % of working age people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)	3.7 ³	2.6 ¹
PMe02a - % of working age people aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers	7.9 ³	4.9 ¹
PMe03 - Employment rate of those aged 16 to 64 years old	74.7 ⁴	73.3 ²

Footnote:

¹ Data as at Apr 2015 (Nomis)

² Individuals who are economically active (Jan 2014 - Dec 2014) (Nomis)

³ Data as at Apr 2014 (Nomis)

⁴ Individuals who are economically active (Jan 2013 - Dec 2013) (Nomis)

Key Priority: Improving our Communities

Lead Officer: Neil Elliott (Service Director - Direct Services, Business and Housing)

Outcome 2: People better understand the financial choices that are available to them through the increased delivery of advice and information and improved financial capability at earlier stages in their lives

Theme	Measure											
	Title	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Provisional Target	
Prosperity	Me01 - No. of people supported through Council funded welfare rights advice services (Local)	2,671	2,598*				2,598*	2,524	●	↓	2,500	
	Me02 - Amount of income maximised for people supported by Council funded welfare rights services (Local)	£1.84M	£1.326M*				N/A	£910.4k		↓	No Target Set	For information only.
	Me03 - % of Communities First programme participants with improved financial capability (Local)	N/A	49				49	71	●	↑	53	

Footnote:

* This data has been updated since publication of the Corporate Plan and the Qtr 1 Performance Report for 2014/15, following receipt of the annual report from the data provider i.e. the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)

Draft

Key Priority: Improving our Communities

Lead Officer: Neil Elliott (Service Director - Direct Services, Business and Housing)

Outcome 3: Reduce homelessness and provide services that meet the housing needs of individuals and families

Theme	Measure	Measure											
		Title	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
			Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Provisional Target	
Prosperity	Me01 - % of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months (Statutory)	88.3	93.7	1	5	62.6	88.0	95.0	●	↑	92.0	Annual performance has exceeded 2014/15 target, and has improved since 2013/14. The 2014/15 target was set below the 2013/14 top quartile to reflect the volatility of this measure. This measure remains within the top quartile when compared to the 2013/14 all Wales data	
	Me02 - Average number of days all homeless families with children spent in Bed & Breakfast accommodation (Local)	25.5	2.00				15.00	4.67	●	↑	*	These local performance measures have previously been compared to available all Wales data (albeit they are not statutory indicators). Following a recent data review it has been identified that the Rhondda Cynon Taf local definition is not directly comparable across Wales. As a result, all Wales comparisons have been removed for the purposes of this report	
	Me03 - Average number of days that all homeless households spent in Bed & Breakfast accommodation (Local)	40.2	42.75				50.00	27.77	●	↑	*		
	Me04 - Average number of days that all homeless households spent in other forms of temporary accommodation (Local)	69.2	92.48				95.00	85.16	●	↓	*		

* The data definition for 2015/16 has changed to reflect the Welsh definition.



Key Priority: Improving our Communities
 Lead Officer: Jane Cook (Director - Regeneration & Planning)

Outcome 4: Sustainable town centres which contribute to the economy of the Borough

Theme	Title	Measure										Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG	Provisional Target		
Prosperity	Me01 - No. of property enhancements completed in Aberdare and Pontypridd (Local) ¹	N/A	33				36	36	●	↑	40	Target originally set on the presumption that the Local Investment Fund (LIF) programme would end in 2014. LIF has now been extended to June 2015

Population & Contextual Measures	Actual Data		Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2013/14
	2013/14	2014/15	
PMe01 - % of Vacant retail premises in the town centres	All Premises	11.8%	
	Porth	15%	14% ↑
	Mountain Ash	20%	18% ↓
	Ferndale	9%	11% ↓
	Llantrisant	3%	0% ↑
	Pontypridd	9%	9% ↔
	Tonypanydy	15%	20% ↓
	Treorchy	4%	7% ↓
	Aberdare	10%	9% ↑

¹Data is cumulative over the course of the regeneration programme i.e. from April 2011 to March 2015

Key Priority: Improving our Communities

Lead Officer: Jane Cook (Director - Regeneration & Planning)

Outcome 5: Encourage and facilitate investment in Rhondda Cynon Taf to strengthen the economy and create jobs, by working with business, developers,

Theme	Measure	Measure										
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
				Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target			
Prosperity	Me01 - No. of jobs created through grant support programmes direct to businesses (funded by the Council and / or Welsh Government - excluding jobs created through the Pontypridd and Aberdare regeneration projects) (YTD)	N/A	86				40	116	●	↑	60	
	Me02 - No. of businesses supported through direct grant programmes (funded by the Council and/or Welsh Government) - excluding businesses supported through the Pontypridd and Aberdare regeneration projects) (YTD)	N/A	108				40	82	●	↑	60	
	Me03 - No. of people employed as a result of Community Benefits into major authority contracts	N/A	43				30	77	●	↑	TBC	
	Me04 - % creditor payments to local businesses using postcodes CF,SA,NP	N/A	70.72				70.00	69.76	●	↓	70.00	
	Me05 - No. of suppliers attending local development workshops	N/A	369				350	447	●	↑	370	
	Me06 - % of bids/tenders submitted by local businesses (New)	N/A	81.00				70.00	74.45	●	↓	75.00	

Population & Contextual Measures	Actual Data	
	2013/14	2014/15
PMe01 - Stock of VAT registered enterprises in the Borough	5,030	5,210
PMe02 - The rate of VAT registered enterprise births (start ups) of small and medium sized enterprises	10% (505)	15% (785)
PMe03 - The rate of VAT registered enterprise deaths (closures) of small and medium sized enterprises	11% (555)	9% (480)
PMe04 - Amount of floor space permitted and/or developed in major commercial developments in Rhondda Cynon Taf	53,854	

Improving our Communities - 2015/16 Action Plan

Supporting the Social and Physical Regeneration of Rhondda Cynon Taf by providing people with opportunities to improve their employability and financial capability. We also need to focus on places - providing sustainable and vibrant communities that promote our area as an attractive place to live, and to create the right environment that will encourage business investment to benefit the local economy and support local business

Lead Officer(s) for this priority:

Neil Elliott (Service Director - Direct Services, Business and Housing) & Jane Cook (Director Regeneration & Planning)

Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?

2014/15 Risk Description:

Outcome Reference:

If the Council does not continue to monitor the impacts of the Welfare Reform changes on its citizens there may be an unforeseen (and significant) increase in demand for support from Council services.

If appropriate housing stock is not available then the ability to house citizens who are either homeless and/or are vulnerable to homelessness may be compromised.

If externally funded projects are not planned, procured and managed effectively by the Council and its partners, then delivery could be severely compromised and the benefits lost.

If the anticipated reductions in grant funding used to deliver training and employment programmes are not properly planned for then the continued delivery of projects beyond the current financial year could be compromised.

Council Key Priority:

Improving our Communities

Lead Officer:

Neil Elliott (Service Director - Direct Services, Business and Housing)

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 1 - Increase opportunities for young people and working age adults to enter employment, education and training
Why we need to do it:	Current levels of people aged 16-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance in RCT is 5.1% which is higher than the Welsh Average of 4.1% (Dec-14). Increasing people's employability through the provision of relevant training and support to develop the right skills for them to obtain gainful employment will help reduce the high levels of unemployment in Rhondda Cynon Taf and support the move away from a reliance of state benefits to maximise
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	Prosperity – People – Employability Places – Economic Growth
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Residents will have the opportunity to access relevant training and learning opportunities to increase their skills and work based experience to secure future employment

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		Rationale
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	
Me01 - Number of people entering work following support from work clubs (Local)	216	288				288	620	521	Targets are based on 2015/16 Community First Cluster Delivery Plans to Welsh Government
Me02 - No of accredited qualifications gained by people attending community learning programmes (Local)	726	1,465				1,465	2,090	1,472	
Me03 - Number of apprentices recruited via the Council's Apprenticeship Scheme - Cohort 4 (Local)	33	11				13	17	10	Target is based on agreed Council funding.
Me04 - % of Apprentices securing employment or entering further education or training Cohort 2 (Aug 2013 – Aug 2015) (Local)	N/A	N/A				50%	N/A	50%	Target set as per the WG Outcome Agreement

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Measures	PERFORMANCE						TARGET		
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data				2014/15		2015/16	
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me05 - No of young disengaged people supported through the 'Your Future First' programme ² (New) (Local)	N/A	N/A				N/A	90	90	Target based resources available to support a maximum number of young people
Me06 - % of young improving their skills to prepare them for future employment through the 'Your Future First' programme ² (New) (Local)	N/A	N/A				N/A	86	86	Target set to maintain the same level of support as in previous year

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Footnotes:

¹ Data refers to Apprenticeship recruited as part of Cohort 2 (August 2013 – August 2015)

² Young individuals under 16 who have been identified as needing support as part of vulnerability profiling undertaken in schools

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Increase community based opportunities to support skills development and improve employment opportunities	M01	Review existing work club provision and implement revised model in line with new communities first cluster delivery plans for 2014/15	May-15	Nicola Lewis
	M02	Work with Welsh Government and DWP to agreed delivery for the new "Communities 4 Work" programme within Communities First Clusters	Oct-15	Nicola Lewis
	M03	Through Communities First, organise at least two "Jobs Fair" events (one by September 2015 and one by March 16)	Mar-16	Nicola Lewis
CA02 - Increase the opportunities available for young people to positively engage in education, employment and training to secure better future job outcomes and reach their potential	M01	Continue to provide young people with real work based employment opportunities within the Council:		
	M01(i)	Recruit 10 Corporate Apprenticeships	Oct-15	Sian Woolson
	M01(ii)	Recruit 6 Vision Products Traineeships	Jul-15	Nicola Williams
	M01(iii)	Recruit 6 trainees as part of the Step in the Right Direction programme	Oct-15	Alastair Cope
	M02 (iv)	Deliver 3 Your Future First pre-employment support programmes to support young people become job ready	Mar-16	Syd Dennis

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA03 - Complete review and redesign of specialist learning disability employment and training programmes to ensure more sustainable job outcomes and more effective use of resources	M01	Following review of existing programmes in 2014/15; develop service model for employment and training and report to Scrutiny for consideration and thereafter Cabinet for approval	Dec-15	Neil Elliott
	M02	Consult with service users and their carers on the new service model	Mar-16	Neil Elliott
	M03	Implement new service model	Apr-16	Neil Elliott

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - If the Council does not continue to monitor the impacts of the Welfare Reform changes on its citizens there may be an unforeseen (and significant) increase in demand for support from Council services.	

Draft

Council Key Priority:

Improving our Communities

Lead Officer:

Neil Elliott (Service Director - Direct Services, Business and Housing)

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 2 - People better understand the financial choices that are available to them through the increased delivery of advice and information and improved financial capability at earlier stages in their lives
Why we need to do it:	To reduce financial and economic exclusion throughout the County Borough
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	Prosperity – People – Supporting people in financial need
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	People will be able to maintain and improve their financial wellbeing and resilience

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		Rationale
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	
Me01 - Number of people supported through Council funded welfare rights advice services (Local)	2,671	2,598				2,598	2,524	2,500	Target will be set in line with the CAB Service Level Agreement
Me02 - Amount of income maximised for people supported by Council funded welfare rights services (Local)	£1.849M	£1.326M				N/A	£910.4k	N/A	We are unable to predict the amount of income maximised following support from our services

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Ensure that people needing help are supported to maximise their income and improve their ability to financially support themselves	M01	Renew Service Level Agreements with RCT CAB to provide county borough wide specialist welfare rights and debt advice to people in need of help	May-15	Neil Elliott
	M02	Renew Service Level Agreements with Age Connects Morgannwg to welfare benefit checks and advice to older people	May-15	Neil Elliott
CA02 - Work with our Partners to tackle the causes and impact of poverty, exclusion and inequality in Rhondda Cynon Taf	M01	Establish a 'Tackling Poverty Advisory Group' to oversee development of a Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf	Sep-15	Neil Elliott
	M02	Building on previously completed poverty needs analysis undertake an assessment of the nature, causes and impact of poverty, exclusion and inequality in Rhondda Cynon Taf to inform development of Poverty Strategy	Dec-15	Neil Elliott
	M03	Draft 3 year Tackling Poverty Strategy and action plan and report to Scrutiny for consideration and thereafter to Cabinet for approval	Mar-16	Neil Elliott
CA03 - Work with our Partners to mitigate the impact of changes to Universal Credit in Rhondda Cynon Taf as part of ongoing Welfare Reform	M01	Work with DWP to develop a framework of support services to help people manage planned changes to Universal Credit in March 2016	Oct-15	Neil Elliott
	M02	Submit framework and action plan to Scrutiny for consideration and thereafter to Cabinet for approval	Jan-16	Neil Elliott

Footnotes

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - If the Council does not continue to monitor the impacts of the Welfare Reform changes on its citizens there may be an unforeseen (and significant) increase in demand for support from Council services.	

Council Key Priority:

Improving our Communities

Lead Officer:

Neil Elliott (Service Director - Direct Services, Business and Housing)

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 3 - Prevent homelessness and provide services that meet the housing needs of individuals and families
Why we need to do it:	There are vulnerable people who have specific needs for whom specialist housing and/or support is necessary to enable people attain and retain a settled home and help improve their employment, health and well being. On the other hand being homeless or living in inadequate housing can often lead to a whole range of other difficulties, including the risk of developing mental health problems, offending and drug or alcohol dependency.
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	Prosperity – Places – Homes & Communities
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	People will be able to retain their existing home or find a suitable alternative housing eliminating their risk of becoming homeless and help improve their quality of life

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		Rationale
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	
Me01 - % of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months (Statutory)	88.3	93.7	1	5	62.6	88.0	95.0	92.0	
Me02 - Average number of days all homeless families with children spent in Bed & Breakfast accommodation (Local) (New)	25.50	2.00				15.00	5.00	8.00	
Me03 - Average number of days that all homeless households spent in Bed & Breakfast accommodation (Local) (New)	40.15	42.75				50.00	29.00	32.00	
Me04 - Average number of days that all homeless households spent in other forms of temporary accommodation (Local) (New)	69.21	92.48				95.00	100.00	95.00	

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Expand the supply of specialist accommodation and housing support to meet the needs of homeless and vulnerable people	M01	Complete the remodelling of the former Martins Close scheme to provide 24 hour supported accommodation for single homeless adults	Jan-16	Phillip Howells
	M02	Complete the remodelling of the Old Bakery and Ty Rhondda schemes to improve the supported accommodation available for homeless young people	Mar-16	Phillip Howells
	M03(i)	Supporting People Planning Group to complete review of commissioned services to evaluate performance in line with future strategic commissioning intent and expected funding levels	Oct-15	Phillip Howells
	M03(ii)	Include the review outcomes and recommendations in the 3 year Supporting People Operational Plan and report to Scrutiny for consideration and thereafter to Cabinet for approval	Jan-16	Philip Howells
CA02 - Further develop the Council's approach to prevent and relieve homeless in accordance with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014	M01	In partnership with Shelter Cymru extend access to independent Housing Advice at the Council Housing Advice Centre to 5 days per week	Jul-15	Cheryl Emery
	M02	Establish Fund to assist in the prevention of homelessness, to include: Assistance with maintaining tenancies for offenders whilst in Prison Payment of rent arrears where specific criteria are met Payment of court fees to suspend eviction proceedings or delay an eviction date	May-15	Cheryl Emery
	M03	Improve access to Private Rented Sector accommodation by:	Jul-15	Cheryl Emery
	M03(i)	Increasing targeted incentives for landlords, including guaranteed rent and one off payments; furniture packs and bonds/rent in advance		
	M03(ii)	Improving our advertising of all private rented sector properties in line with existing arrangements for social housing	Oct-15	Cheryl Emery
	M04	Work with Communities First Clusters to explore opportunities to develop joint homeless prevention initiatives at a community level	Oct-15	Phil Howells

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - If appropriate housing stock is not available then the ability to house citizens who are either homeless and/or are vulnerable to homelessness may be compromised.	

Council Key Priority:

Improving our Communities

Lead Officer:

Jane Cook (Director Regeneration & Planning)

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 4 - Sustainable Town Centres which contribute to the economy of the borough
Why we need to do it:	Town centres can become economic hubs of our communities providing a range of opportunities for work, leisure, shopping and business
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	Prosperity - economic growth
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	The benefits of economic growth filter right through our communities, impacting on health, wealth and wellbeing. Investment in RCT, including new development, in our businesses, and in town centres, will provide direct jobs for local people as well as putting more into the local economy generally through local spending power etc. Clearly economic growth is significantly affected by external economic factors, but there are clear benefits from local interventions

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me01 - No. Of property enhancements completed in Aberdare & Pontypridd (Local)	N/A	33				36	36	40	Based on evidence of demand and anticipated programme of delivery for this year.

Contextual Measures	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 & Comparative Data		
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Actual Data	Wales	UK
% vacant retail premises in town centres	Porth 15% Mountain Ash 20% Ferndale 9% Llantrisant 3% Pontypridd 9% Tonypanydy 15% Treorchy 4% Aberdare 10%	Wales 5.5% UK 10.4%	Porth 14% Mountain Ash tbc Ferndale tbc Llantrisant 1.8% Pontypridd 8.2% Tonypanydy tbc Treorchy tbc Aberdare 8.6%		

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Restore Pontypridd Lido to create a regional visitor attraction to contribute to the economic growth of the Pontypridd settlement area	M01	Progress the development of the Lido project to enable it to open to the public from July 2015.	Jul-15	Jane Cook
	M02	Produce an interim evaluation of the Lido (which will test arrangements to measure the impact of the Lido on the local and regional economy) and report to the relevant Scrutiny Committee to form a view on the evaluation	Mar-16	Peter Mortimer
	M03	Produce a final evaluation of the Lido project (and its impact on the local and regional economy) and report to the relevant Scrutiny Committee to form a view on the evaluation	Sep-16	Peter Mortimer
CA02 Assess the impact of the programme of property improvements in Aberdare and Pontypridd (via the Townscale Heritage Initiative and Townscale Enhancement Programme)	M01	Report a position statement to Scrutiny Committee of property improvement projects (that include benefits delivered, feedback from recipients and possible areas to further improve the programmes)	Mar-16	Peter Mortimer
	M02	Undertake a user survey of visitors to Aberdare and Pontypridd to gauge the feedback of visitors	Mar-16	Peter Mortimer
CA03 - Develop 'Business Improvement District' to contribute to the economic growth of the Pontypridd settlement area	M01	Following the development of the Business Improvement District (BID) business plan, support the businesses in an awareness campaign on the future BID.	Dec-15	Adrian Evans
	M02	Undertake a Ballot of Local Businesses to determine if a Business Improvement District will be established	Dec-15	Adrian Evans
	M03	In the event of a ballot result in favour of the Business Improvement District, support the new BID to form a company limited by guarantee	Mar-16	Adrian Evans

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA04 - Work with Traders and Partner Organisations in Aberdare and Porth to improve the town centre environments and encourage trade**	M01	Complete the town centre Healthcheck for Aberdare (to provide a comprehensive picture of the town centre which can be used to attract future funding and as a basis to evaluate future progress) and report to the relevant Scrutiny Committee to form a view on the healthcheck	Dec-15	Adrian Evans
	M02	Develop an online App for Aberdare town centre to allow residents and visitors to access information, special offers and discounts via mobile phones and tablets	Sep-15	Adrian Evans
	M03	Develop an online App for Porth town centre to allow residents and visitors to access information, special offers and discounts via mobile phones and tablets	Sep-15	Adrian Evans
	M04	Deliver a secure radio system for businesses and licensed premises in Aberdare to share information on anti-social behaviour, improving the town centre environment	Mar-16	Adrian Evans
	M05	Improve the appearance of vacant units to enhance the streetscape*** through the use of vinyls to feature 'virtual shops'	Mar-15	Adrian Evans
CA05 - Support the renovation of existing Town Centre buildings by adopting supplementary planning guidance	M01	Report consultation responses on final draft flats supplementary planning guidance to cabinet	TBC	Simon Gale
	M02	Adopt flats supplementary planning guidance subject to Cabinet approval	TBC	Simon Gale

Footnotes

*Pontypridd town centre funded through the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable places scheme.

**funded through the Town Centre Partnership Funding

*** vacant units can have a detrimental impact on footfall within the town centre

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - If externally funded projects are not planned, procured and managed effectively by the Council and its partners, then delivery could be severely compromised and the benefits lost	Effective project management, risk analysis and financial control during the delivery of projects will support successful implementation

Council Key Priority:

Improving our Communities

Lead Officer:

Jane Cook (Director Regeneration & Planning)

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 5 - Encourage and facilitate investment in Rhondda Cynon Taf to strengthen the economy and create jobs, by working with business, developers, partners and funders, to help deliver initiatives which contribute to economic growth
Why we need to do it:	Rhondda Cynon Taf has not been immune to the global recession, fewer people have been able to find or keep a job; there is a heavy reliance on public sector jobs
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	Prosperity - economic growth
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	The benefits of economic growth filter right through our communities, impacting on health, wealth and wellbeing. Investment in RCT, including new development, in our businesses, and in town centres, will provide direct jobs for local people as well as putting more into the local economy generally through local spending power etc. Clearly economic growth is significantly affected by external economic factors, but there are clear benefits from local interventions

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE						TARGET		
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data				2014/15		2015/16	
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me01 - No. Of jobs created through grant support programmes direct to businesses (funded by the Council and/or Welsh Government - excluding jobs created through the Pontypridd and Aberdare regeneration projects) (Local)		86				40	116	60	Local Investment Fund will be coming to a close in June so targets have been reduced in comparison to performance achieved previously.
Me02 - No. Of businesses supported through direct grant programmes (funded by the Council and/or Welsh Government) - excluding businesses supported through the Pontypridd and Aberdare regeneration projects (Local)		108				40	82	60	Local Investment Fund will be coming to a close in June so targets have been reduced in comparison to performance achieved previously.
Me03 - No. People employed as a result of Community benefits into Major authority contracts (Local)		43				30	77	TBC	Target not yet set, provisional data to be finalised
Me04 - % creditor payments to local businesses using postcodes CF, SA, NP (Local)		70.72				70	69.8	70	14/15 target not achieved; target retained at this level.

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Measures	PERFORMANCE						TARGET		
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data				2014/15		2015/16	
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me05 - No. of suppliers attending local development workshops (Local)		369				350	447	370	14/15 target exceeded, however this PI is dependant upon the tenders to be undertaken in the financial year and whether How to Tender Workshops will be required to support the suppliers tendering (outside of the normal annual Meet the Buyer Events). Therefore target increased from 350 - 370.
Me06 - % of bids/tenders submitted by local businesses (Local) - if we could have a measure in		81.00				70.00	74.45	N/A	14/15 target of 70% was exceeded, therefore improvement target set at 75%.

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 & Comparative Data		
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Actual Data	Wales	UK
PMe01 - Stock of VAT Registered enterprises in the Borough**	5090	5,030	5,210	Not comparable	Not comparable
PMe02 - The rate of VAT registered enterprise births (start ups) of small and medium sized enterprises**	(555)	10 (505)	15.1 (785)	12.6	14.1
PMe03 - The rate of VAT registered enterprise deaths (closures) of small and medium sized enterprises**	(510)	11.0 (555)	9.2 (480)	9.1	9.7
PMe04 - Amount of floor space permitted and/or developed in major commercial developments in Rhondda Cynon Taf	TBC	58,854	TBC	Not comparable	Not comparable

** Table shows year of data publication. Data for these indicators in reported by calendar year, one year in arrears (i.e. Data published in 2014/15 is for calendar year 2013).

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Support development within Rhondda Cynon Taf through enhancing the planning process	M01	Adopt supplementary planning guidance on employment and skills for large developments to encourage local job creation as part of new developments	Sep-15	Simon Gale
CA02 -Help Business to develop on Treforest Industrial Estate to support the development of Rhondda Cynon Taf as a location for investment and business growth by introducing an innovative new planning system	M01	Prepare a report for Cabinet to agree draft Local Development Order ¹ for Treforest Industrial Estate for consultation	Sep-15	Simon Gale
	M02	Consult with businesses and the public on the draft Local Development Order for Treforest Industrial Estate	Oct-15	Simon Gale
	M03	Report consultation responses to Cabinet	Dec-15	Simon Gale
	M04	Submit Local Development Order for Treforest Industrial Estate to WG for adoption subject to Cabinet approval	Mar-16	Simon Gale
	M05	Develop activities and programmes to support businesses on the Treforest Industrial Estate	Dec-15	Phil Barnes
CA03 - Review the Local Development Plan ² for Rhondda Cynon Taf to ensure it continues to meet the needs of residents and businesses into the future	M01	<i>Formal review cannot start until new regulations are issued by Welsh Government (Summer 2015)</i>	Sep-15	Simon Gale
	M02	Draft delivery agreement to be agreed with Welsh Government	Dec-15	Simon Gale
	M03	Formal delivery agreement submitted to Welsh Government for approval following consultation	Mar-16	Simon Gale
CA04 - Analyse the regional economy and target support to exploit identified gaps in development	M01	Lead South East Wales Regional activity as lead authority for the business thematic and develop a range of activities	Mar-16	Jane Cook
	M02	Complete an analysis of the economic position of the South East Wales region	Sep-15	Phil Barnes
	M03	Based on the economic analysis above, identify opportunities in the regional economy to tailor support activities and programmes	Mar-16	Phil Barnes

Footnotes

¹ Local Development Orders simplify the planning process and help to stimulate economic development

² The Local Development Plan is a land use document which sets out how the County Borough will be developed, including policies to control new development, and provides the basis for deciding planning applications

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA05 - Support the ICT Sector in Rhondda Cynon Taf to develop and grow through bespoke support to ICT businesses	M01	Develop a regional focus group for business clusters within the ICT sector (SEWDER)	Sep-15	Phil Barnes
	M02	Implement a range of activities across the ICT cluster (SEWDER)	Mar-16	Phil Barnes
CA06 - Support and facilitate improvements to ICT infrastructure within Rhondda Cynon Taf to support existing businesses and attract new business to the area.	M01	Deliver a series of workshops in connection with the Pathfinder project to help local businesses understand, adopt and exploit superfast broadband to benefit their business	Jun-15	Phil Barnes
	M02	Evaluate the success of the Pathfinder project	Jul-15	Phil Barnes
	M03	Facilitate access for businesses to grant support to assist them to connect to broadband	Mar-16	Phil Barnes
CA07- Facilitate the Development of the Lady Windsor Colliery Site in Ynysybwl	M01	Complete detailed site analysis and investigation	Sep-15	Peter Mortimer
	M02	Determine outline planning application	Dec-15	Peter Mortimer
	M03	Begin to market the site to potential developers	Mar-16	Peter Mortimer
CA08 - Encourage Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to do Business with the Council	M01	Develop guidance on advertising lower value contracts more widely, to encourage local small businesses to do business with the Council	TBC	Vince Hanly
	M02	Test out guidance on advertising lower value contracts to ensure the process is transparent and proportional	TBC	Vince Hanly
CA09 - Improve the way we work with small businesses to assist them to remain viable.	M01	Encourage the use of e-trading ³ with SMEs to improve their cash flow and increase their capability to do business with the public sector	TBC	Vince Hanly
	M02	Encourage contractors to pay their subcontractors promptly through effective contract monitoring	TBC	Vince Hanly

Footnotes

³ E trading includes the use of electronic ordering and invoices and use of the P card. This makes processing orders more efficient for both the Council and suppliers, resulting in more prompt payment of invoices and improved cash flow, which can be vital for the viability of smaller businesses.

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions
R1 - If externally funded projects are not planned, procured and managed effectively by the Council and its partners, then delivery could be severely compromised and the benefits lost.	
R2 - Failure of private sector to engage in projects and programmes	Targeted marketing and development of robust programme and relationship building
R3 - Economic climate	Adapt support and expected outcome
R4 - Lack of regional collaboration	Agree deliverable targets and programmes for regional activity

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**STREET CARE SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH & PROTECTION SCRUTINY
WORKING GROUP**

Notes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group held at the Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Monday, 27th April 2015 at 2.00pm

Present:

County Borough Councillor G. Davies - in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

S. A. Bradwick
(Mrs) J Bonetto
G. Smith
(Mrs) A. Roberts

Officers in Attendance:

Mr N. Wheeler – Director of Highways & Streetcare Services
Mr P. Mee – Service Director, Public Health & Protection
Mrs L. Davies – Environmental Protection Manager
Mr A. Mallin - Community Safety & Partnership Co-ordinator
Ms N. Jones – Strategy and Operations Officer, Waste Services
Ms L. Lawson – Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning
Ms J. Nicholls – Scrutiny Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S. Powderhill, (Mrs) S. Pickering and J. Watts.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor G. Davies declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 3 – 'Landlord & Provider of Misuse of Substance Services'

3. INTRODUCTION

The Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning reported on the introduction of this new scrutiny process. She outlined the process by which Members of the Working Group were being asked to challenge the draft performance evaluations for 2014/15 and draft priority plans for 2015/16.

The Service Improvement Officer explained that the lead officers would provide an overview of each proposed outcome following which Members would have the opportunity to ask questions. The Officer also drew Members attention to the recommendations set out at 2.2.1 of the report with a number of points for consideration attached at Appendix 1.

4. **TO CHALLENGE THE COUNCIL'S EVALUATION OF ITS PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERING ITS 2014/15 PRIORITY PLAN IN RESPECT OF 'KEEPING RHONDDA CYNON TAF CLEAN AND 'GREEN' (STREETCARE SERVICES AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT)**

The Director of Highways & Streetcare Services presented the 2014/15 action plans before Members, highlighting the main areas of focus for the plan going forward. The working group was advised that the plan was the culmination of areas concerning waste sustainability, recycling targets, street care, maintenance of highways and flood prevention schemes.

Outcome 1 – Deliver Clean Streets

The Director of Highways & Streetcare confirmed that RCT has achieved and bettered its target for keeping the County Borough clean and tidy with measures in place to maintain the priority despite the service re structure and demanding financial pressures. Dog fouling continues to be an area of concern for residents of RCT yet proves to be a difficult issue to target by the service as has frequently been discussed by Members in the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee. It was reported that in respect of fly tipping incidents the RCT figure is still performing above the Welsh average for 2013/14 despite the impact of financial pressures upon the way the service is delivered. It is considered that members of the public are more aware of the consequences for fly tipping which is having an impact.

Outcome 2 – Improve recycling rates helped by more targeting of areas with low recycling rates

Of concern to Members was the issue of recycling rates, having failed to achieve its target for the amount of waste which was recycled in 2014/15 which placed the authority as one of the worst in Wales, Members were keen to ask whether this is a recognised area for improvement. The Director of Highways, & Streetcare acknowledged those areas of poor performance within the local authority and confirmed that through awareness campaigns and door knocking exercises targets have improved. In response to a query regarding green initiatives in other local authorities, the Director confirmed that following the introduction of new legislation in January 2015 requiring green waste to be collected separately there is no charge for residents within the County Borough for this collection just cooperation from members of the public that notice is given for the larger collections. A query was raised in respect of whether the provision of new bins in one area of the County Borough was discouraging residents to recycle. The Director confirmed it was discouraging those residents from producing side waste by providing them with the largest size bins available as in any other part of the County Borough

and he reiterated the importance of education such as the projects mainly aimed at school children, but open to all, at Bryn Pica which demonstrates what happens to the recyclable materials to capture resident's imagination and encourage recycling by all. Members were assured that all data outlining the tonnage collected is regularly reported to the Scrutiny Committee.

Members were informed of the work undertaken to improve recycling rates and some of the recycling initiatives were highlighted - 'Green Glyncoch', the Christmas Card Recycling Challenge, the 'Go Green Baby' disposable nappy recycling scheme and the 'Too many Black Bags, Recycle or Face a Fine' campaign all of which have proven successful. The Council's enforcement work has also assisted in improving targets and awareness amongst residents in respect of the changes to the amount of side waste put out for collection, encouraging residents to recycle their rubbish instead.

One Member queried the Welsh Government targets for Landfill (currently 45% soon reducing to 42%) which the Local Authority, although continuing to reduce the percentage of municipal waste, still falls below the Welsh average of 37.72%. This could result in financial penalties from Welsh Government. Despite not meeting recycling targets and recognising that improvements need to be made with regard to municipal waste the Director of Highways & Streetcare confirmed that recycling increased during February and March 2015 and were likely to result in the end of year data reaching 60% exceeding the target for the current year of 58% and assurances were given that effective measures are in place to further improve performance by means of enforcement and awareness campaigns.

Outcome 3 – Develop a residual waste treatment plant with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in line with Welsh Government requirements and to review options to achieve higher levels of recycling through the processes operated by the Service

An update was provided in relation to the residual waste treatment which is being developed with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council explaining that the preferred bidder will be appointed by June 2015 with contract award by September 2015.

Outcome 4 – Develop a food waste treatment plant with Merthyr Tydfil and Newport County Borough Councils in line with Welsh Government requirements and to review options to achieve higher levels of recycling through the processes operated by the Service

Details were provided in respect of the Food Waste Plant being developed in conjunction with two neighbouring authorities which is on schedule to be operational by June 2015.

Outcome 5 – Maintain the condition of our roads

Details were provided in respect of projects to improve highway infrastructure across the County Borough such as the structural refurbishment of Victoria Bridge in Pontypridd as well as improvements to footways, safety fencing and resurfacing. Four flood alleviation schemes have been put in place using funding from the Capital Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and Welsh Government funding and traffic management schemes have also been implemented in Rhydyfelin and Maerdy.

One Member queried whether more barriers would be put in place along the Rhigos Road and it was confirmed that there was scope to do more utilising the specialist barrier team at Merthyr Tydfil CBC.

The Director of Highways and Streetcare confirmed that one of the strategic risks identified within the draft 2014/15 plan is the Council's recycling rates which have fallen below target. Despite having reached its target of 58% because of improved performance in February and March 2015 it was still considered to be a Key Corporate Risk and subsequently continues to be a high priority by the Service. It was acknowledged that if the cause of low recycling in some areas across the County Borough is not addressed it will result in the Council having to pay a financial penalty from the Welsh Government.

The Working Group **AGREED** that the 2014/15 draft performance is a balanced and fair assessment.

5. CHALLENGE OF THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2015/16 PRIORITY PLAN - KEEPING RHONDDA CYNON TAF CLEAN AND GREEN (STREETCARE SERVICES AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT)

The Director of Highways and Streetcare reminded Members that the Priority Plan before them was a draft plan for 2015/16 and subject to change which reflects the forthcoming changes in legislation by Natural Resources Wales in respect of flooding issues. The Director added that as a result of this new legislation new maps are being developed which will impact upon the local authority and its services relating to flood risk management which is reflected in the number of outcomes for the Streetcare WPI 2015/16 Action Plan by one.

Members had outlined to them the key priority areas for 2015/16, the actions and the expected outcomes despite the reduction in budget and funding sources but emphasised the importance of continued Member involvement in terms of communicating ward issues. The Director emphasised the importance of continuing to capture data in conjunction with case studies which will help bring some clarity to the narrative.

Members were provided with a snapshot of developments for 2015/16 to include an updated Council website page for the Service, a new recycling

centre in Llantrisant, further recycling awareness initiatives and education programmes in schools and continued reporting on Fixed Penalty Notices. It was emphasised that in light of current budget reductions in the public sector waste sustainability and street cleansing continue to be a high priority. It was reported that Outcome 3 – ‘Our Highways network is well maintained and well managed’ – is considered a high priority by residents of RCT and future projects were outlined such as further network improvements across the County Borough.

The Working Group **AGREED** that subject to the inclusion of case studies and other minor amendments considered appropriate by officers the 2015/16 draft priority plan for Streetcare Services and the Natural Environment has understandable outcomes supported by actions and performance indicators that will enable progress and impact to be measured and scrutinised.

The meeting closed at 17.15 pm.

Our improvement priority – Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and ‘green’ – Performance Evaluation

We have made good progress in recent years in improving the local environment, roads and streetscene. Dealing with our waste sustainably continues to be a high priority to ensure we meet the 2015/16 recycling target of 58% set by Welsh Government. In addition to continuing to increase our recycling rates by targeting areas with low participation rates, we are also working to minimise the level of waste produced and investigating alternatives to landfill for disposal of waste which cannot be recycled.

We continue to work to deliver cleaner streets, both by education and awareness campaigns and strict enforcement of littering, graffiti, fly tipping and fly posting. We have implemented flood prevention schemes to alleviate specific historical flooding issues across the County Borough. These schemes have reduced the risk of flooding to several hundred properties in the County Borough. Maintaining our highways and keeping traffic moving is a high priority for residents and we have continued to invest in our highways infrastructure and tackle problem parking through the introduction and appropriate enforcement of civil parking regulations.

Why was this a priority in 2014/15?

- As part of a wider commitment to improve the environment, the Welsh Government has set councils challenging targets to send less waste to landfill and recycle more. The key target we are aiming for is to recycle 58% of the municipal waste we collect by March 2016. Failure to meet this target will result in the Council having to pay a financial penalty. In 2012/13, we missed the Welsh Government target of recycling 52% of municipal waste and last year we again failed to meet this target, recycling 49.3% of municipal waste collected. This represented the lowest recycling rate across Wales. A contributory factor to this was the sudden loss of an external company that recycled items that we were unable to. The impact of this unforeseen change was the need for us to send more waste to landfill.
- We have worked hard in recent years to improve the cleanliness of the streets and residents have told us that keeping the County Borough clean and tidy remains important to them. Our challenge is to look for ways to maintain standards of cleanliness that is comparable with other councils across Wales.
- When asked in our budget consultation exercise in early 2014, which we used to inform our priority setting in 2014/15 52% of respondents felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

In our 2014/15 Plan, we said we would

- **Deliver clean streets**
- **Improve recycling rates helped by more targeting of areas with low recycling rates**
- **Maintain the condition of our roads**
- **Improve flood prevention**

Having considered the information available to us including progress, current trend and comparative data, complaints and feedback from the Regulators and our own self assessment, overall our progress in the four Outcomes in this Priority Plan has been positive but we have failed to

achieve our recycling target which is the most important measure within this plan. Details of our progress are outlined in detail below. Four of the five key measures we had indicated would help to evidence success have been achieved and one key measure has not been achieved. These are

- 99.75% of our streets inspected were of a high or acceptable standard in 2014/15 – exceeding our target of 95.8% and making our performance one of the best in Wales compared to the 2013/14 Wales average of 96.8%.
- 35.01% of our waste was sent to landfill – exceeding our target of 45% and making our performance better than the 2013/14 Wales average of 37.72%.
- 9.4% of our streets were in an overall poor condition – exceeding our target of 10% and making our performance better than the 2013/14 Wales average of 13.2%.
- 412 homes/ businesses have a reduced risk of flooding as a result of flood prevention schemes – exceeding our target of 375 homes/ businesses.

However, we have failed to achieve one key measure

- 54.08% of our waste was recycled in 2014/15 – narrowly missing our target of 55% and placing our performance below the 2013/14 Wales average of 54.33%.

The detailed evaluation is set out below.

We said we would deliver clean streets so that residents and visitors live in a cleaner and safer environment

We recognise how important the cleanliness of the County Borough is to residents and we continue to see this as one of our priorities. However, we also have to balance this with the increasing financial pressures that all Public Services in Wales are facing. With this in mind, we undertook a range of service changes in 2014/15 to reduce the costs associated with our street cleansing service whilst still focusing on keeping the cleanliness of our streets and highways at an acceptable level compared to the rest of Wales. An independent survey carried out by ‘Keep Wales Tidy’ throughout November 2014 found that 97.6% of our streets that were inspected were of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness (6.83% were of a high standard and 90.76% were of an acceptable standard). This is above the Wales average of 96.6% and is the same as our performance last year based on this survey. The service has maintained a high level of performance this year through the commitment and dedication of the cleansing staff which has increased productivity in this area.

However, the perception of residents is also important. Feedback from our residents has been mixed with residents identifying the following issues:

‘I don’t see street cleaners anymore...’ Resident R.M.

‘Lot of litter in Ponty town centre, especially after the weekend... The Council doesn’t come to clean it up fast enough or regularly enough... they do it every now and again though’ Resident J.B.

We recognise the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of our town centres especially after periods of heavy use and we now have dedicated street care operatives in Pontypridd and Aberdare who clean the town centres prior to 9am to ensure that standards of cleanliness are brought back up to an acceptable standard.



Pontypridd Town Centre – 6:54am



Pontypridd Town Centre – 7:23am

We will continue to address resident's issues within the available budgets to ensure that standards remain above the Welsh Average for cleanliness.

Keep Wales Tidy also found that during their inspections that there has been a significant improvement in the number of streets affected by dog fouling since last year. Dog fouling has historically been an issue that our residents have been concerned about. For many years, we have targeted dog fouling by installing 821 dog fouling bins in areas identified as 'hot spots', by running high profile press campaigns to raise awareness and encouraging people to pick up after their dogs and by taking enforcement action against those people who continue to allow their dogs to foul our streets. In 2014/15, this included issuing 7 fixed penalty notices. It is therefore particularly pleasing that 'Keep Wales Tidy' found such a significant improvement. In response to a request for feedback in September 2014 on the positives and negatives associated with the priority 'Keeping RCT Clean & Green' one resident said that one positive is that):

'Most individuals clear up after their dogs' Resident R.M., Rhondda

However, we must be mindful that dog fouling continues to be a problem in some areas. One resident fed back:

'Dog mess is the biggest issue in the area that I live – there's a bin in the area and signs around to make people aware of the dog mess bins and that they will be fined but they fail to put the mess in the bins and there are never any wardens around to fine people.' Resident J.B., Pontypridd

Targeting Dog Fouling 'Hot Spot' Areas

The following 10 areas have been identified as dog fouling 'hot spot' areas. This means that the Council have received specific complaints about the areas and the problem of dog fouling:

- Lancaster Drive, Crown Hill, Llantwit Fardre.
- Arnotts Place, Aberdare.
- Welfare Playing Fields, Hirwaun.
- Dan-Y-Rhiw, Cwmaman.
- Maesycoed Playing Fields, Pontypridd.
- Ynyswen Road, Ynyswen, Treorchy.
- Birchgrove Street, Porth.
- Pontyclun Rugby Ground, Pontyclun.
- Hendrewen Road, Bleanrhondda.
- Darren Park, Ferndale.

The 10 areas have been subject to early morning patrols, extra dog fouling bins and additional signage to encourage people to clean up after their dogs.



In 2014/15, we cleared 97.72% of reported fly tipping. This represents 3644 of the 3729 reported incidents. This is currently less than our 2013/14 performance of 99.26% but with financial pressures impacting on the way that we deliver this service it is pleasing to see that we would still be performing above the 2013/14 Welsh Average of 95.03%. We have also removed all of the 205 reported

tipping incidents within 5 working days. incidents being cleared within 5 working days.

incidents of graffiti within 5 working days (100%) and all of the 117 incidents of abusive graffiti within 1 working day (100%) in 2014/15. This is currently better than our 2013/14 performance. One resident stated:

'This area is generally clean and there is rarely any fly tipping. The community should take responsibility for their local environment with the assistance of the community council.' Resident A.A.

One way we have made better use of our available resources is to work with our partners and local businesses to work together to tackle issues surrounding environmental crimes. In summer 2014, we joined forces with the Welsh Government and Fly-tipping Action Wales to crack down on Fly Tipping hot spots across the County Borough. The Council's Enforcement and Awareness Officers are now armed with the latest technology and are able to use a smart phone to log, photograph and plot fly-tipping incidents onto a GPS mapping system in real time. This pinpoints fly-tipping hotspots in Rhondda Cynon Taf and five other local authorities - Carmarthenshire, Gwynedd, Newport, Denbighshire and Cardiff.

We have also worked with 'Keep Wales Tidy' and local businesses in the County Borough, including a litter pick on the Taff Trail near Rhydyfelin with the McDonalds tidy team to tackle a litter problem in the area. Donning high visibility jackets and armed with litter pickers, the teams collected over 20 bags of litter as they looked to encourage the community to take responsibility for keeping their neighbourhood litter-free and take pride in the local environment. Activities like this will take place throughout the year across the Rhondda Cynon Taf.

We have dealt with a total of 4,150 customer complaints/requests to date this year within Streetcare Services, of which 3,275 have been dealt within the target of 15 working days. This represents a 78.9% response rate compared to 77% in 2013/14.

We said we would improve recycling rates through targeting areas of low participation and raising awareness of residents

Community participation remains key to the success of waste reduction and recycling, and awareness raising initiatives continued throughout the year to encourage residents to participate in reuse and recycling initiatives. We secured funding from Waste Awareness Wales to carry out a high profile food waste campaign, which encourages residents to reduce the amount of food they waste as part of the 'love food hate waste' campaign, and to recycle any unavoidable food waste. We are targeting areas with low recycling participation rates in order to meet the challenging recycling target of 58% set by Welsh Government for 2015/16. This includes awareness raising campaigns. The awareness campaign is carried out over a 4 week period. In week 1, the Awareness Team carry out an initial assessment of recycling participation in the area and letter drop to all households to inform them that the Awareness Team will be working in the area over the next 4 weeks. Residents can also contact the Awareness Team direct if they require recycling bags, food waste bins, nappy bins or further information on the Council's recycling schemes. This is followed by intensive door knocking exercises and weekly recycling participation checks. After week 3 the Awareness Team are provided with a list of properties where there has been no evidence of recycling participation. This enables the team to work more efficiently by only carrying out door knocking to the properties of residents who are not recycling.

Case Study – Recycling Participation Campaigns - Our Results in 2014/15

We have undertaken the following participation campaigns in 2014/15:

Penywaun - 21st March 2014 – 11th April 2014

Dry recycling participation increased from 52.7% in week 1 to 70.0% in week 4 with 85.9% of residents recycling at least once in the 4 week period. Food waste participation increased from 27.7% in week 1 to 37.2% in week 4 with 49.2% of residents participating in the food waste recycling scheme in the 4 week period.

Maerdy - 2nd May 2014 – 23rd May 2014

Dry recycling participation increased from 54.4% in week 1 to 71.7% in week 4 with 79.4% of residents recycling at least once in the 4 week period. Food waste participation increased from 26.9% in week 1 to 36.0% in week 4 with 40.4% of residents participating in the food waste recycling scheme in the 4 week period.

Cilfynydd - 26th May 2014 – 20th June 2014

Dry recycling participation increased from 48.4% in week 1 to 80.3% in week 4 with 87.5% of residents recycling at least once in the 4 week period. Food waste participation increased from 17.6% in week 1 to 46.1% in week 4 with 49.1% of residents participating in the food waste recycling scheme in the 4 week period.

Rhydyfelin (Phase 1) - 4th August 2014 – 29th August 2014

Dry recycling participation increased from 62.6% in week 1 to 85.1% in week 4 with 95.1% of residents recycling at least once in the 4 week period. Food waste participation increased from 29.5% in week 1 to 52.0% in week 4 with 57.7% of residents participating in the food waste recycling scheme in the 4 week period.

Glyncoch – March 2015 (follow up)

Originally visited in August 2013, Glyncoch is the first area that we have revisited to check if recycling participation rates have been maintained after the initial campaign. The initial campaign saw dry recycling participation increase from 55.5% in week 1 to 92.3% in week 4 with 95.2% of residents recycling at least once in the 4 week period. Food waste participation increased from 26.4% in week 1 to 61.7% in week 4 with 71.0% of residents participating in the food waste recycling scheme in the 4 week period.

The Awareness Raising team revisited Glyncoch in March 2015 and found that dry recycling participation increased slightly to 95.5% and food waste dropped slightly to 69.8%, still significantly higher than when the first participation checks were made in August 2013.

We sought feedback from our residents on recycling in November and December 2014. Visiting supermarket car parks with our recycling trailer, we were able to speak to and gain feedback from nearly 500 residents across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf Ely about their recycling habits and importantly how they felt about changes to collections. Feedback from residents showed that of those who completed a questionnaire, 100% said that they already took part in the Council's recycling scheme, 98% on a weekly basis. 94% of those asked found the Council's current recycling schemes easy but when asked if they would be willing to separate some of their recycling into the various material types in the home, 43% said they would not (and 40% said they would either stop participating in the scheme or would reduce their frequency of participating).

We have also received feedback from residents who were interested in taking part in a focus group so that we could better understand the positives and negatives associated with **'Keeping RCT Clean & Green'**. Comments have included:

'If you look at other councils, RCT are very good at recycling. We put very little into black bags now – once a fortnight if that' Resident L.C.

'Can I say though that I am very happy with my waste collections especially the ability to get rid of the garden waste that I can't compost.' Resident A.A.

'RCT don't show enough of what has been recycled for people to realise its worth. We need more advertising, more education, leaflets through doors to get the message out there – show what is being recycled. We need to educate people – younger people are being brought up to recycle and look after their area' Resident L.C.

'More pressure should be put on the retail sector to use biodegradable packaging. What about a grading system for shops and businesses that take recycling seriously .perhaps like the five star grades for food outlets' Resident A.A.

We will continue to seek ways to publicise the recycling services that we offer and we will continue to provide opportunities for communities and schools to visit our education centre in Bryn Pica where our recycling processes can be viewed.

A particular focus in 2014/15 has been the implementation of Green Glyncoch. This project was first introduced in 2009 with the aim of turning the village of Glyncoch into a 'Zero Waste Area', where at least 95 per cent of residents recycle both their dry recyclables and their food waste, and respect their environment. Recycling levels have increased greatly over the past five years from 46% of residents participating in dry recycling to 95.5% and 43% participating in food waste recycling to 69.8% between November 2011 and March 2015. Residents have also supported activities such as litter-picking and good dog ownership schemes. In 2014/15, we worked in partnership with Glyncoch Regeneration and set up a team of volunteers to collect and sort recycling at the kerbside. This is designed to improve the quality of the recycling materials collected and reduce the risk of contamination which can reduce the value of the recycling collected. Whilst the initial set up of this trial has been challenging, the scheme is now beginning to deliver success with high recycling participation in the village.

We continued to promote recycling with our younger residents by introducing the Christmas Card Recycling Challenge in January 2015. The winning school, Ysgol Hen Felin in Ystrad, collected 42 stones or the equivalent weight of 10 average 8 year old pupils (10 x 4.2 stone) in cards to scoop top prize in this year's competition. They were closely followed by Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn Y Forwyn after they collected 27 stone (379.99lb) and Porth Infants 11 stone (158.78lb) in cards. The challenge asked schools to collect as many cards as possible and bring them in to their schools to be collected. A total of 33 schools took part in the challenge which saw over 323 stones (4,532.16lb) of Christmas cards collected – that's equivalent to the weight of 77 average 8 year old pupils or 2 tonnes.

We re-opened the 'Go Green Baby' disposable nappy recycling scheme to new applicants in September 2014 following the introduction and huge popularity of the scheme in 2013. Initially intended to target 500-1,000 residents in 2013, the demand for the scheme exceeded 4,500 in its first few months. To improve the service that the Council offers mums and dads in 2014/15, four new nappy vans have been purchased, which are clearly branded and able to hygienically collect disposable nappies and incontinence pads around the County Borough. We are now able to send 20 ton of nappies for recycling on a weekly basis via Nappi Cycle which is provided by Natural UK, who provide our nappy and incontinence pad recycling service, and so far over 1,500 tonnes of nappies have been collected and recycled since the scheme was launched in 2013.

We have continued to encourage residents to increase the amount of their rubbish that they recycle by launching our "Too Many Black Bags, Recycle or Face a Fine!" campaign. From autumn 2014, the Council's Streetcare team began rolling out changes to the amount of additional black bags, also known as side waste that would be collected from its residents in the Rhondda area. This change in policy limits the amount of black bags that residents can put out for collection on a fortnightly basis and therefore encourages residents to recycle their rubbish instead. Additional black bags, except ash waste, are no longer collected and residents who do leave out additional side waste now receive a visit from the Council's Enforcement and Awareness officers, so that they can help with future waste issues. Following these visits, repeat offenders will face a £75 fine. Enforcement is always a last resort and if residents are using the Council's recycling services there should be no excuse for additional black bag waste. The enforcement and awareness raising teams have visited communities and distributed leaflets throughout the County Borough to make people aware of the changes to black bag waste and the potential fines if the amount of rubbish is exceeded. As a result of the changes, black bag waste in the Rhondda has reduced by over 30% when we compare the weekly tonnage of black bag waste collected before the new arrangements were introduced (from 274.64 tonnes to 190.78 tonnes). The scheme was rolled out to the Cynon area in November 2014 and the Taff Ely area in January 2015. For more information on the new arrangements please visit our website [Too many black bags! Recycle](#). The enforcement and awareness raising teams are also using intelligence gathered as part of the 'Too Many Black Bags' campaign to target areas such as Fernhill and Penrhys, which have been identified as being areas of low participation. We have also identified the priority areas for 2015 (Cae Fardre, Penrhys, Penywaun and Tylorstown) which will be visited by officers via door knocking exercises to ensure residents are participating in recycling in identified low participation areas

We are pleased that we are continuing to reduce the percentage of our municipal waste that we send to landfill. Our 2014/15 performance of 35.01% is a significant improvement on our 2013/14 performance of 41.56% and exceeds our 2014/15 local target of sending less than 45% of municipal waste collected to landfill. Our performance also places us above the 2013/14 Welsh Average of 37.72%.

However, we have failed to improve recycling rates significantly enough to meet our recycling targets. When calculating our recycling rates we separate the materials that we collect into reuse e.g. household goods that are able to be reused; dry recycling e.g. paper, plastics and metals; and

green recycling e.g. food waste and grass cuttings. Whilst our current performance for dry recycling is 42.23%, which would represent top quartile performance when compared to the 2013/14 all Wales data, our green recycling rates of 11.28% continue to be low compared to the rest of Wales, placing us in the bottom quartile when compared to 2013/14 all Wales data. This means that when considered together, we have recycled 54.08% or 59,744 tonnes of municipal waste, narrowly missing our local target of recycling 55% of our municipal waste in 2014/15. Our performance is also below the 2013/14 Welsh Average of 54.33%. This means that whilst we have increased the percentage of municipal waste that we have recycled compared to last year (49.31%) we still have to make significant improvements if we are to meet the Welsh Government national target of recycling at least 58% of municipal waste in 2015/16. This puts us at risk of incurring significant financial penalties. Estimated financial penalties based on current figures at £200 per tonne could be in the region of £1M.

However, we are confident that the various measures that we have discussed above will put us in a good position to meet the 58% target in 2015/16. This can be demonstrated by the vast improvement in the percentage of municipal waste we recycled at the beginning of 2014 compared to the percentage at the end of the financial year. Between April 2014 and February 2015 our combined recycling figure was 53.03%, but in February 2015 the stand alone data was 62.3%. This suggests that the actions that we have taken in 2014/15 will have an impact on our recycling rates in 2015/16 which makes us confident about hitting the 58% in 2015/16. However, we still recognise that this is a risk for the Council.

We said we would develop a residual waste treatment plant with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in line with Welsh Government requirements and to review options to achieve higher levels of levels of recycling through the processes operated by the Service

We are continuing to develop a solution for the treatment of residual waste with Merthyr Tydfil Council. Contract documents have been produced and a short list of potential companies compiled through a pre-qualification process. The list of bidders has now been reduced to the final two via a competitive dialogue procurement process. We originally stated in the Corporate Plan 2014/15 that we would have awarded the contract by December 2014. However, this was misstated and this date actually only referred to the evaluation of bids. At this time the bidding process is not complete but ongoing and we are on schedule to appoint the Preferred Bidder by June 2015 and reach contract award by September 2015. The remaining two bidders have significantly different proposals but both are in a position to take waste on the Contract Commencement Date.

We said we would develop a food waste treatment plant with Merthyr Tydfil and Newport County Borough Councils in line with Welsh Government requirements and to review options to achieve higher levels of recycling through the processes operated by the Service

We have developed a food waste treatment plant in collaboration with Merthyr Tydfil and Newport Councils. Renewable energy firm Biogen (UK) Ltd has designed and built it and it will operate the new food waste-to-energy plant at Bryn Pica, Aberdare. The construction phase of the project was completed in December 2014 and the plant is now being commissioned and is on schedule to be operational by June 2015. The new anaerobic digestion facility has the capacity to convert 22,500 tonnes of food waste into green electricity and also produce a fertiliser for farmland. Based on current food waste recycling rates across the three councils involved, this project will generate one mega-watt of green electricity, sufficient to

power 1,500 homes. Anaerobic Digestion is a treatment process favoured by the Welsh Government's for dealing with food waste and the scheme is supported by the Welsh Government's Regional Capital Access Fund.

We said we would provide well maintained highways infrastructure that will support our Prosperity Priority through contributing to the economic, environmental and social development within the County Borough.

We completed the £1 million structural refurbishment of the Victoria Bridge in Pontypridd as part of the Council's Structure Investment Programme. The Victoria Bridge, which crosses the River Taff next to Pontypridd's iconic William Edwards Bridge and is one of the main routes that link Pontypridd and the Rhondda Valleys to the A470, underwent essential strengthening repairs to ensure the long-term stability of the 148-year-old structure. The bridge was re-opened to two lane traffic and pedestrians in January 2015.



The photos show works to the upstream cantilevered bridge deck adjacent to the William Edwards Bridge. The deck was supported by a temporary structure which was built in the river whilst the work was carried out.



Maintaining access for our communities is reliant on having structures that can carry traffic loading. Without adequate maintenance many of our structures would need to be closed or access over them restricted. The above photos show progress on the £260k scheme to replace the substandard bridge deck which carries traffic over the river at Blaenrhondda. Work was undertaken in two halves so that the only vehicular access to Blaenrhondda was maintained whilst these critical works were undertaken.

Investment in our highways has continued to be a priority and we continued a programme of investment to improve the condition of our roads and footpaths. This has included resurfacing 68 streets and 65 footways as part of Phase 4, a £30 million investment in traditional and preventative treatments on Council highways. Environmentally friendly preventative surface treatments which restore the skid resistance of road surfaces as well as sealing the surface to prevent ongoing deterioration have been extensively used. These treatments are carried out at a fraction of the cost and much more quickly than conventional surfacing techniques reducing travel delays due to road works. Traditional surfacing materials have also been used at numerous locations around the County Borough to repair worse condition roads such as the A4061 Rhigos Mountain Road. We have also renewed 300 metres of safety barriers on the mountain roads at Maerdy and Rhigos Mountains to improve the safety of our roads.

We know that the impact of this investment is contributing to the improving condition of our roads: the percentage of our roads in overall poor condition has fallen from 9.94% in 2013/14 to 9.35% in 2014/15, above the 2013/14 Welsh Average of 13.2%.

We have also continued to reduce the energy costs and overall carbon emissions of our street lighting stock. The Council currently operates and maintains 28,500 lights in residential and non-residential areas. As well as implementing the agreed proposals detailed in the Phase 2 service cuts (see Making best use of our budget section for further details), which following detailed risk assessments, saw the introduction of part night (midnight to 5am) switch off of all streetlights in non-residential areas and the part night (midnight to 5am) switch off of alternate (every other) streetlight in residential areas, we have also replaced street lighting columns that were due to be replaced in 80 streets across the Council with new columns that are fitted with energy efficient LED lanterns. This will generate savings on energy costs (£300k in a full year) and will reduce carbon emissions. Whilst the public consultation revealed broad support for this savings initiative, the changes have resulted in a number of concerns being raised. The white and LED lights are far more efficient than the old orange lights and result in far less light spillage and pollution. This means

that most of the light is now focussed on the highway. This has been a big culture change for those that have hitherto relied on street lights to illuminate their driveways and front gardens and means that some are now installing their own lighting in these private areas. Concerns about personal safety and security have also been raised, however, these have generally been limited by the fact that few people are actually out walking the streets after midnight.

We said we would provide a safe environment for RCT residents through increased protection from flooding and improved road safety awareness and training for our residents within our most vulnerable groups

We implemented four flood alleviation schemes across the County Borough in 2014/15 having secured £2.5M flood alleviation funding from the Capital Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and Welsh Government's Flood Risk Management Grant due for completion by end of March 2015. Nant Cae Dudwg, Cilfynydd, Nant Gwawr, Aberaman, the Nant y Fedw, Abercynon, and Bwlfa Road, Cwmdare have benefitted from these schemes and in total 412 homes/businesses have had their risk of flooding alleviated. All four areas have seen flooding in recent years and it is hoped that these schemes will now reduce the risk to future flooding events taking place by alleviating historical flooding issues. As funding was specific to 2014/15, we will not be including flood alleviation in our priority plans for 2015/16. However, we will continue to provide services related to flood risk management and manage flooding risks as part of our regular Council business.

Case Study – Flood Alleviation Scheme in Nant Cae Dudwg, Cilfynydd

In 2014/15, the Council secured £2.5 million funding to alleviate flood risks in four key areas across the County Borough. £240,000 was invested in a flood alleviation scheme in Nant Cae Dudwg, Cilfynydd which was completed in Autumn 2014 and has directly benefited 11 residential properties and three commercial properties in the Cilfynydd area. The scheme also alleviates and minimises flooding to the wider area, as it tackles historical flooding issues centred around the culvert inlet alongside Pant Ddu Road and the locally known 'Cilfynydd Lido' area.

The project included the renewal and raising of the flood wall at the inlet together with changes to the inlet grill. Works have also been carried out to retain leaves and other debris from the hillside and to stabilise the collapsing walls and allow fish to pass. This will minimise the amount of debris travelling downstream onto the inlet grill and minimise the damage to the grill from on-going debris removal. A warning system has been installed on the inlet to provide maintenance teams with advanced warnings of potential blockage.



Before



After

It is hoped that this historically flood hit area will now see a reduction in flooding for many years to come.

We also commenced work to improve pedestrian safety at the A4058 Broadway/Sardis Road junction thanks to £250,000 funding from Welsh Government. This busy thoroughfare at the gateway to the Rhondda Valleys and Pontypridd Town Centre can be a difficult area for pedestrians to cross because of the high volumes of traffic and in a bid to improve overall safety the existing crossing, outside the Bingo hall to the railway station entrance, has been upgraded. The length of the crossing has been reduced by widening the footpath for pedestrians, improving the view of on-coming traffic and a visual countdown timer to warn pedestrians that the lights are changing is being installed. A new pedestrian crossing outside the Probation Office/Wetherspoons has been constructed to overcome a hazardous situation for those pedestrians who chose to cross 5 lanes of traffic and navigate a traffic island. The installation of this new crossing will ensure improved pedestrian safety. As part of the scheme, new street lighting will be installed along with new traffic signage. Work was carried out between Christmas and the end of the financial year, with key works being carried out overnight to minimise disruption to the travelling public.

Work also continued on the introduction of traffic management schemes in Rhydyfelin and Maerdy, with the help of Welsh Government funding, which will help to make the roads in these communities safer. Safe Routes in Communities is a Welsh Government grant programme that allows local authorities to bid for funding on an annual basis. The programme aims to improve accessibility and safety, and encourage walking and cycling within communities. It is designed to change how people travel, resulting in greater social inclusion and improved community safety. Over the last three years, the Council has received £605,500 in total from the programme which has helped create safe walking and cycling routes for the schools and the community. Consultation on the introduction of the scheme in Rhydyfelin took place in November 2014 with all works now completed. Our funding bid to progress a similar initiative in Maerdy was supported in part and cycle storage facilities have been installed in the local primary and secondary schools. A revised bid for Maerdy has been submitted for 2015/16. In addition we have also bid for phased funding to provide a footway link between Llantrisant and Brynteg along the B4595, supporting access for pupils attending Bryncelynog Comprehensive School. The outcome of these bids will be known early in 2015/16. Local Transport Funding was granted by Welsh Government to enhance public transport infrastructure in the Rhondda Fawr, these enhanced facilities promote social inclusion for the one in three households in the valley that do not have access to a car. Sustainable transport also helps to alleviate congestion. This £250k scheme was successfully completed in 2014/15.



A new crossing in Rhydyfelin

An enhanced bus stop near Pontygwaith – part of a bus corridor improvement scheme funded by a £250k Local transport Fund Grant

We are committed to raising awareness of road safety and safer driving within our community and have continued to provide grant funded road safety initiatives aimed at all ages with our partners throughout 2014/15. Initiatives range from ‘Kerbcraft’ which is aimed at primary school age children to ‘Megadrive’ which is available to all 6th form pupils. Older drivers are involved in 1 in 10 road accidents and Mature Driver courses provide refresher and updated training to allow our mature drivers to safely retain their independence and boost their confidence. 1 in 5 young drivers are involved in a crash in the first year of passing their test. Around 27 young drivers are killed or seriously injured on UK roads every week together with around 18 young passengers. We act as the lead authority for 8 councils in the region in coordinating and managing the Pass Plus Cymru initiative which provides new drivers with enhanced skills after they have passed their test, including 6 hours tuition with an advanced driving instructor gaining practical experience of motorway, night-time and wet weather driving.

We have also consulted on a new resident parking scheme in Pontypridd and Treforest in response to increasing amounts of complaints from residents about the high number of commuters, shoppers and workers parking in the streets of residential areas during the day and into the evening. This has created severe parking pressures for residents. We commenced a consultation process during May 2014 with residents and business owners to gauge support for a proposed residents parking scheme in the area. This was followed up by further consultation in November 2014 on revised proposals which took into account feedback from

residents and businesses on the first phase of consultation. The final scheme will be introduced during 2015 and we will take enforcement action to ensure compliance with the new scheme.

We have also begun to seek public opinion on the introduction of a revised residents parking scheme in Aberdare. We have drafted a proposed residents parking scheme for the Maes Y Dre, Gadlys and Foundrytown areas of the town which seeks to address these issues by extending existing residential parking zones as well as creating new residents parking zones, together with short term limited waiting parking bays to provide parking opportunities for visitors. We consulted on the proposed scheme throughout January and February 2015 and hope to have a final scheme introduced by July 2015

What this means for 2015/16?

As part of the first stage General Budget Strategy Consultation for 2015/16, which took place in November and December 2014, respondents were provided with a list of current council priority areas that were targeted for improvement in 2014 and they were then asked if they agreed or disagreed that the Council had made sufficient improvements in these priorities in 2014. The Council priority area with the highest percentage of respondents in agreement (agree and strongly agree) that it had made sufficient improvements was keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and 'green' (55.0%). However, we recognise that we still have to deliver improvements in this area and our priorities for 2015/16 continue to be:

- Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green

This will mean:

- 58% of our waste is recycled by March 2016
- Our streets are clean all year round with continued focus on enforcement of littering, graffiti, fly tipping, fly posting and non compliance of recycling and waste collections
- Our highways network is well maintained and well managed

**Wales Programme for Improvement
Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and 'green'**

What we aim to achieve:

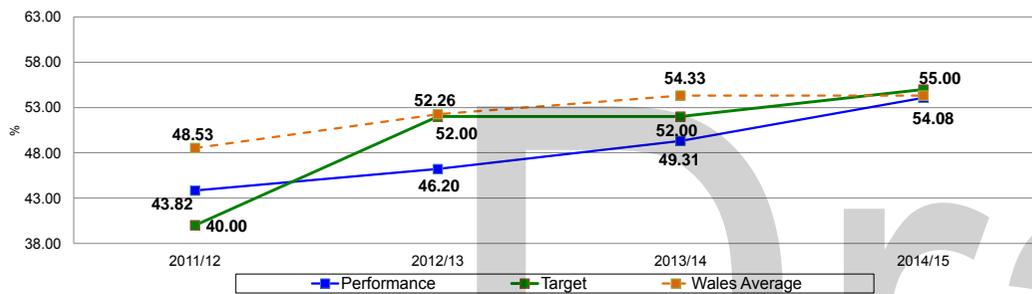
Dealing with our waste sustainably continues to be a high priority and in addition to continuing to increase our recycling rates, we are also working to minimise the level of waste produced by promoting reuse schemes and investigating alternatives to landfill for disposal of waste which cannot be recycled. We continue to work to deliver cleaner streets, both by education and awareness campaigns and strict enforcement of littering, graffiti, fly tipping and fly posting. Maintaining our highways and keeping traffic moving is a high priority for residents and we will target continued investment in our highways infrastructure and tackle problem parking through the introduction and appropriate enforcement of traffic regulations.

Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?

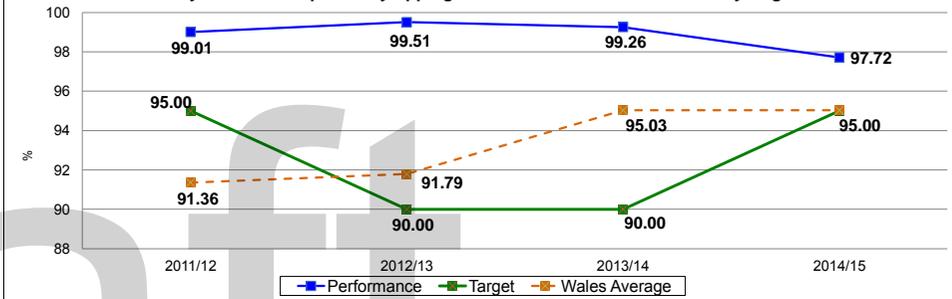
Risk Description:	Outcome Reference:
If the specific root causes of areas where recycling is known to be low are not identified and addressed then the amount sent to landfill will not necessarily reduce resulting in financial penalties from the Welsh Government.	2
In light of the current budget reductions across the public sector, capital and revenue funding required for the Council's Highways infrastructure may reduce which could impair the Council's ability to maintain and improve the existing infrastructure.	5

How will we know if we are making a difference:

Key PI 1 - % of municipal waste collected and prepared for reuse and/or recycling



Key PI 2 - % of reported fly tipping incidents cleared within the 5 day target



Story behind the data: Key PI 1 - The graph shows performance has improved since 2013/14 by 4.77% (from 49.31% in 2013/14 to 54.08% this year*). Our current performance places us slightly below the 2013/14 Wales Average of 54.33%, and moves us out of bottom quartile performance (based on 2013/14 all Wales data).

This improvement equates to an increase of 6,316 tonnes of waste being recycled in 2014/15 compared to last year (53,428 in 2013/14 - 59,744 in 2014/15). Our food waste recycled has also increased by 1,144 compared to last year (7,024 tonnes in 2013/14 - 8168 tonnes in 2014/15).

*Provisional Data

Story behind the data: Key PI 2 - This year there have been 3,729 reports of fly tipping, of which 3,644 were removed within 5 working days. The average time taken to remove these fly tipping incidents was 0.77 days. In comparison, 3,399 fly tipping incidents were recorded last year with 3,374 removed within 5 days taking an average of 0.47 days

Story

Nigel Wheeler - Director of Highways and Streetcare Services - March 2015

Key Priority: Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green (Streetcare Services & The Natural Environment)

Lead Officer: Nigel Wheeler (Director of Highways and Streetcare Services)

Outcome 1: Deliver Clean Streets

Theme	Title	Measures									Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16 Annual Target	Comment
		2012/13 Annual Performance	2013/14 Annual Performance	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15						
				Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG				
Safety	Me01 - The cleanliness index (Local)	74.7	74.9	1	6	73.2	72.2	74.3	●	↓	72.2	Annual performance is within top quartile when compared to 2013/14 all Wales data.	
	Me02 - % of streets, highways & relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness (Statutory)	99.5	99.7	1	2	96.8	95.8	99.7	●	↑	95.0	Annual performance is within top quartile when compared to 2013/14 all Wales data.	
	Me03 - % of streets, highways & relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness (LEAMS) (Local)	97.6	96.8				95.0	97.6	●	↔	Not being reported in 2014/15		
	Me04 - % of streets returned to Grade A standard within 1 working day (Local)	83.3	91.18				85.00	100.00	●	↑	85.00		
	Me05 - % of reported abusive graffiti removed within 1 day (Local)	100	97				95	100	●	↔	Not being reported in 2015/16		
	Me06 - % of all reported graffiti removed within 5 days (Local)	100	98				95	100	●	↔	Not being reported in 2015/16		
	Me07 - Average number of working days taken to remove fly tipping (Local)	0.29	0.47				<5	0.77	●	↓			
	Me08 - % of reported fly tipping incidents on relevant land cleared within 5 working days (Statutory)	99.51	99.26	1	2	95.03	95.00	97.72	●	↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	<i>This performance indicator has also been shown graphically at the front of the plan</i> Whilst 2013/14 performance was in Wales top quartile, in anticipation of the impact of service changes the 2014/15 target was set in bottom quartile. 2014/15 annual performance is above the 2014/15 annual target and all Wales average but is no longer in top quartile for Wales.	
	Me09 - % of reported fly tipping incidents which lead to enforcement activity (Local)	12.44	11.80	2	8	30.13	15.00	18.42	●	↑	Not being reported in 2015/16	This service has also been subject to change, and a reduced target set for 2014/15. Annual performance has exceeded target, and is better than 2013/14, but remains below the 2013/14 all Wales average.	

Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee 15th June 2015

Key Priority: Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green (Streetcare Services & The Natural Environment)

Lead Officer: Nigel Wheeler (Director of Highways and Streetcare Services)

Outcome 2: To improve recycling rates through targeting areas of low participation and raising awareness with residents

Theme	Title	Measures										Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Safety	Me01 - % of municipal waste that is sent to landfill (Statutory)	38.19	41.56	3	12	37.72	45.00	35.01	●	↑	42.00	Annual performance has exceeded the 2014/15 target and has improved since 2013/14. Performance also remains above the 2013/14 all Wales average.
	Me02 - % of local authority collected municipal waste prepared for reuse and/or recycled, including source segregated bio wastes that are composted or treated biologically in another way (Statutory)	46.20	49.31	4	21	54.33	55.00	54.08	●	↑	58.00	<i>This performance indicator has also been shown graphically at the front of the plan.</i> Annual performance is slightly below target but has improved since 2013/14. Despite this improvement performance remains below the 2013/14 all Wales average
	Me03 - % of local authority collected municipal waste diverted from landfill (Local)	61.81	58.44				N/A	69.08		↑		For information only
	Me04 - No. of visits, presentations, campaigns to discuss enviro-crimes and recycling including school visits (Local)	740	432				400	271	●	↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	The annual target has not be met due to a change in service priorities. Staff have been utilised to manage the roll out of the revised side waste policy.
	Me05 - % of residents in Glyncoch taking part in recycling scheme for a) Dry recycling b) Food waste recycling (New) (Local)	N/A	N/A				N/A	a) 95.5 b) 69.8		N/A	Not being reported in 2015/16	

*Provisional data

Finance & Performance Scrutiny Committee 15th June 2015

Key Priority: Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green (Streetcare Services & The Natural Environment)
 Lead Officer: Nigel Wheeler (Director of Highways and Streetcare Services)

Outcome 5: A well maintained highways infrastructure that will support our Prosperity Priority through contributing to the economic, environmental and social development within the County Borough. The single most important element of our highway network is our extensive carriageway asset. It extends to 1,260km and is the Authority's largest single asset

Theme	Title	Measures										Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16 Annual Target	Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			RAG				
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	Annual Target					
Safety	Me01 - % of Principal (A) roads in poor condition (Local)	7.6	8.1	4	22	4.4	8.7	8.0	●	↓	8.7	Annual performance has exceeded 2014/15 target and has improved since 2013/14. Performance remains within the 2013/14 bottom quartile and worst in Wales.		
	Me02 - % of Non-Principal / Classified (B) roads in poor condition (Local)	9.9	8.4	4	19	6.1	8.2	6.4	●	↑	8.2	Annual performance has exceeded 2014/15 target and has improved since 2013/14. Performance remains within the 2013/14 bottom quartile.		
	Me03 - % of Non-Principal/ Classified (C) roads in poor condition (Local)	13.9	13.6	2	11	18.9	13.0	13.3	●	↑	13.3	Annual performance has not achieved 2014/15 target. However performance has improved since 2013/14, and performance is above the 2013/14 all Wales average		
	Me04 - % of Principal (A) roads and Non-Principal / classified (B) and (C) roads that are in overall poor condition (Statutory)	10.0	9.9	3	15	13.2	10.0	9.4	●	↑	10.0	Annual performance has exceeded the 2014/15 target and has improved since 2013/14. Performance is above the 2013/14 all Wales average		
	Me05 - % of maintained streetlights 'in-light' (Local)	93.75	95.18				95.00	100.00	●	↑	96.10			
	Me06 - The average number of days taken to repair street lamps during the year (Local)	3.75	2.74	1	5	4.75	4.00	3.82	●	↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	In anticipation of the impact of service changes the 2014/15 target was set lower than 2013/14 performance. Annual performance has exceeded target, and is above the all Wales average for 2013/14 but not in top quartile.		

Footnote:

* Scanner surveys are undertaken by accredited UKPMS (UK Pavement Management System) providers to assess the condition of roads on an annual basis. Surveys have been undertaken in this quarter, and the data presented represents the year end position.

Key Priority: Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green (Streetcare Services & The Natural Environment)
 Lead Officer: Nigel Wheeler (Director of Highways and Streetcare Services)

Outcome 6: A safe environment for RCT residents through increased protection from flooding and improved road safety awareness and training for our residents within our most vulnerable groups

Theme	Title	Measures									Comment	
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13		2015/16
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG	2014/15 against 2012/13		Annual Target
Safety	Me01 - No. of homes / businesses where the risk from flooding has been minimised by flood alleviation schemes (New) (Local)	349	7				375	375	●	N/A		

Draft

STREETCARE WPI 2015/16 Action Plan

Dealing with our waste sustainably continues to be a high priority and ,in addition to continuing to increase our recycling rates, we are also working to minimise the level of waste produced by promoting reuse schemes and investigating alternatives to landfill for disposal of waste which cannot be recycled. We continue to work to deliver cleaner streets, both by education and awareness campaigns and strict enforcement of littering , graffiti, fly tipping and fly posting. Maintaining our highways and keeping traffic moving is a high priority for residents and we will target continued investment in our highways infrastructure including structures.

In developing this plan we have identified the following strategic risks that could impact on delivery of this priority . The impact and likelihood of these risks have been assessed and actions to mitigate them appear in this plan and the Council's Strategic Risk Register (see extract below.)

**Lead Officer(s) for this priority:
Nigel Wheeler - Director of Highways and Streetcare Services**

2014/15 Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?

Risk Description:	Outcome Reference:
If the specific root causes of areas where recycling is known to be low are not identified and addressed then the amount of waste sent to landfill will not necessarily reduce resulting in financial penalties from the Welsh Government.	
In light of the current budget reductions across the public sector, capital and revenue funding required for the Council's Highways infrastructure may reduce which could impair the Council's ability to maintain and improve the existing infrastructure.	

Council Key Priority:

Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green (Streetcare Services & The Natural Environment)

Lead Officer:

Nigel Wheeler - Director of Highways and Streetcare Services

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 1 - 58% of our waste is recycled by March 2016
Why we need to do it:	Encourage residents, businesses and Council buildings to take ownership of the waste they produce
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	Homes and Communities
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Educating business to pass onto their employees and customers

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		Rationale
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	
Me01 - The percentage of municipal waste that is sent to landfill (Statutory)	38.19	41.56	3.00	12.00	37.72	45.00	35.01	42	National target set to achieve 58% recycling by the end of 2015/16
Me02 - The percentage of local authority collected municipal waste prepared for reuse and/or recycled, including source segregated bio wastes that are composted or treated biologically in another way (Statutory)	46.20	49.31	4.00	21.00	54.33	55.00	54.08	58	National target set to achieve 58% by the end of 2015/16
Me03 - The percentage of municipal waste prepared for reuse (Local)	0.39	0.49	3.00	12.00	2.09	N/A	0.56		No target set as contributes to Me02
Me04 - The percentage of municipal waste that is recycled (Local)	37.21	38.20	1.00	5.00	33.80	N/A	42.23		No target set as contributes to Me02

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me05 - The percentage of local authority collected municipal waste that is collected as source segregated bio wastes and composted or treated biologically in another way (Local)	8.6	10.61	4.00	22.00	18.44	N/A	11.28		No target set as contributes to Me02
Me06 - The percentage of local authority collected municipal waste that is use to recover heat and power (Local)	15.61	9.67	2.00	7.00	9.11	N/A	15.00		No target set as it includes energy from waste, which is dependent on resources.

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Awareness raising and participation checks in low participation areas	M01	Undertake 4 intensive participation exercises in low recycling participation areas (Cae Fardre, Penywaun, Tylorstown, Penrhys) to raise the rate of participation. The exercise will include an initial assessment of participation, an intensive door knocking exercise and follow up participation assessments over a 4 week period	Mar-16	C Evans/ A Dennis
	M02	Undertake participation exercises in high recycling participation areas to recognise and promote those communities and identify good practice.	Mar-16	C Evans/ A Dennis
	M03	Monitor recycling participation following intensive participation exercises after 6 months to determine if improvements are sustained	Mar-16	C Evans/ A Dennis
CA02 - Ensure relevant and up to date information is available to residents on our recycling schemes and how they can dispose of their waste responsibly	M01	To ensure Council website waste pages are accurate and contain timely information i.e. Christmas collections etc.	Mar-16	N Jones
	M02	Undertake customer satisfaction surveys in order to improve our service provision	Mar-16	N Jones
	M03	Work in partnership with local supermarkets to take part in promotional events	Mar-16	N Jones
	M04	Introduce and promote charges for replacement wheelie bins	Jun-15	N Jones
	M05	Open and promote new Community Recycling Centre in Talbot Green	Jun-15	N Jones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA03 - Raise awareness in schools, residents and community groups on environmental issues	M01	Organise visits to Bryn Pica for landfill safari, recycling workshops and other environmental problems	Mar-16	S Owen
	M02	Promote recycling competitions in primary schools e.g. Christmas Card and Easter Egg Challenges	Mar-16	C Evans
	M03	Promote Love Where You Live awards with residents, schools and community groups to maximise entries	Mar-16	C Evans
CA04 - Develop waste treatment facility for food waste	M01	Manage contract to end of commissioning phase and start of operations	Jul-15	I Berry
	M02	Manage contract during operational phase	TBC	I Berry
CA05 - Develop a waste treatment facility for residual waste	M01	Release final tender documentation	Apr-15	I Berry
	M02	Evaluate final tender returns	May-15	I Berry
	M03	Appoint preferred bidder	Jun-15	I Berry
	M04	Award contract	Aug-15	I Berry

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - Reduction in budget and funding sources	Make the best of our existing resources or less resources to ensure service efficiencies are met
R2 - Communication	Implement communications plan
R3 - Lack of interest in recycling from businesses	Attractive rates for recycling, non attractive rates for general waste
R4 - Inefficient collections	Ensure rounds are reviewed periodically to accommodate new and existing customers
R5 - Lack of buy-in residents	Undertake door knocking in areas of low recycling participation Use of social media and other online methods to communicate with residents

Council Key Priority:

Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green (Streetcare Services & The Natural Environment)

Lead Officer:

Nigel Wheeler - Director of Highways and Streetcare Services

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 2 - Our streets are clean all year round with continued focus on enforcement of littering, graffiti, fly tipping, fly posting and non compliance of recycling and waste collections
Why we need to do it:	Tackle basic environmental problems Encourage public responsibility, participation and compliance with recycling and waste collections
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	Homes and Communities
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Reduce the amount of household waste, litter, fly tipping and dog fouling on our streets

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me01 - Number of fixed penalty notices issued (Local)	586.00	307.00				N/A	1533.00	N/A	For information
Me02 - Number of warning letters (Local)	9,079	6,096				N/A	3,661	N/A	For information
Me03 - The cleanliness index	74.70	74.90	1.00	6.00	73.20	72.20	74.27	72.20	Managed decline with reduced budget and reduced staff resource
Me04 - Percentage of streets of highways & relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness (Local)	99.50	99.70	1.00	2.00	96.80	95.80	99.75	95.00	Managed decline with reduced budget and reduced staff resource
Me05 - Percentage of streets returned to Grade A standard within one working day (Local)	83.30	91.18				85.00	90.91	85.00	Managed decline with reduced budget and reduced staff resource

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Undertake targeted cleansing operations in identified problem areas	M01	Review hot spots areas to target resources/frequency of cleansing required	Mar-16	S Gammon/ M Price
	M02	Target problems areas and patrol for litter, dog fouling and fly tipping	Mar-16	S Gammon/ M Price
	M03	Targeted enforcement exercises on blitzes/specific problem areas	Mar-16	S Gammon/ M Price
	M04	Work with communities during/following targeted exercises to reduce the likelihood of cleansing issues reoccurring	Mar-16	S Gammon/ M Price
	M05	Undertake specific enforcement patrols and surveillance to respond to specific complaints e.g. early morning patrols in Town Centres or use of CCTV equipment	Mar-16	S Gammon/ M Price

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - Reduction in budget and funding sources	Make the best of our existing resources or less resources to ensure service efficiencies
R2 - Communication	Implement communications plan Use local press to raise awareness Liaise with community groups to identify problems Increased working with Customer Services and ICT
R3 - Lack of engagement with partners	Communicate with partners to gain appreciation of their needs and aspirations Communicate service needs to partners

Council Key Priority:

Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green (Streetcare Services & The Natural Environment)

Lead Officer:

Nigel Wheeler - Director of Highways and Streetcare Services

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 3 - Our highways network is well maintained and well managed
Why we need to do it:	An integrated service, with all teams contributing to meeting the Network Management Duty in maintaining the street environment to meet the needs of all members of the community through the use of effective asset management delivering a more resilient network.
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	Prosperity
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	All residents will benefit from more effective management and maintenance of our network which will support the economic activity of the borough. A well maintained and managed highway network will provide more effective and reliable transport corridors with reduced congestion and delays from unplanned road works.

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me01 - The percentage of principal (A) roads, non-principal (B) roads and non-principal (C) roads that are in overall poor condition (Statutory)	10.00	9.94	3.00	15.00	13.20	10.00	9.40	10.00	The 15/16 capital works programme is analysed to determine how much poor condition road will be removed from the network. It is assumed that any road sections with a condition index of 95-99.9 which are not included in forthcoming year's the capital programme will deteriorate into poor condition. As the capital programme has only just been approved, this analysis has not yet been carried out, so the stated targets are provisional estimates will be amended over the next few weeks following the analysis.
Me02 - % of Principal Roads (A) in poor condition (Local)	7.60	8.10	4.00	22.00	4.40	8.70	8.00	8.70	
Me03 - % of Non-Principal/Classified B roads in poor condition (Local)	9.90	8.40	4.00	19.00	6.10	8.20	6.40	8.20	
Me04 - % of Non-Principal/Classified C roads in poor condition (Local)	13.90	13.60	2.00	11.00	18.90	13.00	13.30	13.30	

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Measures	PERFORMANCE						TARGET		
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data				2014/15		2015/16	
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	*Rationale
Me05 - % Street lights and illuminated signs out (Unplanned) (Local) (New)	N/A	N/A				N/A		6.00	Due to part night lighting, the wear on lanterns is likely to be higher resulting in more outages and a higher percentage out at any one time. It is uncertain how this will affect this PI which is very complex to calculate. The calculation method of this PI should be reviewed.
Me06 - Number of days to repair street lights and illuminated signs (Local)	N/A	2.74				4.00	3.82	4.00	Based on a contractual 5 day response to a fault. We have no powers to further improve performance without varying the contract conditions, which would give the contractor the opportunity to re-rate and increase costs. The target of 4 days is based on experience of our contractor's performance

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Implementation of capital programme within timescale and budget agreed to strengthen and maintain Council structures in order to ensure safety and reduce hazards	M01	Aberaman Bridge - Extensive concrete repairs and access provision	Mar-16	H Jenkins/ D Bond
	M02	Fidlers Elbow Bridge - Replacement of expansion joints (joint scheme with MTBC) - £500k	Mar-16	H Jenkins/ D Bond
	M03	Upper Boat Bridge - Replacement of bearings and expansion joints, concrete repairs - £410k	Mar-16	H Jenkins/ D Bond
CA02 - Implementation of capital programme within timescale and budget agreed to improve the Council's highways infrastructure utilising appropriate recycling techniques including energy efficient tarmac and sustainable road surface treatments	M01	Undertake traditional and preventative treatments on Council highways, and monitor against investment programme	Mar-16	H Jenkins/ D Bond
	M02	Undertake repairs to footways e.g. replacing uneven footpaths with a new surface, and monitor against investment programme	Mar-16	H Jenkins/ D Bond
CA03 - Deliver traffic management schemes that contribute to making the use of our roads safer and less congested	M01	Deliver major highways improvements (Subject to WG Metro Phase 1 funding) to reduce congestion and boost economic activity e.g. Upper Boat Phase 2 Signalisation and Sardis Road Gyratory Signalisation improvements	Mar-16	R Waters

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - Insufficient budget to meet optimal HAMP service standards	Prioritise available funding to mitigate main risks identified within HAMP
R2 - Insufficient resources to undertake the necessary work	Look at other viable options and prioritise work accordingly within existing resource
R3 - Possible reduction of resources to support other departments	Look at other viable options and prioritise work accordingly within existing resource
R4 - A budget not being available for introduction of new processes	Seek to identify any invest to save solutions that could attract budgets to the section.
R5 - Without repair and maintenance some of our key bridges and structures would close	Inspection regime and prioritisation

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**STREET CARE SERVICES AND PUBLIC HEALTH & PROTECTION SCRUTINY
WORKING GROUP**

Notes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group held at the Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Monday, 27th April 2015 at 2.00pm

Present:

County Borough Councillor G. Davies - in the Chair

County Borough Councillors:

S. A. Bradwick
(Mrs) J Bonetto
G. Smith
(Mrs) A. Roberts

Officers in Attendance:

Mr N. Wheeler – Director of Highways & Streetcare Services
Mr P. Mee – Service Director, Public Health & Protection
Mrs L. Davies – Environmental Protection Manager
Mr A. Mallin - Community Safety & Partnership Co-ordinator
Ms N. Jones – Strategy and Operations Officer, Waste Services
Ms L. Lawson – Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning
Ms J. Nicholls – Scrutiny Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors S. Powderhill, (Mrs) S. Pickering and J. Watts.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor G. Davies declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 3 – 'Landlord & Provider of Misuse of Substance Services'

3. INTRODUCTION

The Service Improvement Officer, Strategic Planning reported on the introduction of this new scrutiny process. She outlined the process by which Members of the Working Group were being asked to challenge the draft performance evaluations for 2014/15 and draft priority plans for 2015/16.

The Service Improvement Officer explained that the lead officers would provide an overview of each proposed outcome following which Members would have the opportunity to ask questions. The Officer also drew Members attention to the recommendations set out at 2.2.1 of the report with a number of points for consideration attached at Appendix 1.

Points 4 & 5 refers to Clean & Green

6. TO CHALLENGE THE COUNCIL'S EVALUATION OF ITS PERFORMANCE IN DELIVERING ITS 2014/15 PRIORITY PLAN IN RESPECT OF 'PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM HARM AND TACKLING ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR'

The Service Director, Public Health & Protection set out the background to the Improvement Priority – Protecting people from harm and tackling anti-social behaviour and emphasised that good progress has been made in respect of the overall performance of the 2014/15 plan. Members were informed that on balance performance has been on target and measures have been completed demonstrating a positive impact on our communities with some exceptions as follows:-

- The inability to report on the measures relating to reduced offending rates. This is due to issues with collecting data with partner agencies and will be addressed at a regional level.
- The pilot Voluntary Perpetrator Programme will be evaluated in May 2015 although early indications show that those involved in the programme have responded well.
- The initial commitment to implement a Selective Licensing Scheme has been postponed until 2015/16 following the results of surveys – the scheme was launched in February 2015 and the surveys are currently being collected.

Outcome 1 – Fewer people are the victims of anti-social behaviour

The Service Director for Public Health & Protection stated that overall the approach taken by the Service and its partner agencies has been very effective in reducing the number of people falling out of ASB system and has delivered positive outcomes. There have been no significant exceptions to report and the use of a number of case studies has added illustration to the narrative.

A number of targeted approaches have been organised to tackle specific areas across the County Borough considered 'hot spots' for anti social behaviour and seasonal operations have been undertaken by the Council and its partner agencies specifically targeting youth related anti social behaviour. Members felt that the draft priority plan should include completed evaluation forms from residents to demonstrate the positive impact the targeted operations have had upon the community and the number of residents who have been helped. A Member confirmed that he had received positive

feedback from residents expressing their gratitude for the way anti social behaviour had been tackled in their area by the Council.

Outcome 2 – Fewer people are the victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence

Members were informed that since 2009 there has been significant work in respect of domestic abuse in RCT and more recently the collaborative arrangements have been reviewed with an executive steering group of senior representatives of partner organisations now in place to oversee the work of the forum. The working group was informed that client engagement is key to the success of supporting the victims of domestic abuse in RCT, of which there are many, as demonstrated in the number of referrals, with a case study attached to highlight the issues involved. Details of the pilot Voluntary Perpetrator Programme were provided by the Service Director Public Health & Protection who also commented that this work maybe better commissioned at PCC or Cwm Taf region level. Further details were also provided in respect of the 'White Ribbon Accreditation' which RCT has received for its work in engaging men and boys in tackling violence against women and girls.

Outcome 3 – Fewer people misuse alcohol and drugs

It was clarified that the performance indicators for substance misuse are set by Welsh Government, they are aggregate PIs and difficult to capture although the data within the priority plan does demonstrate that RCT does compare favourably in Wales (emphasised by the use of a case study). Further developments have been implemented in respect of the needle exchange service following a service user review and new specification has been agreed in respect of specialist secondary care treatment services following a review of existing provisions although implementation of this work is still anticipated.

Outcome 4 – People in RCT live in safe, appropriate housing in sustainable prosperous communities

Members of the working group were updated with developments in this outcome area within the draft 2014/15 priority plan such as the Housing (Wales) Act which comes into force in September 2015. Energy efficiency measures have exceeded all targets with a Scrutiny Working Group established to consider the issue of Empty Properties across the County Borough ongoing with its work. There are no significant exceptions in respect of the HMO Licensing scheme. The first Housing and Health Action Area initiative in conjunction with Cwm Taf University Health Board was launched in Tylorstown with the aim of improving the health of those residents in areas of greater housing need. The approach, which is based on the principles of a Formal Renewable Area, is being piloted in Tylorstown with the hope of expanding into other areas.

Outcome 5 – People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe and feel safe

Details of ongoing work in respect of licensing activity were provided such as training sessions which have been provided for the licensing trade on several matters relating to effective management and good practice. The success of the Best Bar None awards in terms of the quantity of licensed premises which have become accredited in 2014/15 was explained as was the purpose of the taxi fleet and vehicle specification inspections which are carried out to ensure the continuing safety of fare paying passengers.

A Member stated that it was important that this authority introduces a knowledge test for all new applicants so that their local knowledge can be tested. The Service Director, Public Health & Protection acknowledged the perception held by many applicants that it is easier to get a taxi licence in RCT than in Cardiff despite the introduction of the BTEC qualification in RCT over a year ago. Currently a Mercury Project Team is evaluating the impact that the BTEC qualification has had on the service since its inception and the feasibility of introducing a Knowledge Test.

The Service Director, Public Health & Protection outlined the work of Trading Standards in protecting vulnerable groups and raising resilience in older people. He also outlined the success of the food hygiene levels which has shown a 90% of food premises within the County Borough are 'broadly compliant'.

A question was raised in respect of whether there is any joint working between RCT Homes and the Council. The Community Safety & Partnership Co-ordinator confirmed that there are a number of occasions whereby joint visits or tenancy enforcement action is required and joint responses to the Police are produced. However it was acknowledged that some areas need to be strengthened and some complaints remain unresolved and it was confirmed that specific cases relating to anti social behaviour matters are being looked into by RCT Homes in an effort to improve their response times. Members were keen that this should be addressed.

A Member queried why the PIs for the number of individuals who have completed their treatment have not met their target and shown a decrease for the period 2014/15 and further queried how many treatments are carried out in house whether they are effective? The Service Director, Public Health & Protection acknowledged that the number of cases closed reflects the number of individuals dropping out of the treatment programmes for a variety of reasons which is of concern. These are reported separately by the service providers themselves. It was explained that there are different levels of treatments from tier 1-4, with tier 4 representing the more intensive treatment services. The Chair requested a breakdown of performance by service provider.

A member queried whether there was an increasing number of licences within HMOs in Treforest. The Environmental Protection Manager reported that there is good cooperation with the landlords in this area with up to 74% of HMOs which are now fully compliant with others in the system. Although there is an increased number of HMOs that are known to the Service the ultimate

goal is to achieve 100% compliance although in some parts of the County Borough it is more of a difficult task with landlords who are not as engaged.

The Service Director Public Health & Protection concluded that on balance he considered the draft evaluation to be a fair and balanced appraisal which had been improved with the inclusion of a number of case studies. He added that some projects had been evaluated as they had progressed but it was acknowledged that earlier reporting mechanisms to Scrutiny should have been in place.

The Working Group **AGREED** that:

Subject to further minor improvements (taking into consideration the working group's request for information in relation to the more complex alcohol and drug cases and further evidence to measure the success of the targeted anti social behaviour operations across the County Borough and the number of residents who have been helped)

The 2014/15 draft performance evaluation provides a balanced and fair assessment of performance

7. CHALLENGE THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2015/16 PRIORITY PLAN FOR PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM HARM AND TACKLING ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Service Director Public Health & Protection outlined the proposed 2015/16 Action Plan for Public Health & Protection – 'Protecting People from Harm' which he stressed was a draft document with further amendments to be made. Members were informed that there were two overall changes to the document; the plan is shorter and consists of two broad themes. The Service Director added that following significant service changes the decision was taken to focus the work around four strategic work priorities. The work will focus more on intelligence led targeted interventions and supporting vulnerable groups. He added that as this is an improvement plan any 'business as usual' actions had been removed.

The Service Director, Public Health & Protection provided a summary of each outcome and highlighted some key activities and initiatives to be delivered as part of the proposed 2015/16 Action Plan such as the three housing related schemes to be implemented as part of the vibrant and viable places programme for Pontypridd. New legislation to empower victims of antisocial behaviour and ensure that new tools and powers are available to tackle antisocial behaviour related crime will be led by the Police and Crime Commissioners framework. In conclusion, the Service Director, Public Health & Protection referred to the current Scrutiny Working Group tasked with examining the issue of long term empty properties and subsequently advise Cabinet on future policy matters arising from the work.

The Working Group **AGREED** that subject to minor amendments considered appropriate by officers the 2015/16 draft priority plan has understandable outcomes supported by actions and performance indicators that will enable progress and impact to be measured and scrutinised

The meeting closed at 17.15 pm.

Appendix 8b

Our improvement priority – Protecting people from harm and tackling anti-social behaviour

Many of our residents' lives are blighted by the anti social behaviour of others, with some suffering harm such as domestic abuse, violence and criminal damage. We provide services that protect and improve health, promote safety and wellbeing. We will support victims of domestic abuse and work to reduce the harm to individuals of their own alcohol and substance misuse. We will continue to use our licensing and public protection powers to reduce anti social behaviour by effectively managing the late night economy and holding the perpetrators of anti social behaviour and other offences to account. We will also work to protect people, particularly our most vulnerable residents, from harm and exploitation by using our enforcement powers to ensure that housing meets required standards, businesses are effectively regulated and rogue traders are prevented from operating.

This outcome is focussed on ensuring that our residents are protected against antisocial behaviour and domestic and sexual violence; supported in reducing alcohol and substance misuse; housed to appropriate standards, and using our licensing and enforcement powers, provided with safe, regulated businesses and protected from illegal practices and rogue traders.

Why was this a priority in 2014/15?

- Overall, Rhondda Cynon Taf is a safe place to live with crime rates falling in recent years. But it's important you also feel safe and some of the information we collect, including your feedback, has told us we need to continue to focus on your safety.
- Anti-social behaviour is still a problem in some of our communities with over 7,000 complaints reported to the Police last year. Some victims experience repeat offences, which impacts on their quality of life and their feelings of safety. During 2013/14, 78% of vulnerable and/or repeat victims of anti-social behaviour we supported indicated they were either no longer experiencing it or felt safer after our help.
- Some crime is hidden, such as the misuse of substances. People rarely admit to using drugs because many of them are illegal and most people under-estimate how much alcohol they drink.
- Substance misuse makes people feel unsafe. Over the last five years, young people have reported that 'people using drugs' and 'people drinking alcohol' are the things that make them feel most unsafe in their local area. In 2013/14, 62¹% of substance misusers we worked with reported a reduction in their substance misuse and nearly 54% reported an improvement in their quality of life.

¹ The Substance Misuse Programme is a rolling programme of activity. Previously reported data for this measure has been updated since publication of the 2014-15 Corporate Plan and Annual Delivery Report 2014

- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs can increase the likelihood of crimes like anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse. The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to Police has begun to fall in Rhondda Cynon Taf, from 4,246 in 2013/14 to 4,088 in 2013/14; however, we believe that the real figures are much higher. In 2013/14, where we worked with victims of domestic abuse, 74% said they were no longer experiencing it following our support.
- We know that investing in existing housing improves people's health by, for example, reducing hazards and providing adaptations to help people live independently. We also know demand for good quality affordable housing is greater than the supply currently available. The latest assessment of need undertaken in 2012 indicated 167 affordable houses would be needed per annum; this compares to 91 affordable houses provided during 2013/14.
- Well run public houses, taxi firms, food outlets and traders help people feel safe when going about their daily lives. By continuing to undertake visits and inspections to these businesses, as part of our public protection responsibilities as a council, we can help ensure they operate legally and are well run.
- When asked in our budget consultation exercise in early 2014, 73% of responses to our survey felt that work on this priority would improve their quality of life.

In our 2014/15 Plan, we said we would ensure

- **Fewer people are the victims of anti-social behaviour**
- **Fewer people are the victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence**
- **Fewer people misuse alcohol and drugs**
- **More properties that were not occupied will become occupied**
- **The promotion of good practice in public houses and food businesses**

Having considered all the information available to us, our progress in the five Outcomes in this Priority Plan has been generally positive but we know we have more work to do.

Progress in the nine key measures we identified last year to evidence success is listed below.

- 82% of vulnerable/repeat victims we have worked with no longer experiencing anti social behaviour, above our annual target of 75%
- 73% of people no longer causing anti social behaviour as a result of our help, slightly below our 2014/15 target of 75%
- 68% of people we have worked with no longer experience domestic abuse, below our 2014/15 target of 80%
- 74% of people suffering from abuse have seen an improvement in their quality of life, below our 2014/15 target of 85%
- 60% of people have told us that their substance misuse has reduced, above our 2014/15 target of 59%
- 71% of people with substance misuse issues have seen an improvement in their quality of life 2014/15 target of 56%

- 114 vacant properties (3.37%) have been returned to occupation with our support, above our 2014/15 target of 3%
- All (100%) of our high risk public houses have been inspected on time, above our target of 75%
- 90% of food businesses inspected by us are broadly compliant with food law, above our 2014/15 target of 85%

Progress against each individual Outcome is outlined in the detailed evaluation below.

We said that fewer people in Rhondda Cynon Taf would be the victims of antisocial behaviour, and public concern is reduced overall. People in Rhondda Cynon Taf will also be protected from the actions of repeat offenders

South Wales Police figures between April and March 2015 tell us that more anti-social behaviour (ASB) complaints have been made in Rhondda Cynon Taf this year compared to last (7,238 compared to 7,028 in 2013/14). On average 603 complaints have been made each month, with the most complaints being received in July (896) and September (774) this year. The number of anti-social behaviour perpetrators referred to our ASB unit this year has also increased. In 73% of cases ASB perpetrators have ceased reoffending as a result of the interventions of the ASB team. The actions taken by the team included home visits to perpetrators and parents, warning letters to highlight issues and behaviour contracts. The team also addresses perpetrator behaviour by referring them to support services to tackle any underlying root causes of ASB, for example this could be for help with Mental Health or Substance Misuse issues. Following joint working, Cwm Taf Health Board now regularly makes referrals to the ASB team for incidents taking place in Accident and Emergency Departments and doctors surgeries. Perpetrators were also referred to a Mediation² service that provides regular progress updates, and assists the team in delivering long lasting solutions to complex neighbour disputes,. Evaluation³ of the mediation service showed it was successful at managing complex and longstanding disputes.

We have also worked with vulnerable and repeat victims of ASB through a dedicated victim officer who manages the high risk / vulnerable victims in RCT. This officer ensures that tailor made action plans are put in place for each victim following a home visit with the Police to carry out an assessment on the level of risk. The ASB team then work in partnership with Police to put in place preventative measures such as increased police patrols in the area, CCTV, target hardening of property and frequent visits and contacts. In 82% of cases victims have told us that they are no longer experiencing ASB and feel safer as a result of our support.

² The Mediation service is provided by Gweddol who to carry out neighbourhood mediation to assist in the resolution of our complex ASB cases. Mediation is a process by which impartial, independent mediators help people in dispute resolve their differences in a positive, practical and mutually acceptable way. Mediation allows people to take ownership of their issues and reach workable resolutions and a way forward for the future.

³ Evaluation of the cases managed by the 'Mediation Service' in 2014/15 was carried out internally via self assessment by the Business Owner at Gweddol

Positive feedback from vulnerable and high risk victims included:

- *'Info provided was great. Numerous visits from the ASB Victim officer, within 1 month the issue was resolved'.*
- *'People caring about what's happening, L (Victim Officer), Police, PCSO all gelled together, good feedback, L (Victim Officer) calling to check if all ok. You are calling to check on the service I have received is very good'.*
- *'We were very happy with service, reassured all the way through, progressed quickly when ASB Team got involved'.*
- *'Was excellent in all aspects'.*
- *'...it's a very good service – L (Victim Officer) calls, PCSO calls in – I'm very happy'.*

Case Study

A report was made to the ASB Team from a resident in the Cynon area. The perpetrators were having very loud parties throughout the evening and into the early hours; being verbally abusive and physically threatening towards neighbours when they asked for the music to be turned down; fighting in the street and being generally rowdy and causing disturbance. The resident herself was undergoing treatment for cancer at the time and the constant parties and noise nuisance throughout the night, fuelled by alcohol and drugs were causing her to lose sleep and causing stress and anxiety for her and her family.

The ASB Team supported the resident by maintaining regular contact; risk assessing the case; developing an action plan and providing advice and case updates. They also discussed enforcement action that could be taken against the perpetrators, and liaised with relevant partners, South Wales Police, the RCT Environmental Health Team and Social Services to progress the actions.

To establish the extent of the issue, questionnaires were sent to all the residents in the area together with an invite to attend a residents meeting on the subject. Five households attended the meeting, corroborating further the extent of the problem and also raising additional concerns regarding the care and safeguarding of young children at the property.

The following actions were taken in response:

- *Tenancy Enforcement letters were sent to the landlord and tenants*
- *Letters were sent to the tenants advising that they would be installing noise monitoring equipment because of complaints received. This resulted in a noise abatement notice being served on the tenants*
- *A joint visit to the property accompanied by the landlord was made, where it was discovered that the tenant was also sub letting rooms. This resulted in an ASB 2nd Stage Warning, and a Tenancy Enforcement Warning was also issued. The DWP were also informed regarding the housing situation as there were implications for Housing Benefit.*

The ASB team were informed by Social Services that the tenants had abandoned the property and moved to different addresses. Residents were updated and were very happy with the results of the actions taken on their behalf and provided the following feedback:

Current situation - 'Improved, tenant moved out of property'

<i>Found most helpful</i>	-	<i>'PCSO very helpful, L phoning to check everything was ok'</i>
<i>Potential improvement area</i>	-	<i>'Police should be given more powers by the council to be able to enter a property and remove equipment (I.e. music systems) if causing an issue for residents'.</i>
<i>Anything Further</i>	-	<i>Was excellent in all aspects.</i>

Integrated Offender Management (IOM) is a key government priority to reduce crime and reoffending. Information on re-offending rates for Repeat and Prolific Offenders has not been collated by partner agencies this year, as a need for a regional or national performance monitoring system for this work has been identified and is currently being addressed as a national concern. As such, we are unable to report on our measures relating to reduced offending rates in this area. Despite this, the multi agency work we planned to undertake with our partners has continued with identified priority cohorts.

We have identified locations with repeat cases of Antisocial Behaviour throughout the year, through an intelligence led approach gathering all ASB referral data, e.g. ASB calls to police, reports from community and elected members and intelligence from partner agencies. This is then discussed at weekly ASB partnership tasking meetings where decisions on how best to target the 'hot spot' are made. Particular attention this year has been paid to the town centres of Porth, Aberdare, Pontypridd, Tonyrefail and Beddau. Multi agency teams have worked together on weekend evenings to target these locations at key times e.g. Friday nights. A series of seasonal operations have also taken place during the year targeting peak times of ASB activity. These include:

- **Operation Streetwise** – targeting youth related anti social behaviour during the 6 week school holiday period. During this operation the team covered a total of 319 locations and engaged with 1,082 young people to provide advice and address any issues. From these operations a total of 77 ASB referrals were generated from incidents witnessed by the teams that were acted upon (With follow up work being done on each of these cases). Parents were spoken to and young people taken home where required. 217 units of alcohol were seized during this campaign.
- **Operation BANG** (Be A Nice Guy) to target Halloween and bonfire related ASB between 24th October 2014 and 7th November 2014, in partnership with South Wales Police (SWP) MORE INFO EXPECTED ON THIS REGARDING IMPACT ON RESIDENTS

To improve public perception of community safety in our town centres we carried out engagement exercises and projects within our main town centres. The team has carried out numerous ASB operations with South Wales Police targeting ASB in the town centres of Pontypridd and Aberdare on an intelligence led basis. A range of actions have arisen from these operations such as seizure of alcohol, education work with young people and parents and ASB referrals for perpetrators. The team has also formed part of the Safer Town Centre operational and strategic groups to work closely with key partners to tackle town centre concerns. An example of a positive initiative resulting from this activity

was the installation of an alley gate at Taff Street in Pontypridd town centre. This was installed as a result of repeated complaints of ASB and criminal behaviour. The lane is now blocked off and locked at key times. Shop keepers and town centre visitors have reported significant improvements in behaviour. There is also extensive use of CCTV in both town centres which is used to identify offences and perpetrators and is often used as evidence to bring about prosecutions where necessary. The CCTV provision is being reduced in 2015/16 as a result of a review of the service and budget cuts. Continued coverage and surveillance of the fixed cameras at peak times will however mitigate any impact on responses to incidents of anti social behaviour in our Town Centres.

A Community Engagement exercise with users of Pontypridd and Aberdare Town centres has been undertaken this year to gather feedback on the current perception of ASB and crime in these areas. This information will allow the Council and partner agencies to consider public views to inform the best way of targeting resources. Results of those responding to the survey in relation to crime and disorder in our town centres have told us:

- 5% consider the levels high
- 53% have witnessed incidents in the last twelve months
- 10% consider ASB an issue on a daily basis in the morning; 15% in the afternoon; 9% in the evening and 6% in the early hours.

Fewer people in Rhondda Cynon Taf would be the victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence

We reviewed collaborative arrangements for the Cwm Taf Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse Forum (CTSVDAF). From this review, it was recognised that the forum required a strategic body to make decisions on the way forward. An 'Executive Group' has been formed to oversee the work of the forum and identify priorities for the future. The Executive Group will also consider the impacts and required actions of the 'Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Bill' that has recently been approved by Welsh Government, which is aimed at tackling violence against women and requires local authorities to improve support for victims. By working together to ensure that services received by victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse across Rhondda Cynon Taf are coordinated and consistent; we aim to achieve the best outcome for the client and their families, whilst holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

Engaging with our clients is important to us and, utilising funding from Welsh Government, a Regional Service User Group has been developed for Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. A number of consultation events were held to consider our action plan and its priorities and our clients told us:

- There should be improved training for all professionals involved with victims of domestic abuse so they have a more sensitive and empathic approach
- Perpetrators should receive rehabilitation and not just custodial sentences
- There should be greater awareness/higher profile of service provision
- There should be whole family support not just support for the victim

This feedback will be considered in our future priority actions.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is committed to supporting the victims of domestic abuse and this year to date 4,342 referrals have been received by the Oasis Centre (One Stop Shop for Domestic Abuse). 66% (2,866) were new referrals and 34% (1,476) were repeat referrals. 1,155 of these referrals were considered high risk cases, and contact was made with the individual's⁴ concerned offering support from an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). For those that do take up the offer of help, there are various agencies that work with us depending on a client's support requirements e.g. www.victimsupport.org.uk⁵, and www.womensaid.org.uk⁶. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, IDVAs work collaboratively with partner agencies on behalf of the victim to put in place the necessary safety measures.

As a result of the IDVA service provision, those supported have told us:

- 78% feel safer and 74% say that their quality of life has improved
- 68% report a cessation of abuse (in past month or since intake)

CASE STUDY

'B' is an 18yr old female with a 10 month old baby who accessed the IDVA Service in October 2014. B's perpetrator was an extremely dangerous individual with a previous conviction and term of imprisonment for arson, as a result of burning down his mother's house. B's perpetrator had also previously barricaded her, the baby and himself inside her top floor flat, holding them hostage, for which he served another term of imprisonment. In addition to this, B lived in an isolated flat, away from the area where her family lived.

⁴ Attempts are made to engage with all high risk individuals but not all can be contacted safely and others have refused the offer of intervention. There is no obligation to engage with the service it is purely the client's choice.

⁵ Victim Support is the independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales

⁶ Women's Aid is the national charity for women and children working to end domestic abuse

Upon engagement with the IDVA service, the IDVA arranged target hardening (security measures) for the flat which included a Kilo Alpha Alarm (which if triggered, immediately alerts the Police Control Room) and a referral to the Fire Service (due to the nature of the perpetrators previous conviction) who placed risk markers on her flat.

The IDVA linked in with RCT Homes to find secure accommodation nearer her family. This was something that had been attempted previously by Children's Services but no secure accommodation was available at the time. Effective partnership working between the IDVA and the Community Safety Officer in RCT Homes resulted in B being re-housed just a few houses away from her grandmother, which instantly reduced risk and her feelings of isolation. In addition to this, the house was re-decorated and a new kitchen and bathroom fitted. The IDVA also took B to Too Good to Waste to obtain furniture for the baby's bedroom.

Security measures were installed at the new property. This included an intercom system (a time limited option funded by Welsh Government until March 2015), a vital security measure given the previous hostage incident. All the above was completed by the end of October 2014, a short time after intake to the IDVA service.

The perpetrator did attempt to contact B at the new property and she was able to see him, without opening the door, via the intercom. B rang the Police immediately, as advised by the IDVA, and they attended and arrested him.

B continues to receive support from the IDVA Service and will do so, until both B and the IDVA are satisfied that risks have been sufficiently reduced.

Evidence tells us that most perpetrators of domestic abuse (70%) are ex-intimate partners of the victims. In order to introduce preventative actions that challenge the attitudes and behaviours that foster domestic violence, we have focussed on perpetrator behaviour. This also responds to what our clients have told us, 'Perpetrators should receive rehabilitation and not just custodial sentences'.

An independent facilitator has been appointed to deliver a pilot 'Voluntary Perpetrator Programme' which aims to support men to change their behaviour and attitudes, ensuring the safety of any women and children they are in a relationship with, and supporting the wellbeing of all concerned. The programme has two distinct strands, **Risk Management** (facilitating men to manage and reduce their abusive impulses so as to ensure the safety of any women and children they are in relationship with) and **Transformation** (facilitating men to become responsible and loving human beings in relationship with their partners and children so as to support the well being of all concerned). The partners of the men undertaking the programme are offered support from an IDVA to keep them safe.

A full evaluation of the Voluntary Perpetrator Programme will be undertaken in May 2015. Initial results show that those involved in the programme have responded well, and that the group environment discussion has facilitated healthy peer challenge from within the group, demonstrating a positive shift in recognising unhealthy relationship behaviour. We have also found that two of the individuals that dropped out at the beginning of the programme have now returned, signifying that timing and mindset has a major part to play in successful outcomes. Throughout the year we have also continued to receive referrals onto the Programme from Children's services, which indicates the need for this service to ensure that children remain safe.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC has also received a 'White Ribbon Accreditation' for its action plan which is committed to tackling violence against women and girls. The www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk is primarily focussed on men working together with women's organisations to tackle this issue. During November 2014, an event was held to mark 'White Ribbon Day' attended by survivors of domestic abuse and partner agencies including Hafan Cymru, the Housing Advice Centre and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. In addition, as a result of the action plan, a 'Domestic Violence Workplace Policy' has been created and will shortly be implemented via training for managers within the organisation, to ensure they are confident in the use of the Policy and its guidelines, and committed to zero tolerance of domestic violence. Further activity to support the actions that led to this award will be progressed during 2015/16.

Formally opening in April 2012, The Oasis Centre in Pontypridd has provided a 'one-stop shop' facility for those affected by domestic violence. The Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) service resides here, together with one other commissioned service. This 3rd sector agency will no longer be commissioned to deliver the drop-in service from 1st April 2015 however the service will continue and will be provided by the IDVA team in the interim, until a full review of Domestic Abuse services across RCT has been completed. A full report on the findings will be made to the Local Service Board in 2015/16.

We said fewer people in Rhondda Cynon Taf would misuse alcohol and drugs⁷

During 2014/15, we continued to work with our partners including The Health Service, South Wales Police, Probation Service, and Social Services to reduce the harms associated with alcohol and drug misuse⁸. During the year:

- The number of individuals starting treatment has declined slightly when compared to last year (1,676 compared to 1,682 in 2013/14), and our waiting times were below 20 days between referral and treatment for 86% of our service users (1,438 people), and is better than the all Wales performance of 85%.

⁷ Substance misuse data is collected as part of a rolling programme of support, and as such comparable data for previous reported years will be subject to change.

⁸ This service provision is managed through x service providers, and a breakdown of the performance of each provider will be made available to the Council's Scrutiny Officers during 2015/16

- 812 people (66%) completed their treatment - this is slightly below the all Wales performance of 67%. The remaining 412 were closed for reasons including: non attendance; where treatment has been withdrawn as treatment conditions have been breached, or the individual has died. This was a decrease for this year when compared to 904 for the same period in 2013/2014 (74% completed treatment with negative closures of 324).
- In 63% of cases, clients have reported a reduction in their substance misuse, below the all Wales performance of 73%. The remaining 37% may still be in the treatment programme or have not shown a reduction in their substance misuse at this stage. 71% of our clients are also reporting an improvement in their quality of life as a result of being on the programme.

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Case Study (2015) – Cwm Taf Children and Young People’s Service

L was referred to the Children and Young People’s Service for support with her use of Cannabis, Alcohol and Mephedrone. At assessment it was identified that L had previously accessed services over a period of four years and had been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). L also presented with anxiety and depression.

L engaged well with the Children and Young People’s (CYP) service and received a number of interventions to assist with the reduction of her substance use, i.e. Motivational interviewing, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), goal setting and relapse prevention. L was supported to visit her GP for assistance with her anxiety and depression and access “New Pathways” Counselling Service.

Initially the counselling sessions resulted in an increase in substance use and L also became alcohol dependent which resulted in minor liver damage. With increased support from her key worker to address these issues, L was accompanied to visit her GP and Mental Health appointments; she was also referred to the Rhondda Integrated Substance Misuse Service (RISMS) which resulted in an inpatient detox.

Following the Detox and with the assistance of antabuse, L remained abstinent for three months during which time she re-engaged with New Pathways and commenced prescribed medication for her anxiety and depression. In this period, relationships with family and friends improved.*

L now practices controlled drinking on special occasion, drinking no more than 6 units when she does go out. L is hoping to go to college in September to study mechanics and is currently waiting for voluntary opportunities at an animal sanctuary.

L’s case was closed in March 2015, treatment complete and substance free.

** Antabuse blocks an enzyme that is involved in metabolizing alcohol intake. It produces very unpleasant side effects when combined with alcohol in the body. It is used in cases of chronic alcoholism and causes unpleasant side effects if taken whilst consuming alcohol.*

We have reviewed and further developed Needle Exchange (NEX) this year, with emphasis on preventative services and harm reduction. NEX facilities are open to all, and provide:

- Information, advice and support;
- General health promotion and education;

- BBV screening which includes Hepatitis B and C;
- Clean injecting equipment, and
- Onward referrals to:
 - Substance Misuse Treatment programmes
 - BBV treatment and vaccinations
 - Screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
 - Family Planning advice

Revised opening hours have now been put into operation at two of our centres in Aberdare and Merthyr Tydfil where they are now open between 9 and 5, and have one late night opening until 8pm per week. Pre-packaged needle kits of three or ten needles are also now being provided to reduce drug related litter. These changes have been made to make the service more accessible, improve the health of those using substances and to reduce the risk of blood borne infections such as Hepatitis B and C, to the wider population. We have also produced a discreet credit-card sized leaflet with advice on 'Safer Injecting', what to do if overdose occurs, and key contact details for advice and testing. A further leaflet has also been produced on 'Steroids and Image Enhancing Drugs' which is more prevalent in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The needle exchange service will be continually evaluated to ensure that the provision is meeting the needs of the client and to incorporate any changes in usage trends.

Substance misuse services have been reconfigured to meet the financial pressure of a reducing budget. Following the introduction of a 'single point of contact' the focus has been on reviewing and reconfiguring the specialist, secondary care substance misuse treatment service⁹ to provide an accessible and integrated care pathway for service users into primary care, ensuring that people are seen sooner and moved onto a relevant treatment plan earlier. Following a review of the existing provision, and consultation with stakeholders, a report with recommendations for improvement was presented to the Cwm Taf Substance Misuse Area Planning Board (CTSMAPB), who agreed to the development of a new service specification for this statutory service. Further consultation on this new delivery model to inform implementation will be undertaken during 2015/16. The emphasis on stakeholder views has also been escalated to the CTSMAPB and two service users have been appointed a seat on the Board to provide direct feedback from a user perspective.

To ensure that the wider workforce has a good understanding of substance misuse issues, a multi-agency training programme has been developed by the CTSMAPB. This training programme covers alcohol awareness as well as substance misuse. Following a training needs analysis last year of those that work with substance misuse, the need for additional resources in co-occurring mental health and substance

⁹Specialist secondary care treatment services are services that only deal with substance misuse interventions for people with complex substance misuse issues outside of primary care

misuse was identified. This year we have adopted a targeted approach to substance misuse training, and have delivered training courses to 56 mental health staff (Sept-Dec 14) to raise awareness of most widely used substances, and to challenge the stigma associated with its use. The courses 'Understanding substance misuse', and 'Working with people who use substances', primarily provide a better understanding of substance misuse issues, and introduce interventions which if introduced early enough, could prevent the escalation of many problems. Feedback received:

'Course was delivered extremely well, full of enthusiasm and good information and education, was really interesting and informative, thoroughly enjoyed'.

'The lecturer was fantastic, very knowledgeable and approachable, can apply all information to our work area. Please offer more courses like this, I will definitely send staff'.

People in Rhondda Cynon Taf live in safe, appropriate housing in sustainable and prosperous communities

Housing has an important role to play in regeneration and can be a catalyst for other regeneration activity in an area. We know that investing in and enabling the improvement of existing housing through effective regulation and enforcement can improve people's health and well being by, for example, reducing hazards and providing adaptations to help people live independently.

Whilst there is a continued need to build new homes in the County Borough, bringing empty properties back into use helps to make use of existing housing stock to regenerate areas, reduces visible eyesores in our communities and the anti social behaviour that is often associated with empty properties. It can also provide much needed affordable housing and increase housing options for those in need.

During 2014/15 we have implemented the recommendations of the Housing Allocation Scheme and Common Housing Register Review that was undertaken in 2013/14. The new [Housing Allocation Scheme](#) was approved by Cabinet in November 2014. This Scheme has a simplified banding system and ensures that the Scheme is fit for purpose locally and can better address the challenges presented by Welfare Reform. Along with our Housing Association partners, the Council has also changed the way that the Housing Allocation Scheme will be implemented through the Common Housing Register. Applicants will now be able to bid for properties in areas of their choice, through a Choice Based Lettings Scheme. These changes will ensure that an equitable and efficient process is experienced by service users and will help to create sustainable communities and make the best use of the social housing stock available.

The Council undertook a Social Housing Stock Review in 2013/14, which made a number of recommendations for our housing association partners to consider about changes they could make to their housing stock to ensure that it is utilised to maximum effect. This work is envisaged to continue over the next few years as each housing association undertakes its own asset review and considers the Council's recommendation. The 'Housing Leaders' group which involves representatives from the local housing associations, the Council and the Local

Health Board has agreed to continually review progress in this area and to establish working groups as required, which may consider individual geographical areas, or certain types of properties.

We have also delivered 474 energy insulation measures to 405 private homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf. These results are lower than in previous years as ECO funding has been lower and the schemes that the Council has enabled have had longer than anticipated lead-in times, giving less time for delivery in communities. However, the Council has been successful in 2014/15 in attracting £610,000 of Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places Regeneration funding for the Pontypridd settlement area for a domestic energy improvement scheme. It is anticipated that this will deliver 1,080 measures to 460 households (both private and rented homes) by March 2017.

As well as being a wasted housing resource, empty properties are a blight on our communities, often being targets for anti-social behaviour and vandalism. This year we have continued to proactively target empty properties and to deliver the Welsh Governments 'Houses into Homes' initiative. Interest in the 'Houses into Homes' scheme continues to be positive with 126 loan enquiries/expressions of interest being made this year from potential purchasers. In 2014/15, 11 properties were brought back into reuse as a result of this funding, and since the scheme was launched in 2012, £1.19M of loans have been approved and paid.

In total, 255 empty properties have been subject to interventions such as provision of advice and support to bring them back into use or enforcement action aimed at mitigating their visual impact on the community. This compares with 212 interventions delivered in 2013/14. Our performance in relation to total numbers of long term vacant properties returned to use last year was in bottom quartile when compared with the whole of Wales although once again this year, the total number of long term vacant properties in the County has increased from 3,133 in 2013-14 to 3,381 in 2014-15 (7.9% increase). This year 114 empty properties (3.37%) were brought back into use, 18 more houses more than in 2013/14 (19% increase) and work with many of the remaining vacant properties is ongoing to ensure their reoccupation. The complexities involved in restoring empty properties is recognised by the Council and in 2014/15 a member Scrutiny working group was established to consider the options available to the Council to encourage more of them to be brought back in to use and to continue to improve the Council's performance overall in this area.

Case Study - Effective use of Housing Act 2004 legislation to tackle empty properties

A complaint was received concerning a long standing empty property in Trehafod. The property had suffered extensive fire damage and was in a condition that was seriously detrimental to the area. The neighbour was extremely upset as her property had also been affected by the fire that was started in this property. An Environmental Health Officer visited the property to assess the conditions under the Housing Act 2004 and identified a number of severe Category 1 hazards. Determining ownership of the property was difficult as one of the registered owners was recently deceased. A neighbourhood renewal assessment was undertaken to determine the most appropriate course of action.

It was determined that demolition would be the most appropriate course of action and therefore a Demolition Order was served on the owner of the property requiring the property to be demolished within a prescribed time period. As part of the requirements of the Demolition Order, the site would need to be cleared and the walls to the two neighbouring properties shored up, weather proofed and insulated in accordance with Building Regulations.

The Order was not complied with and therefore the Council has executed the requirements of the Order in default and the property has been knocked down. The demolition of this building has brought about a significant improvement to the built environment and surrounding amenity. In addition several Housing Hazards have been removed and the neighbour is happy in the knowledge that the problematic empty property no longer poses any further nuisance or annoyance.



Before

After

In the 10 years since the last Census, the private rented sector has doubled in size and there are now 13,604 private rented properties across Rhondda Cynon Taf. As at 1st April 2014, 790 properties were known to us as being in multiple occupation (HMOs), the majority of which are located in Treforest.

A County wide HMO Licensing Scheme was implemented in April 2014, to include all types of HMOs, accompanied by stringent conditions to limit the impact of shared housing on the locality. As a result of the Council proactively investigating potential HMOs to determine their status

and working with landlords to ensure that all potential properties are effectively licensed, 536 HMOs (73%) are now fully compliant and licensed. This is a positive 3.3% increase on performance in 2013-14 (69.7%).

We have also worked with landlords to improve their properties and this has resulted in the reduction of 237 Category 1 and 2 hazards in private rented sector properties throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. This includes the removal of hazards such as damp and mold, excess cold and trip and fall hazards following an assessment under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (Housing Act 2004).

Case Study - Effective Housing Enforcement in the Private Rented Sector

A disrepair complaint was received from a mid terrace property in Pentre. A full inspection of the property was carried out and a HHSRS assessment in-line with the Housing Act 2004. A number of Category 1 Hazards were identified including

- *Fire – no safe means of escape from the first floor of the property due to escape route passing through a high risk room - the kitchen - and no escape window upstairs. No means of detection at the property.*
- *Electrical – cables precariously dangling from ceilings with exposed ends; damaged sockets; scorch marks on cables and sockets, inadequate wired items for example the immersion heater and exposed electrics in the bathroom.*

On completion of the assessment the most appropriate course of action was to serve an Emergency Prohibition Order on the property which immediately removes the property from use. The reason for this action was because of the imminent risk to health and the high number of hazards which couldn't be easily rectified with the tenant in situ. The tenant was given full support in seeking alternative suitable accommodation for her family in the local area.

The Landlord has been given extensive advice to ensure the property is brought back up to standard prior to re-letting. Since service of the Order, the property has undergone major renovation works.



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In recognition of the benefits of targeted housing action, an area assessment methodology was implemented to identify areas that would benefit most from targeted housing and health interventions. Following this, the first 'Housing and Health Action Area' was launched in Tylorstown in conjunction with Cwm Taf University Health Board and local housing associations in February 2015. The aim of the project is to improve the health and well being of residents through housing improvements and to encourage healthy lifestyles. We aim to undertake property condition surveys in all homes, regardless of tenure and following this, develop an action plan to assist residents and landlords to make the improvements necessary. The project began in February 2015 and already 160 residents have signed up for a survey of their home. All residents who have a survey have also been provided with a 'Healthy Homes Pack' which includes energy saving light bulbs, draft excluders and Carbon Monoxide Monitors.

One option in Housing and Health Action Areas would be to implement a Selective Licensing Scheme which would mean that all types of private rented sector accommodation would require a licence which would help to improve the condition of rented accommodation in these areas. However, as the project has developed, it has become clear that the Council can only decide whether to progress with the implementation of a Selective Licensing Scheme in the area, once the outcome of the surveys has been analysed. This will now be undertaken in 2015/16.

People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe and feel safe

As a Council, we have a regulatory requirement to licence premises to ensure responsible retailing of alcohol, music and dancing in conjunction with our partners, ensuring that they do not adversely impact on the local community. Our work this year has continued to focus on high and medium risk licensed premises to ensure compliance with licensing legislation and conditions. Training has been arranged to promote responsible management and good practice. Attendees were targeted in accordance with Responsible Authority recommendations to address under performance in preventing nuisance, underage drinking and crime and disorder. 60 staff and managers will receive training in April 2015 to encourage compliance and promote responsible retailing of alcohol. Delegates will be tested at the end of the course and successful candidates will be awarded the BII National Certificate of Personal Licence Holders. They will also receive a presentation on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. As at the end of 2014/15 all (100%) of our high risk licensed premises have been inspected in line with our inspection programme.

We have also promoted good practice in the licensed trade through the Best Bar None Awards¹⁰, with 40 premises becoming accredited in 2014-15

Case Study

Council Environmental Officers worked with residents in Talbot Green following concerns raised regarding unacceptable noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour from a local public house. Officers worked with the staff and management of the pub for nearly a year to resolve the problems. Despite this support and the relevant interventions and actions put in place, the problems continued. As a last resort the License of the premises was reviewed by the Council's Licensing Committee. Evidence at the hearing was presented and decisions were made to suspend their Licence for serving alcohol for 3 months, and the venue lost its their right to host live music between the hours of 8pm and 11pm permanently. The Licensees appealed that decision but, following negotiations, withdrew their appeal and surrendered the Premises Licence. The premises are now closed and on the market with intended use for residential purposes.

Our Trading Standards Team has also undertaken proactive test purchase operations to check that children under the age of 18 are not being sold alcohol, or that those over 18 are not purchasing alcohol on behalf of minors. Using underage volunteers, 50 test purchase operations have been undertaken resulting in 5 illegal sales of alcohol to minors. 3 were issued a fixed penalty notice of £90 and prosecution cases have been made regarding the other two. 14 proxy sales exercises were also undertaken resulting in 13 sales. 4 successful prosecutions were undertaken over the year. In addition,

- 28 test purchases for tobacco were carried out leading to 1 illegal sale, which we successfully prosecuted.
- 10 firework test purchases were undertaken with 1 illegal sale.

We also ensure that the County Borough has a fleet of taxis that safely meets the needs of our communities and whose drivers are subject to stringent vetting. This year we have revised the Taxi Licensing Policy and reviewed operational procedures to increase efficiency in processing applications and to reflect the current needs of the public and taxi drivers and operators, in particular to improve vehicle safety and to secure more suitable vehicles for disabled passengers. Our plans to evaluate the new BTEC Taxi Driver qualification have been delayed, but an evaluation of the impact of this new qualification and a feasibility study to introduce a 'knowledge test' for new applicants will be undertaken as a management project in the forthcoming financial year.

¹⁰ Best Bar None aims to reward licensees who provide good management, a safe and enjoyable environment for customers, discourage binge drinking and prevent alcohol-related crime

During 2013/14 we established joint Cwm Taf Trading Standards service working with Merthyr Tydfil CBC. A joint service delivery framework and common working plan has been developed this year to support these arrangements, and we have provided a report on the collaborative activities undertaken during 2013/14 to our Council Scrutiny Committee. Details of this report can be found on our [webpage](#). These joint working arrangements are continuing, and an evaluation of this joint activity is currently being undertaken and the findings will be made available to our Scrutiny Committee at the end of the financial year.

Our Trading Standards Service continues to take action to protect vulnerable consumers from sharp practice, the shadow economy and rogue trading in this increasingly difficult financial climate, whilst supporting our genuine local businesses. This year we have:

- Dealt with 83 incidents of doorstep crime, and taken robust action against illegal traders operating in the shadow economy, successfully prosecuting 11 and given informal warnings to 44 others;
- Raised awareness of doorstep crime with 200 elderly people, all of them reporting feeling better prepared to resist doorstep crime afterwards
- Received around 2,000 notifications of breaches of civil law from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service and dealt with over 600 in-depth consumer complaints at our Consumer Advice Service;
- Publicised doorstep crime issues to provide community reassurance and warnings to criminals

Case Study

A Penrhys man was prosecuted for selling counterfeit CDs and DVDs in his workplace to his friends over a period of 7 years. The mini-industry was uncovered after Trading Standards executed a search warrant at his home. Part of his living room had been set up to copy music and films. The items seized had an estimated total value of over £103,000 and included 3,732 mainstream and pornographic DVDs, and over 252,000 film and audio files.

At court, following an early guilty plea, he was sentenced to 16 months in prison, suspended for 12 months and ordered to complete 200 hours of unpaid work. All items seized were destroyed.

Our efforts to improve the standards of hygiene and management practices at food premises across Rhondda Cynon Taf have been positive demonstrated by an improvement in food hygiene levels at our food premises. There are approximately 1,930 food establishments within the authority. When the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme was introduced 50% of our premises were 'broadly compliant'. As a result of a focused training and coaching initiative and a more robust approach to enforcement in uncooperative businesses this figure has steadily risen year on year. Last year 88% of these food premises were 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene legislation. This year this has risen to 90%.

Whilst this improvement is consistent across most sectors of the industry fast food take away premises have been the slowest to respond. This is associated with a rapid turnover as businesses open up only to fail in these economically difficult times. New entrants are often underfunded, inexperienced and poorly trained and therefore present a high risk to consumers. We therefore aim to inspect new food businesses within 28 days of opening, and we set up a system to ensure early intervention. At the start of 2014/15 we were inspecting 28% of new businesses within 28 days of opening. This has almost doubled to 55% at the end of 2014/15.

The introduction of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) legislation during 2013/14 requires local authorities to inspect food business establishments in their area and produce food hygiene ratings for them, using criteria published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The operator of an establishment that has been rated is provided with a sticker (or stickers) showing their food hygiene rating which they are required to display in a conspicuous position at or near each entrance to the food business. The FSA is required to publish the rating and other information on it's on its [website](#). This information enables the consumer to make informed choices about where and what they eat.

We were the first Authority in Wales to bring a prosecution for failing to display a Food Hygiene Rating (in addition to committing numerous food hygiene offences). Although the food business operator was convicted, the fine for this offence was disappointing (£50 - less than the Fixed Penalty (£200)). A subsequent prosecution of a different food business operator for non-display only resulted in a more realistic fine of £300 plus £100 costs plus victim surcharge of £30.

Later in the year we carried out a Welsh Government funded project to sample compliance with the mandatory display. 137 checks were made with just 9 breaches. Appropriate advice and warning letters were sent to ensure that the ratings were properly displayed. In total over the year we detected 52 breaches and gave appropriate advice. We have served Fixed Penalty Notices for failure to display: Two fines were paid and we prosecuted the remaining two.

Case Study

A 'zero rated' Treforest takeaway was prosecuted for failing to clearly display its 'food hygiene rating' (with effect from 28th November 2013 it is an offence for a food business inspected from this date not to display their food hygiene rating sticker in a place where it can easily be seen by consumers).

Numerous other issues were discovered by officers when the takeaway was subjected to a routine inspection including no food safety management system, inadequately trained staff, no hot water supply to sinks, a lack of suitable hand-washing facilities, and suitable facilities to disinfect equipment and utensils. The takeaway voluntarily closed until improvements had been made. Standards had improved upon re-

inspection the following day but clear instructions were given that further improvements were needed and the situation monitored. Legal notices were served detailing the required standards.

A further revisit found that the food hygiene rating sticker was on display but was located in the bottom corner of the premises window and the zero rating was obscured with white paint, so that it was not conspicuous to consumers. Numerous visits and warnings continued and the owner was issued with a fixed penalty notice for failure to display the sticker in a conspicuous position, which he failed to pay. He was subsequently charged with various food hygiene offences, including the offence of failing to display the food hygiene rating. He admitted 11 charges when he appeared at Pontypridd Magistrates' Court on September 26th 2014 and was ordered to pay a total fine of £1,130, including a £120 victim surcharge and £560 costs.

DRAFT

What this means for 2015/16

Many of our residents lives are blighted by the anti social behaviour of others, and we will work with our partners to protect victims of anti social behaviour and reduce reoffending. We will support victims of domestic abuse and challenge the behaviour of perpetrators. We will work to reduce the harm to individuals from alcohol and substance misuse. We will also target our resources to maximise the improvement of housing conditions for those in greatest need.

As a result of our work to date and the continuing requirement to support, protect and keep our residents safe, our priorities in 2015/16 are:

- **To ensure vulnerable people in our communities are supported by us using intelligence led interventions**
 - We need to change how we work to address the priorities of the Single Integrated Plan, and work in an intelligence led manner to ensure that what we deliver has the greatest potential to effect change. We will have a greater emphasis on early intervention and on delivery of services in areas where we identify we can have the most impact.
 - Although a great deal has been achieved since the Domestic Abuse services were established in 2012/13 there is a need to undertake a strategic review of support services in the context of forthcoming new Welsh Government legislation, the findings of the PCC review of services in South Wales and increased collaboration with Merthyr Tydfil CBC.
- **To focus activities and actions on providing targeted support, addressing the specific needs of our communities**
 - Reducing inequalities by focusing on areas of RCT with the greatest disadvantage is a key priority. This will enable communities to benefit from preventative services and enable us to work in partnership to identify the opportunities available through alternative funding models, re-focusing existing services and working smarter together.
 - A key strategic priority for 2015-16 will therefore be to focus on housing interventions, in particular to develop and deliver the Housing and Health Action Area Action Plan for Tylorstown and deliver the Housing Schemes within the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme for Pontypridd.
 - We will respond positively to any resident activating the Community Trigger and work closely with the Police & Crime Commissioner and partners to tackle anti social behaviour

**Wales Programme for Improvement
Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour**

What we aim to achieve:	
Many of our residents lives are blighted by the antisocial behaviour of others, with some suffering harm such as domestic abuse, violence and criminal damage. We will support victims of domestic abuse and work to reduce the harm to individuals of their own alcohol and substance misuse. We will continue to use our licensing and public protection powers to reduce antisocial behaviour by effectively managing the late night economy and holding the perpetrators of antisocial behaviour and other offences to account. We will also work to protect people, particularly our most vulnerable residents, from harm and exploitation by using our enforcement powers to ensure that housing meets required standards, the safety of passengers using taxis is protected, consumers can eat safely from our food outlets, businesses are effectively regulated and rogue traders are prevented from operating.	
Key Corporate Risks - What are the Strategic Risks being addressed by this plan and which Outcomes aim to mitigate them?	
Risk Description:	Outcome Reference:
If secondary and specialist services for substance misuse are not reconfigured appropriately with partners then the ability to deliver a service that suits the needs of citizens across the Cwm Taf region may be compromised.	3
If partners do not buy into and agree a new Cwm Taf Collaborative Arrangement for Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse then the ability to tackle domestic violence effectively will be compromised.	2

How will we know if we are making a difference:													
<p>KPI 1 - No. of clients reporting a reduction in their substance misuse</p> <table border="1"> <caption>KPI 1 Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No. leaving with no reduction or still in treatment</td> <td>1,126</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No. with a reduction in their substance misuse</td> <td>1,896</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Value	No. leaving with no reduction or still in treatment	1,126	No. with a reduction in their substance misuse	1,896	<p>KPI 2 - No. of domestic abuse clients reporting a complete cessation of abuse following IDVA intervention</p> <table border="1"> <caption>KPI 2 Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Value</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number reporting a cessation of abuse</td> <td>124</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number remaining</td> <td>58</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Value	Number reporting a cessation of abuse	124	Number remaining	58
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Number reporting a cessation of abuse	124												
Number remaining	58												
<p>Story behind the data: At Qtr 4, 1,896 clients have shown a reduction in their substance misuse (63%). 1,126 clients have not shown a reduction in their substance misuse or are still in treatment (37%).</p> <p>During the same period last year 1,501 clients (59%) demonstrated a reduction in their substance misuse and 1,058 clients (41%) were either still receiving treatment (the outcome of which was not yet known) or left without reducing their substance misuse.</p>	<p>Story behind the data: At Qtr 4 this data represents 68% of clients reporting positive outcomes in the form of cessation of abuse as a result of IDVA intervention. Despite a decline in performance compared to last year (74% in 2013/14), our IDVA's have dealt with over 50% more clients this year compared to 2013/14 (117 clients 2013/14 and 182 clients in 2014/15), demonstrating an increase in demand for this service.</p> <p>Other indicators reported within this outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 78% (136) clients feeling safer as a result of IDVA intervention (85% - 99 clients in 2013/14) - 74% (129) clients experiencing improvements in their quality of life (84% - 98 clients in 2013/14) 												

Paul Mee (Service Director of Public Health and Protection) - March 2015

Key Priority: Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour (Public Health & Protection)

Lead Officer: Paul Mee Service Director of Public Health and Protection

Outcome 1: Fewer people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are the victims of antisocial behaviour and public concern is reduced overall. People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are protected from the

Theme	Measures											Comment	
	Title	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16		
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target		
Safety	Me01ai) - No. of vulnerable and / or repeat victims of antisocial behaviour that are no longer experiencing antisocial behaviour / feel safer as a result of intervention (Local)	115	80				N/A	49		↓	No Target Set	For information only	
	Me01aai) - % of vulnerable and / or repeat victims of antisocial behaviour that are no longer experiencing antisocial behaviour / feel safer as a result of intervention (Local)	56	78				75	82	●	↑	80		
	Me02 - No. of individual offenders that have ceased/reduced offending behaviour whilst participating in the scheme for ¹ : ai) Prolific & Priority Offenders (PPO) (Local)	N/A	47 ³				N/A	N/A				Not being reported 2015/16	Unable to report on these indicators as data is externally provided by South Wales Police, and is currently under review as a 'national concern'.
	bi) Integrated Offender Management (IOM) (Local)	N/A	67 ³				N/A	N/A					
	Me03 - Proportion of individuals referred to the unit who are no longer perpetrators of ASB as a result of the intervention: a) No. of individuals referred to the unit who are no longer perpetrators of ASB as a result of intervention ² (Local)	N/A	595				N/A	1,655		↑		No Target Set	For information only
	b) % of individuals referred to the unit who are no longer perpetrators of ASB as a result of intervention ² (Local)	N/A	74				75	73	●	↓		75	
	Me04 - % of residents surveyed in targeted town centres who feel Community Safety has improved following the intervention (New) (Local)	N/A	N/A				N/A	33				Not being reported 2015/16	For information only

Footnotes:

¹ Offenders are closely managed during their involvement in the schemes. The cohorts of offenders are dynamic and will change constantly as new offenders are identified and those whose behaviour has changed fall out of the schemes

² This will capture how many individuals referred to the ASB unit who drop out of the system at the earliest stages because they are no longer a source of ASB - the more that leave early the more effective the system.

³ Data is provided by South Wales Police and represents an average of the first two quarters of 2013/14

Key Priority: Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour (Public Health & Protection)

Lead Officer: Paul Mee Service Director of Public Health and Protection

Outcome 2: Fewer people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are the victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence

Theme	Title	Measures										Comment
		2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG	Annual Target		
Safety	Me01 - % of clients that reported feeling safer as a result of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service (IDVA) intervention (Local)	90	85				85	78	●	↓	85 - Query this target too high??	Ambitious target set. Indicator is based on client perception which is often influenced by external factors beyond the control of the IDVA service
	Me02 - % of clients reporting a complete cessation of abuse ¹ following IDVA intervention (Local)	90	74				80	68	●	↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	<i>This performance indicator has also been shown graphically at the front of the plan.</i> Ambitious target set. Uncontrollable external factors affect performance e.g. the presence of children provides contact opportunities that may lead to the continuation of indirect abuse.
	Me03 - % of clients that reported having an improved quality of life as a result of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service (IDVA) intervention (Local)	88	84				85	74	●	↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	The ambitious target has not been achieved due to external factors outside of the IDVA service's control. The outcome may require referral to another agency for longer term contact and support
	Me04 - % of clients experiencing reduced level of risk as a result of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service (IDVA) intervention ² (case worker perception) (New) (Local)	N/A	N/A				N/A	74			Not being reported in 2015/16	For information only
	Me05 (i) - No. of perpetrators of domestic violence who commence the voluntary perpetrator programme (New) (Local)	N/A	N/A				N/A	N/A			Not being reported in 2015/16	Evaluation of the Voluntary Perpetrator Programme has been delayed as a result of the programme starting later than originally anticipated. Data to inform these measures together with the evaluation will be made available to members during 2015/16.
	Me05 (ii) - % of perpetrators of domestic violence who complete the voluntary perpetrator programme (New) (Local)	N/A	N/A				N/A	N/A			Not being reported in 2015/16	

Footnote:

¹ Cessation of abuse is regarded as no abuse experienced in past month or since intake

² This is quantified using a risk perceptor indicator checklist at the exit interview. The measure is collected as part of our external accreditation for the CAADA (Coordinating Action Against Domestic Abuse) leading lights. It is a well defined and robust measure

Key Priority: Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour (Public Health & Protection)

Lead Officer: Paul Mee Service Director of Public Health and Protection

Outcome 3: Fewer people in Rhondda Cynon Taf misuse alcohol and drugs

Theme	Measures											
	Title	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Safety	Me01 - % of clients who achieve a waiting time less than 20 working days between referral and treatment (Local)	78	86				80	86	●	↑	Not being reported in 2015/16	
	Me02 - % of cases closed as treatment completed (Local)	67	74				74	66	●	↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	
	Me03 (i) - No. of service users reporting a reduction in their substance misuse (New) (Local)	1,515	1,501				N/A	1,896		↑	No Target Set	For information only
	Me03 (ii) - % of service users reporting a reduction in their substance misuse (Local)	63	59				59	63	●	↔	67	<i>This performance indicator has also been shown graphically at the front of the plan.</i>
	Me04 (i) - No. of service users reporting an improvement in quality of life (New) (Local)	756	1,074				N/A	1,542		↑	Not being reported in 2015/16	For information only
	Me04 (ii) - % service users reporting an improvement in quality of life (Local)	55	54				56	71	●	↑	Not being reported in 2015/16	

Draft

Key Priority: Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour (Public Health & Protection)

Lead Officer: Paul Mee Service Director of Public Health and Protection

Outcome 4: People in RCT live in safe, appropriate housing in sustainable and prosperous communities

Theme	Measures											Comment
	Title	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Safety	Me01 - No. of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1st April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action of the local authority (Local)	86	94				75	114	●	↑	75	
	Me02 - % of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1st April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action of the local authority (Statutory)	3.47	3.05	4	20	9.23	3.00	3.37	●	↓		Annual performance has exceeded the 2014/15 target but performance remains in the bottom quartile when compared to 2013/14 all Wales data.
	Me03 - No. of category 1 and 2 Hazards that were reduced to an acceptable standard following a HHSRS assessment ¹ (New) (Local)	54	233				60	237	●	↑		
	Me04 - No. of houses where an excess cold hazard was reduced to an acceptable level (Local)	28	41				25	21	●	↓	Not being reported in 2015/16	There were not as many excess cold hazards reduced during 2014/15 as the types of properties that required a hazard rating assessment did not have as many of these hazards present as anticipated
	Me05 - No. of energy efficient insulation measures installed in all homes (Private) (New) (Local)	1,982	1,734				300	475	●	↓		
	Me06 - No. of homes benefiting from improved domestic energy performance measures (Private) (New) (Local)	1,566	1,550				300	405	●	↓		
	Me07 - % of houses in multiple occupation that fully comply with licensing conditions ² (Local)	68.1	69.7	1.0	3	39.3	60.0	66.0	●	↓		Annual performance has exceeded the 2014/15 target and compared to 2013/14 all Wales data, performance remains in top quartile

Footnotes:

¹ The housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) is a risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. It was

² A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a property occupied by persons who are not members of the same family. Licensing is a mechanism for controlling, managing and improving standards in certain types of HMO.

³ This data was incorrectly stated in Qtr 1. Originally reported as 41

Key Priority: Protecting people from harm and tackling antisocial behaviour (Public Health & Protection)

Lead Officer: Paul Mee Service Director of Public Health and Protection

Outcome 5: People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe and feel safe

Theme	Measures											
	Title	2012/13	2013/14	2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data			2014/15			Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13	2015/16	Comment
		Annual Performance	Annual Performance	Quartile	Rank	Average	Annual Target	Annual Performance	RAG		Annual Target	
Safety	Me01 - % of licensed premises due for inspection in category A & B* inspected by target date (Local)	100	92				75	100	●	↔	Not being reported in 2015/16	
	Me02 -% of test purchases for the sale of alcohol to underage volunteers that results in a refusal to sell (Local)	98	90				N/A	90 (45/50)		↓		For information only
	Me03 - No. of doorstep crime incidents responded to (investigated & action taken in response (Local)	85	47				N/A	83		↓		For information only
	Me04 -% of elderly people responding to a questionnaire at awareness raising events who are prepared to resist door step crime (Local)	N/A	91.43				75.00	100.00	●	↑		
	Me05 - % of food businesses which are broadly compliant with food law (Statutory)	83.87	88.23	3	15	90.33	85.00	90.41	●	↑		Annual performance has exceeded 2014/15 target and compared to 2013/14 all Wales data, performance is above the Welsh average

*Category A & B premises are the higher risk categories

Public Health & Protection - 2015/16 Action Plan

Protecting People from Harm

Many of our residents lives are blighted by the anti social behaviour of others, and we will work with our partners to protect victims of anti social behaviour and reduce reoffending. We will support victims of domestic abuse and challenge the behaviour of perpetrators. We will work to reduce the harm to individuals from alcohol and substance misuse. We will also target our resources to maximise the improvement of housing conditions for those in greatest need.

We will ensure vulnerable people in our communities are supported by us using intelligence led interventions

We need to change how we work to address the priorities of the Single Integrated Plan, and work in an intelligence led manner to ensure that what we deliver has the greatest potential to effect change. We will have a greater emphasis on early intervention and on delivery of services in areas where we identify we can have the most impact.

Although a great deal has been achieved since the Domestic Abuse services were established in 2012/13 there is a need to undertake a strategic review of support services in the context of forthcoming new Welsh Government legislation, the findings of the PCC review of services in South Wales and increased collaboration with Merthyr Tydfil CBC.

We will focus activities and actions on providing targeted support, addressing the specific needs of our communities

Reducing inequalities by focusing on areas of RCT with the greatest disadvantage is a key priority. This will enable communities to benefit from preventative services and enable us to work in partnership to identify the opportunities available through alternative funding models, re-focusing existing services and working smarter together.

A key strategic priority for 2015-16 will therefore be to focus on housing interventions, in particular to develop and deliver the Housing and Health Action Area Action Plan for Tylorstown and deliver the Housing Schemes within the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme for Pontypridd. We will respond positively to any resident activating the Community Trigger and work closely with the Police & Crime Commissioner and partners to tackle anti social behaviour

**Lead Officer(s) for this priority:
Paul Mee, Service Director for Public Health & Protection**

Key Corporate Risks from 2014/15	Outcome Reference:
Risk Description: If secondary and specialist services for substance misuse are not reconfigured appropriately with partners then the ability to deliver a service that suits the needs of citizens across the Cwm Taf region may be compromised.	
If partners do not buy into and agree a new Cwm Taf Collaborative Arrangement for Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse then the ability to tackle domestic violence effectively will be compromised.	

Council Key Priority:

Lead Officer:

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 1 - Vulnerable people in our communities are supported by us using intelligence led interventions
Why we need to do it:	In 2014/15 there has been an increase in the number of anti-social behaviour cases reported to the police (from 7,028 in 2013/14 to 7,238 in 2014/15). We are also still receiving over 4,000 requests for help with instances of domestic abuse, and demand for our substance misuse treatment schemes remains constant. This tells us that there is a community need for the services we provide, but we need to change how we work to address the priorities of the Single Integrated Plan, and work in an intelligence led manner to ensure that what we deliver has the greatest potential to effect change. We will have a greater emphasis on early intervention and on delivery of services in areas where we identify we can have the most impact.
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	The delivery of this outcome will contribute to the "Safety" and "Health" themes of the SIP
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	A reduction in repeat offending behaviour, particularly amongst the targeted groups of young people and women. Enhanced support for victims of anti social behaviour. Coordinated, equitable and accessible services for victims of domestic abuse across Cwm Taf. Improved outcomes for people with substance misuse problems. Closer working relationships between Leisure and Health services to deliver better health outcomes for people as a result of increased physical activity.

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE						TARGET		
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data				2014/15		2015/16	
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me01 - % [& No.] of vulnerable/repeat victims of anti-social behaviour that are no longer experiencing anti-social behaviour / feel safer as a result of intervention (Local) [LPPN127]	N/A	78 [80]				75	82 [49]	80	This target is already challenging and actions aim to maintain good performance rather than seek improvement.
Me02 - % [& No.] of individuals referred to the unit who are no longer perpetrators of Antisocial behaviour (ASB) as a result of intervention (Local) [LPPN129]	N/A	74 [595]				75	73 [1,655]	75	This target is already challenging and actions aim to maintain good performance rather than seek improvement.

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

Measures	PERFORMANCE						TARGET		
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data				2014/15		2015/16	
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	Rationale
Me03 - % [& No.] of clients that reported feeling safer as a result of Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) intervention (Local) [LPPN351]	90	74 [99]				85	78 [138]	85	To achieve high level of positive outcomes for clients, based on previous performance and best practice identified through CAADA.
Me04 - % [& No.] of service users reporting a reduction in their substance misuse (Local) [LPPN140]	N/A	59 [1,501]				59	63 [1,896]	67	Target set by Welsh Government.

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Reduce offending and re-offending across key locations and offending types utilising intelligence led responses	M01	To develop with partners a new work programme to focus on first time offenders aged 18 - 25 to reduce ASB and reoffending. To map out what offending looks like in RCT in this key age range	Aug-16	A Mallin
	M02	To develop the Women's Pathfinder Programme ¹ in Cwm Taf to prevent re-offending by females.	Mar-16	A Mallin
	M03	Launch the pilot Women's Pathfinder Programme	Sep-15	A Mallin
CA02 - Support vulnerable and repeat victims of Anti- Social Behaviour (ASB) and ensure the ASB experienced is tackled	M01	Carry out Vulnerability Risk Assessments with all vulnerable/repeat victims identified to grade risk level	Jun-15	Andrew Mallin
	M02	Tackle offending behaviour of all ASB perpetrators referred to the ASB team	Jun-15	Andrew Mallin
	M03	Put tailor made action plans in place for all Vulnerable / Repeat victims of ASB	Jun-15	Andrew Mallin
	M04	Support vulnerable victims of Hate Crime to ensure their needs are addressed	Mar-16	Andrew Mallin

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA03 - Ensure that Domestic Violence services in Cwm Taf meet the needs of our service users	M01	To evaluate the voluntary perpetrator programme introduced in 2014 -15 to reduce domestic violence re-offending	May-15	Debbie Evans
	M02	Report outcomes and recommendations to the Local Service Board (LSB)	Jul-15	Debbie Evans
	M03	With partners undertake a strategic review of domestic violence services across Cwm Taf	Jun-15	Debbie Evans & Paul Mee
	M04	Report outcomes and recommendations of the review to the Cwm Taf Sexual Violence & Domestic Abuse Steering Group	Jan-16	Debbie Evans & Paul Mee
CA04 - Reduce the risk of harm from the misuse of substances	M01	Appoint a Harm Reduction Co-ordinator	May-15	Debbie Evans
	M02	In partnership with key stakeholders, develop systems to record, monitor and action responses to fatal and non-fatal substance misuse poisonings in Cwm Taf	Dec-15	Debbie Evans
	M03	Evaluate lessons learnt from reports of fatal and non-fatal poisonings and report findings to the Area Planning Board (APB)	Mar-16	Debbie Evans
CA05 - Increase the number of referrals due to expansion of schemes through joint Working with Public Health Wales (PHW), NHS and Community Care	M01	Deliver the 'Joint Care Management Programme' with the Local Health Board	Mar-16	K Russell
	M02	Deliver the 50+ programme with Public Health Wales and Community Care	Mar-16	K Russell

Footnotes

¹ Women's Pathfinder Programme is a pilot offender management programme being introduced by IOM Cymru to target repeat offending by women

² Harm Reduction Coordinator - role to collate information on fatal and non-fatal poisonings and convene Drug Related Death Panel to improve practices

³ Joint Care Management Programme - a joint programme commissioned by the LHB and delivered by the Council to provide physical activity interventions to patients requiring operations to improve patient health and thereby avoid medical intervention

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 - If secondary and specialist services for substance misuse are not reconfigured appropriately with partners then the ability to deliver a service that suits the needs of citizens across the Cwm Taf region may be compromised	
R2 - If partners do not buy into and agree a new Cwm Taf Collaborative Arrangement for Sexual Violence	

Council Key Priority:

Public Health & Protection - Protecting People from Harm

Lead Officer:

Paul Mee - Service Director for Public Health & Protection

What are we trying to achieve, the outcome:	Outcome 2 - Targeted support addressing the specific needs of our communities
Why we need to do it:	Reducing inequalities by focusing on areas of RCT with the greatest disadvantage is a key priority. This will enable communities to benefit from preventative services and enable us to work in partnership to identify the opportunities available through alternative funding models, re-focusing existing services and working smarter together.
It will support the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan Theme(s)	The delivery of this outcome will contribute to the "Safety" , "Health" and "Prosperity" themes of the SIP
What difference will delivery of this outcome make to the service users/residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf	More homes with an improved energy efficiency rating, resulting in reduced fuel costs for households, potentially creating more disposable income Increased supply of good quality affordable housing, reducing the number of people waiting to be re-housed Reducing empty properties will bring aesthetically improved communities and reduce anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

How will we measure our progress against the outcome

Measures	PERFORMANCE					TARGET			
	2012/13	2013/14 & Comparative Data			2014/15		2015/16		Rationale
	Actual Data	Actual Data	Quartile	Rank	All Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual Data	Annual Target	
Me01 - No. of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority (Local) [PSR004 N]		94				75	114	75	This is based on previous activity and the targeted resources available to deliver direct actions to return vacant premises to use
Me02 - No. of new affordable homes delivered (New to WPI) (Local) [PLA006N]		102				70	127	100	This is based on housing developments planned for delivery during 2015-16
Me03 - No. of energy efficient insulation measures installed in all homes - All Homes Private & Social Rented (Local) [LPPN122]		2,801				750	4,557	600	This is based on funding available.

NB any measures used to demonstrate and scrutinise progress within Cabinet Performance and Scrutiny reports will be subject to a Data Assurance Process which will include review of target setting rationale

2014/15 Actions & Milestones

Actions	Key Milestones/Sub Actions		Delivery Date	Responsible Officer
CA01 - Deliver the "Housing & Health Action Area" (HHAA) in Tylorstown	M01	Complete the housing and health surveys in the targeted area	Jun-15	Jen Ellis & Claire Williams
	M02	Develop an housing and health action plan for 2015-17 for the area in conjunction with partners	Aug-15	Jen Ellis & Claire Williams
	M03	Subject to the needs of the area specific plans, prepare a business case for Selective Licensing for decision by Cabinet Member for Housing	Sep-15	Jen Ellis
	M04	Monitor delivery of the key actions for 2015-16 through the HHAA Steering Group	Mar-16	Jen Ellis
CA02 - Deliver the outcomes from the strategic housing schemes that are part of the Vibrant and Viable Places programme for Pontypridd	M01	Deliver the outcomes for the 'Homes Above Retail Premises' ¹ Scheme	Mar-16	Jen Ellis & Louise Davies
	M02	Deliver the outcomes of the 'Heat & Save' ² Scheme	Mar-16	Jen Ellis & Louise Davies
	M03	Secure a contractor to deliver the 'Homestep Plus' ³ Scheme	Apr-15	Jen Ellis & Louise Davies
	M03	Deliver the outcomes of the 'Homestep Plus' Scheme	Mar-16	Jen Ellis & Louise Davies
CA03 - Respond effectively to the new powers within the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	M01	To contribute to the development of the Police & Crime Commissioner's framework for determining the use of the community trigger and remedial actions	Sep-15	Andrew Mallin
CA04 - Improve services aimed at returning long term empty properties to use	M01	Support the elected member scrutiny task team examining the issue of long term empty properties	Jul-15	Jen Ellis & Louise Davies
	M02	Implement decisions of the Cabinet in response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Task team	Mar-16	Jen Ellis & Louise Davies
	M03	To develop and implement innovative models to bring empty properties back into use including Housing Association self funded low cost homeownership models, and private sector leasing schemes	Mar-16	Jen Ellis & Louise Davies

Footnotes

¹ Homes Above Retail Premises - a scheme designed to facilitate the return to use of empty accommodation above retail premises in town centres

² Heat & Save - a scheme to make energy efficiency measures available free of charge to householders

³ Homestep Plus - a low cost home ownership scheme to enable empty properties to be renovated for sale and occupation at below market price

Key Strategic Risks that have been considered	Actions to mitigate risk (if not included above)
R1 -	