



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019/20

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th JANUARY 2020

CABINET AND SCRUTINY ENGAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

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1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the progress made in advancing the portfolio responsibilities of the Cabinet Member.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Members consider and scrutinise the content of the report.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 To challenge any arising matters or issues with the relevant Cabinet Member and to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to effectively scrutinise the Executive.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 On the 22nd January, 2018, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a report regarding the engagement of the Executive at future Scrutiny Committees going forward.

- 4.2 At the meeting Members agreed to receive Cabinet Members at future Scrutiny meetings to present relevant information relating to their portfolio areas, alongside the relevant Director.
- 4.3 Such an approach will provide Scrutiny Members with the opportunity to further challenge the Executive, as the Cabinet Members can provide details (both verbal and written) relating to the potential challenges facing the services, as well as the opportunities and policy changes currently being considered. This approach would allow each Cabinet Member the opportunity to update Scrutiny Members on the delivery of their respective areas of the Corporate Plan, reference Key Performance Indicators and important details of policies being considered for future decisions, which are referenced for future business, or those which have been developed since the last publicised Work Programme.
- 4.4 An overview of the functional areas within the Cabinet Portfolio and progress update is set out in Section 5.

5. **Cabinet Portfolio – Main functional areas of accountability and responsibility**

5.1 **Accountancy Services and Performance and Resources**

Functional Areas

- 5.1.1 Accountancy Services - the primary function of the service is to ensure that the Council meets its legal responsibilities to arrange for the proper administration of its financial affairs. This includes: Revenue and Capital budget setting, monitoring and year end closure of service's accounts; External funding and taxation; Financial reporting (production of the Council's Statement of Accounts, technical capital accounting, managing the Council's Asset Register, Systems, Bank Reconciliation and development of income systems); Treasury Management and Pension Fund Accounting, Investments and Governance; and co-ordinating the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) arrangements.
- 5.1.2 Performance and Resources - the Service's primary function is to coordinate the Council's corporate performance management arrangements and ensure the Council meets its statutory responsibilities in this regard. This includes setting the Council's Service Self Evaluation and Service Delivery Plan frameworks and coordinating / supporting Services in their completion; undertaking the Council's annual corporate assessment; supporting the compilation of the Council's quarterly Performance Reports (including reviews of the robustness of performance data); production of the Council's Corporate Performance Report; and supporting specific projects e.g. coordinating updates on the work being undertaken by the Council to progress recommendations made by the WAO, corporate safeguarding and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

2019/20 Key Priorities and Progress Update

- 5.1.3 The key priorities for 2019/20 and main areas of progress (as at December 2019 unless otherwise stated) is included in Table 1.

Table 1 – Accountancy Services: Key priorities and progress

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus
Delivery of robust in-year financial management and reporting arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating and supporting arrangements to ensure the Council maintains its financial stability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unqualified external audit opinion by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) (i.e. clean bill of health) on the Council’s and Pension Fund 2018/19 Statement of Accounts (SoAs). The external audit process was completed and SoAs approved by Council 31st July 2019 (2 years in advance of the statutory date). ○ General Fund balances maintained above minimum level of £10Million as at 31st March 2019. ○ Robust revenue and capital budget monitoring arrangements. • Early identification of savings in 2019/20 to support additional one-off investment (over £95Million since 2015) and support revenue base budget savings for 2020/21. • Regular reporting of financial and performance information together with a programme of support to scrutiny committees to help further develop understanding of the Council’s budgets and aid effective scrutiny. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with services to bring the Council wide projected over-spend (as at Qtr 2 of £1.761M) closer in line with budget. • Implementation of process related recommendations reported by the WAO (based on the audit of the 2018/19 SoAs) to help further improve the closure of accounts process for 2019/20.
Maintenance and refresh of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTFP refreshed and reported to Council (31st July 2019). • The MTFP has been updated on an on-going basis and has formed the starting point in developing the Senior Leadership Team’s report to Cabinet (23rd January 2020) as part of Cabinet determining a draft Revenue Budget Strategy for the 2020/2021 financial year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead arrangements to enable the Council to set a Revenue Budget and Council Tax levels for the 2020/2021 financial year and updated 3 year Capital Programme in March 2020. • Further refresh and reporting of a robust MTFP. • On-going work with services to identify and where appropriate to do so, the early delivery of budget savings.
Provision of robust financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to support a range of strategic and transformational projects across the Council to deliver positive outcomes and visible improvements for residents, for example, StayWell@Home2, Llys Cadwyn, 21st Century 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued close working with services and partners to support the delivery of

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus
management support to key projects across the Council	schools (including Band B Mutual Investment Model), Welsh Government's Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme for town centre regeneration projects (RCT lead for £10M across the 10 City Deal LAs over 3 years) and Valleys Taskforce Empty Homes Grant (RCT lead for £10M across the 9 Valleys Taskforce LAs over 2 years - to implement RCT's own Empty Properties Grant scheme across the region); Absorbent Hygiene Products treatment services (all Wales); Extracare strategy; and continuation of Residual Waste and Food Waste regional contracts.	strategic and transformation projects across the County Borough.
Modernisation of the Service through the application of up-to-date digital technology and agile working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile working and Office 365 pilot underway and further roll-out planned across the Service in 2020. • A programme of work to digitise paper records to improve work-flow arrangements and records management. • Preparations for relocation of officers to Oldway House (Porth town centre). • Continued investment in staff development, including apprentice and graduate positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll-out of agile working and Office 365 technology across the Service. • Continued staff development and investment, including apprentice and graduate officers.
Work with Services to further improve performance management arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and delivery of the 2019/20 Service Self Evaluation and Service Delivery Planning arrangements and the Council's Corporate Assessment. • WAO review and issuing of compliance certificates for the Council's Corporate Performance Report¹. • Supporting the drafting and consultation arrangements for the Council's new draft Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalisation of new Corporate Plan and report to full Council. • Subject to the Local Government and Election (Wales) Bill being passed, assess the performance management implications for the Council together with actions required to ensure compliance with the legislation.

¹ Corporate Performance Report – this document sets out a review of the Council's Corporate Plan performance for the preceding year and sets out actions to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan for the next year – this being an annual requirement for all local authorities in Wales in line with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

5.2 Pensions, Procurement and Transactional Services (formerly Operational Finance Services, and Procurement)

From the 1st April 2019, responsibility for the following functional areas were combined to create the new Pensions, Procurement and Transactional Services area.

Functional Areas

- 5.2.1 Pensions – the primary function is to deliver the Council's statutory responsibilities as Scheme Manager/Administering Body of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund, on behalf of all participating Employers and Scheme Members. The Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund is the largest local authority occupational pension scheme in Wales, with overall membership exceeding 73,000 individuals. The Fund forms part of the national pension scheme for local authorities, the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Pension Fund Governance requirements are defined in regulations and guidance and include a (politically balanced) Pension Fund Committee and a Pension Fund Board, it is not a function of the Executive.
- 5.2.2 Procurement – the Procurement Service forms an integral part of the Council's contract management and purchasing arrangements for supplies and services, ensuring that value for money is achieved via competitive arrangements, and that all suppliers are dealt with in a fair, equitable way in compliance with the appropriate legislation. The Service collaborates closely with both existing and potential new partner organisations, including the Welsh Government / National Procurement Service and other Local Authorities, to seek opportunities to achieve procurement efficiencies, reducing costs and ensure that the Council's best interests are secured.
- 5.2.3 Transactional Services (includes Payroll, Payments, Council Tax, Business Rates, Benefit Claims, Credit Management, and Corporate Fraud) – the primary functions of these services are to deliver all operational and transactional financial activities, providing key frontline financial functions to customers and residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf for Benefits, Council Tax and Business Rates. It also provides key internal business support services such as Payroll and Payments (for the Council's creditors) and the Credit Management (for collection of all sundry debtor bills issued). The majority of the functions provided by these service streams are statutory or essential business support functions.

2019/20 Key Priorities and Progress Update

- 5.2.4 The key priorities for 2019/20 and main areas of progress (as at December 2019 unless otherwise stated) is included in Table 2.

Table 2 – Pensions, Procurement and Transactional Services: Key priorities and progress

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus
<p>Further embed the revised and evolving LG Pension Fund Governance arrangements and support delivery of the 2019 Triennial Valuation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding the Local Pension Committee and Pension Board within the Fund’s governance arrangements and in accordance with Pension Governance Legislation, the Pension Regulator and the National Scheme Advisory Board (includes reviewing / publishing a number of Fund supporting governance documents in accordance with statutory deadlines). • The Wales Pension Partnership (WPP) collaboration continues to make good progress against key milestones. • Continued staff development, including appointment to apprentice positions. • The 2019 actuarial valuation of the Fund commenced on 31st March 2019 with certified results due by 31st March 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of WPP governance frameworks and arrangements. • Review and update, where required, the Fund’s Governance documents. • Continued monitoring and updating of the Fund’s ‘Risk Register’. • On-going focus to promote Member Self-Serve.
<p>Manage the consequences of the implementation of the UK Government’s welfare reform agenda within the Benefits Service and support work to minimise the impact on citizens.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Service is represented at the DWP/WLGA led workshops for Universal Credit (UC) to exchange experiences and learn from others. • The Service supports the Council ‘Task and Finish Group’ to ensure aims and ambitions of UC are realised in RCT and to avoid unintended consequences for residents, landlords and communities. • Performance Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council Tax / NDR / Benefits Speed of Processing - on or ahead of target. ○ Debtors & Overpayments Collection – reduction in Housing Benefit overpayment debt and sundry debt collection is better than average. The Council also continues to collect social care debt in line with the principles Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timescales for full roll out of Universal Credit remains subject to confirmation - the Service will closely monitor and participate in the relevant stakeholder forums to ensure the Council is well positioned for this. • Continue to monitor any implications on citizens eligible to claim Council Tax Relief, post implementation of UC, and ensure claimants are informed of eligibility for Free School Meals at point of contact with DWP.

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus
<p>Maximise information technology applications to help drive service performance improvement and improve customer access through further digital transformation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 'Transactional Services', improvements in technology and the growing digital appetite of our customers will continue to inform the pace of service improvement into the medium term. • Across the Service there are a number of e-initiatives that have either been introduced or in progress. Take-up rates by our customers is gradual, and promoting and signposting to wider digital support programmes is on-going. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going work to further improve take-up and promote the benefits of self-serve / e-engagement. • Further enhance e-functionality through the implementation of a new HR/Payroll system, to include an employment depositary to communicate, for example, e-employment contracts.
<p>Provide specialist procurement advice and support in the delivery of strategic projects by ensuring appropriate resources are available and are allocated accordingly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported delivery of key Council strategic projects, for example, Llys Cadwyn, Bryn Pica Eco Park, 21st Century Schools, Extra Care and Support. • Facilitate networking opportunities, for example, through the annual 'Meet the Buyer' event. • Good track record of working in collaboration with neighbouring organisations, utilising framework contracts of others and leading on contracts on behalf of others. Examples include: 'The Provision of Substance Misuse Services Across Cwm Taf', 'All Wales Looked After Children', 'The Maintenance of Traffic Control and Associated'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to work with services to enhance and improve contract management arrangements. • Supporting the Council's 'net zero' ambitions, through targeted procurement activity. • Linking the 'Meet the Buyer' event with the Council's Careers event. • Supporting the realignment of the National Procurement Service contract portfolio.

5.3 **ICT & Digital Services** (formerly ICT Operational Services & Digitalisation Strategy)

5.3.1 From the 1st April 2019, responsibility for the following functional areas were combined to create the new ICT & Digital Services area.

Functional Areas

5.3.2 ICT Operational Services - the primary function of the service is to ensure that the Councils ICT systems are available and functional to deliver the day to day business requirements of users. This includes the provision of a single point of contact Service Desk, which facilitates reactive/proactive maintenance, upgrades, monitoring, orders, contracts and support to requests for assistance in relation to ICT. Operations include support for areas such as User Devices, Networks, Telephones, Print, Data Centre, Servers/Storage, Applications/Software and Internet.

5.3.3 Digital Improvement Office – the primary function of the service is to provide Digital Advisory, Improvement, Implementation and Project Management support to enable the delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy. This includes the identification and design of digital solutions, centralised programme management of activities and supporting the adoption of new technologies with users to maximise outcome benefits.

5.3.4 Information Management – the primary function of the service is to ensure that the Council manages its information in accordance with legislation and regulatory requirements. This includes areas such as the General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2019, Public Services Network and Payment Card Industry Standard. The service also provides specialist advice, information and support to services & Schools with regard to data compliance, training, awareness, ICT security and data protection.

2019/20 Key Priorities and Progress Update

5.3.5 The key priorities for 2019/20 and main areas of progress (as at December 2019 unless otherwise stated) is included in Table 3.

Table 3 - ICT & Digital Services: Key priorities and progress

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus
<p>Digital Strategy - Drive and effectively support the delivery of digital transformation for our Workplace, Businesses, Residents and Visitors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out of agile working to over 1,300 staff (completed at Ty Trevithick, Ty Glantaf and Ty Elai. On-going at Bronwydd & Ty Sardis) and Microsoft Office 365 roll-out in progress (over 650 enabled to date). • Interactive Digital Meeting rooms now in place across key sites and agile 'hot desk' areas. • Work on-going to transform use of data e.g. joining up data from multiple sources e.g. Adult Services. • Supported key service based projects. Examples include Community Hubs, Llys Cadwyn, Customer Relationship Management System, HR/Payroll and Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Digital Strategy 2020-24 is currently being drafted. • On-going roll-out of agile working and Office 365. • Use of Data - proof of concept developments are currently under way with Waste Management.
<p>Data & Information Management: Drive Data Improvements whilst ensuring the Council is compliant with Legislation & Security Standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work continues corporately on Risk & Impact Assessments, Event & Incident management procedures, Asset Audits & Privacy Impact Assessments. • The Council provides (from 2019) Data Protection support services to all Schools (all schools are signed up via Service Level Agreements). • Public Services Network (PSN) application for renewal has been submitted. • Payment Card Industry (PCI) accreditation was gained in April 2019 (renewal due April 2020). • Cyber Essential accreditation achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to ensure ongoing work with Council Services and Schools to meet GDPR requirements. • PSN / PCI on-going compliance and review programme in place.
<p>Deliver First Class Infrastructure: To improve the Council's core ICT Infrastructure, providing a robust and resilient platform to enable business operations and our digital Improvements. Continue with the core Infrastructure refresh & improvement</p>	<p>Datacentre developed at Rhondda Fach and is in process of being migrated to. The new facility provides a modernised environment that has increased resilience and capacity to deliver ongoing ICT operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in infrastructure, for example, storage and servers replaced; increased and improved WiFi at key Council Sites, Community venues and Town Centre WiFi Live in Mountain Ash and Aberdare (with others Town Centres to follow shortly); and Broadband improvements, • Windows 10 Desktops being implemented and Citrix systems upgraded. • Standardised desktop devices to Microsoft Office 2016 within Council ahead of migration to Office365. Office365 upgrades have been initiated in line with the Digital Programme. • Supported migration of systems to the Cloud. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete migration of Datacentre. • Complete Town Centre WiFi rollout. • Continue with refresh of infrastructure.

5.4 One4all & Contact Centres (Customer Care)

Functional Areas

- 5.4.1 Customer Access Multi-Channel Services – the multi-channel delivery of the Council’s customer experience, providing easy access to information and services, ensuring enquiries are efficiently resolved at the first point of contact and that customers are satisfied with their experience. This is delivered through a range of Advisor Services: face to face, telephone, email and web chat) where interventions are based on need and a focus on vulnerable clients, and also promoting digital channels / self-service option.
- 5.4.2 Customer Improvement Service – reviewing and improving customer facing and back-office processes to put the customer in control (for example, personalised ‘My Leisure’ account), supporting the delivery of policy through regular communication with and advice to residents (for example, the Council policies around recycling arrangements and Adult Social Care support, and national policies for areas such as Universal Credit, Transport for Wales changes and Blue Badges).

2019/20 Key Priorities and Progress Update

- 5.4.3 The key priorities for 2019/20 and main areas of progress (as at December 2019 unless otherwise stated) is included in Table 4.

Table 4 – One4all & Contact Centres (including Web Transactions): Key priorities and progress

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus						
<i>Deliver One Front Door – Multi Channel (Supporting Internal and External Customer)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going focus to further develop and offer more services on-line to customers - over 100 services provided on-line to date and a further 80 planned. Latest information shows - Interactions: 87.8% via website vs other channels An increasing proportion of on-line volumes: 36% in 2016/17 rising to 67.6% in 2019/20 (as at quarter 2). Positive website take up (projection for 2019/20 based on quarters 1 and 2 information) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going work to make available more services on-line (including web chat and on-line services to businesses) to provide customers with a range of multi-access options to conveniently and easily transact with the Council (at the same time as 						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Customer On Line - Website</th> <th>Contact Centre</th> <th>Customer One4aLL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2,983,530 visits (74.5% mobile)</td> <td>356,242 (advice)</td> <td>64,690 visits</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Customer On Line - Website	Contact Centre	Customer One4aLL	2,983,530 visits (74.5% mobile)	356,242 (advice)	64,690 visits
	Customer On Line - Website		Contact Centre	Customer One4aLL				
2,983,530 visits (74.5% mobile)	356,242 (advice)	64,690 visits						

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus												
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer resolution and satisfaction positive: <table border="1" data-bbox="600 325 1541 475"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Resolution</th> <th>Satisfaction</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>One4aLLs</td> <td>97.8%</td> <td>98.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C/Centre</td> <td>97.8%</td> <td>98.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Web</td> <td>87.8%</td> <td>86.7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> • On-going focus on investing in multi skilled advisors, making available ‘easy to use’ web forms for customers and designing on-line services as close as possible to GOV.UK and private sector good practice, underpinned by technology. • Processes have been streamlined and automated to improve customer experience and offer 24 / 7 access, for example, Nappy Recycling. • Work continuing to channel more services via Customer Services, for example: extended Social Care functions in contact centre to support ‘Stay well at Home’ (Lifeline 24/365 response and daytime first response). • Providing customer services for collaborative / regional arrangements, for example, South Wales Parking Group, Cwm Taf Fostering, contact centre developments for the Cwm Taf Local Health Board including alignment to 111 telephone service. 		Resolution	Satisfaction	One4aLLs	97.8%	98.2%	C/Centre	97.8%	98.2%	Web	87.8%	86.7%	<p>ensuring that those who do not have access to online services are not disadvantaged).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support waste services with ‘in cab’ technology. • Embed Social Care functions to support ‘Stay well at Home’ for Lifeline 24/365 response, daytime first response and future proactive calling to vulnerable clients.
	Resolution	Satisfaction												
One4aLLs	97.8%	98.2%												
C/Centre	97.8%	98.2%												
Web	87.8%	86.7%												

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus
Customer Systems and insight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement process completed for a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. • Lifeline ‘panic alarm’ system upgraded to support the Council’s Assistive Technology Strategy (with evaluation of the model to be undertaken). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the new CRM system (including development of My Account and Member Portal). • Procure a Contact Centre upgrade to support RCT and Cwm Taf GP Out of Hours services aligned to the telephone number 111. • Implement plans to further enhance customer involvement in online service development (e.g. working with RCT Panels (Staff, Citizen, Youth Forum etc). • Programme of payment kiosk upgrades scheduled. • Pilot of ‘card only’ payment kiosk at Llwyn Cadwyn.
Consolidate Admin and Develop Corporate Business Support Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of admin / business support pilot completed at the Council’s Ty Elai site (and evaluation confirmed that pilot was fit for purpose). • Hybrid Mail solutions² developed at Central Print/Mail Unit (Ty Elai). • Supporting service projects across the Council e.g. back-scanning of files to develop service digitisation arrangements, review of Print, Mail and Scanning and providing a central archive for key documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further consolidation of admin / business support functions. • Pilot hybrid mail arrangements for the South Wales Parking Service (with lessons learned informing improvement opportunities for business support functions).

² Hybrid Mail – ability to send mail requests electronically to a central print facility for printing, packing and posting (where the distribution of paper documentation is deemed required).

5.5 Corporate Estates (including Design and Property Maintenance, Estates Management, Legal Property and Energy and Utilities Management / Carbon Reduction Commitment)

Functional Areas

- 5.5.1 Estates Management - the primary function of the service is to manage the Council's property portfolio to ensure that premises are fit for purpose, secured on appropriate terms and meet the Council's operational and strategic aims. This includes managing the Capital Receipts programme; leading and delivering the office accommodation strategy; facilitating Town Centre regeneration; producing the Corporate Asset Management Plan and monitoring the key work streams of the Plan; and managing the corporate database of property asset information.
- 5.5.2 Legal Property – the primary function of the service is to deliver a first class conveyancing service to the Council, to ensure that the Council is able to deliver key objectives, targets and services (with a property element) and achieve its property management duties. This includes the sale and acquisition of land and buildings including options, overage and conditional contracts; commercial leases including rent reviews and break clauses; reporting on title deeds; tenancy agreements, licences and wayleaves; placing charges for Empty Property Grants and Low cost housing schemes; protecting the Council's property portfolio by advising on adverse possession claims; and compliance with statutory duties.
- 5.5.3 Property Maintenance - the primary function of the service is to ensure that the Council's buildings are maintained and are safe in accordance with legislation. This includes reactive/responsive (day-to-day) maintenance; emergency 'Out of Hours' response to property related issues, including dangerous structures; minor works project design and contract procurement/management of individual projects; management and monitoring of statutory compliance such as asbestos, legionella, electrical and mechanical engineering services plant and equipment.
- 5.5.4 Corporate Design – the primary function of the service is to project manage and deliver construction capital projects and smaller refurbishment projects. This includes capital projects for Education and Inclusion Services, Community and Children's Services and Prosperity Development and Frontline Services with an average budget over the past 3 years of £15m per year; provide and maintain asset management drawings for all buildings/sites within the Council; and undertake space planning exercises to help inform decisions around the reduction / optimal use of buildings.
- 5.5.5 Energy – the primary function of the service is to reduce the amount of energy the Council uses; reducing the amount of CO2 emissions from Council premises via implementation of a range of interventions to reduce consumption of energy

5.5.6 During 2019/20 the Service has continued to focus on staff development to support the delivery of its key priorities.

2019/20 Key Priorities and Progress Update

5.5.7 The key priorities for 2019/20 and main areas of progress (as at December 2019 unless otherwise stated) is included in Table 5.

Table 5 – Corporate Estates: Key priorities and progress

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus
Make best use of the Council's land and building portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in office accommodation 25.09% (compared to target of 25%), with office accommodation layouts being planned to make best use of agile working solutions and use of recycled furniture. • A single storage solution for residual office furniture acquired and utilised. • On-going close working across Council services to effectively support the Capital Programme and additional one-off investment in Corporate Plan priority areas. • Proactive management of the Council's property portfolio. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going programme of office accommodation rationalisation (supported by agile working and technological developments such as Office 365). • Undertake preparatory work to support the development of the new three year capital programme (2020/21 to 2022/23).
Support the Regeneration of Rhondda Cynon Taf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of acquisitions of strategic properties have been completed as part of the Town Centre Regeneration project. • Supporting the development of community hubs e.g. the former Mountain Ash Day Centre is now a community hub with a third sector café provider and the former Ferndale Infants School is a community hub providing a range of community based services including the relocation and enhancement of Ferndale Library and a childcare facility (will hub will also deliver the Council's commitments to the Welsh Government's Children First Initiative). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Council Services to explore further opportunities to support Town Centre regeneration, in line with service needs, and support the on-going programme of service transformation through the establishment of Community Hubs.
Continued provision of technical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing the final phase of Tonyrefail and Treorchy School projects, that are on target to complete in June 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the 21st Century Schools programme to ensure the

Key Priority	Progress Update and Performance	Areas for on-going focus
<p>to Service Groups for the delivery of projects/programmes and in particular, the Education 21st Century Schools Band B Programme and delivery of the Taff Vale (Llys Cadwyn) Regeneration project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Band B consultation process. The new Hirwaun Primary School will be the first Band B project and works commenced on site in September 2019. • Delivered a range of large scale projects (including Cwmaman Primary School, Ysgol Nantgwyn, Porth Community School, Tonyrefail Community School, Llys Cadwyn, Leisure Centre refurbishments and Data Centre relocation) and smaller refurbishment projects (including Cymmer Primary School & Y.G.G. Tonyrefail). 	<p>programme continues to be monitored and managed within agreed time and budget constraints.</p>
<p>Maintain compliance with legislation for the ongoing maintenance and operation of buildings and ensure there are no unforeseen /unplanned building closures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have kept all of our buildings open and complied with our targets for Statutory Maintenance Compliance, Asbestos Management and Legionella Management (with contract expiry dates are continually reviewed). • More than 10,000 day to day and planned maintenance calls have been handled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of new / upgraded Asset Management System (cloud based) to improve the use of technology (and associated staff training). • On-going staff development and investment e.g. Health and Safety.
<p>Energy and Utilities Management, which effectively manages and reduces energy and other utilities consumption whilst delivering corporate Energy projects and complying with our Energy and Carbon Reduction commitments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest to Save projects are progressing (delivered 67 energy projects (circa £1M) and saved more than 900 tonnes of CO2). • Working on major Energy projects for Wind and Solar development with anticipated carbon savings and financial benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the next phase of 'Invest to Save' projects for 2020/21. • Develop the ongoing work on major energy projects for Wind and Solar development and report findings to the Climate Change Cabinet Steering Group. • Draft an Energy Management Strategy for consideration.

5.6 Internal Audit

Functional Areas

- 5.6.1 The Council's Internal Audit Service joined an existing regional internal audit service with effect from 1st April 2019, as approved by Cabinet on 21st June 2018.
- 5.6.2 The Council's Section 151 Officer is part of the new joint governance arrangements for the Regional Internal Audit Service, with the Vale of Glamorgan Council being the lead and employing local authority. The local authorities that comprise the regional service (i.e. Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Vale of Glamorgan Councils) have signed up to a Partnership Agreement for a period of not less than 3 years and the level, quality and range of internal audit services provided to Rhondda Cynon Taf by the Regional Service is the same as that in place prior to April 2019. Updates are reported to the Council's Audit Committee in terms of the current work of the Regional Service and also on plans for the future.
- 5.6.3 The Council's S 151 Officer will continue to work closely with representatives of the Regional Service to ensure the range and standard of services in place are in line with the Partnership Agreement, utilise the expertise of the Regional Service to support Audit Committee in delivering its Terms of Reference and contribute to the on-going development of the Regional Service.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There are no consultation implications aligned to this report.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

- 8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

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

10.1 The service areas that comprise the 'Corporate Services' Cabinet portfolio are a mix of front and back-office services, and directly and indirectly support the Council in delivering its Corporate Plan priorities and in doing so align with the principles set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 The 'Corporate Services' Cabinet portfolio comprises a wide range of functions, some providing direct frontline services to residents such as Customer Care, Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefit Claims and others providing key support services to frontline services.

11.2 Each progress update for 2019/20 is consistently underpinned by sound service planning, good and joined up working relationships within and between Council services and on-going investment in staff development.

11.3 The work completed to date is wide ranging, is taking advantage of technological and digital advancements and is focussed on working in partnership with others to make positive and visible impacts across the County Borough.

11.4 As part of robust planning arrangements, areas for on-going focus have been identified that will support continued improvement in and transformation of service delivery.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

29th JANUARY 2020

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CABINET AND SCRUTINY ENGAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

Item: 5

Officer to contact: Paul Griffiths (01443 680609)