



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP DUTY ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26**

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## **Foreword**



**Councillor Maureen Webber BEM**

### **Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business**

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Joint Consultative Committee, a body that continues to play a vital role in strengthening constructive dialogue between the Council and our recognised trade union partners. Over the past year, the Committee has demonstrated its value as a forum rooted in openness, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to supporting our workforce and the communities we serve.

This year has brought important opportunities for collaboration. Elected Members and trade union representatives have been closely engaged throughout the Council's budget-setting process, ensuring that staff perspectives were fully considered during continued financial pressure and organisational change. The Committee's discussions have helped shape a more informed and transparent approach to decision-making, reflecting the collective responsibility we hold for the wellbeing of our employees and the sustainability of our services.

The Committee has also been kept fully updated on senior management restructuring, providing a space for constructive scrutiny and for trade union colleagues to raise questions and offer insight. This dialogue has been essential in supporting a smooth transition and maintaining confidence across the organisation.

This year we have taken the opportunity to consider data in relation to Health and safety providing the Committee with an oversight of key data, trends, and compliance measures, reinforcing our shared commitment to providing a safe and supportive working environment for all Council employees.

A further significant area of work this year has been the Council's statutory peer review Panel Performance assessment. Can I once again express my thanks to Trade union colleagues who played an important role in this process, contributing valuable frontline perspectives to the review panel. Their involvement reflects the importance of partnership working in shaping an honest, balanced, and forward-looking assessment of the Council's performance.

As we look ahead, the Committee remains committed to fostering strong industrial relations, promoting transparency, and ensuring that the voices of our workforce continue to inform the Council's strategic direction. It is positive that through our positive working relationship the Council recognises and looks to promote social partnership working into all that we do, which is clearly evidenced by recent Council Notices of Motions referring matters to the JCC, including how we positively respond to the new Worker's Rights legislation. I would like to thank all Members and trade union colleagues for their constructive engagement, dedication, and professionalism throughout the year.'

Under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (SPPP), I am pleased to present the second Annual report to outline our compliance with the Social Partnership Duty for the preceding financial year.

**Cllr M Webber**

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Business**

## **MEETING THE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP & PUBLIC PROCUREMENT (ACT)**

The SPPP Act provides for a framework to enhance the well-being of the people of Wales by improving public services through social partnership working, promoting fair work and social responsible public procurement. It is intended to complement other legislation, including the Socio-economic Duty and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA 2015).

The SPPP Act 2023 requires the council, in carrying out sustainable development, in so far as is reasonable, to seek consensus or compromise with their recognised trade unions, when setting their well-being objectives (in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and making decisions of a strategic nature about the reasonable steps they intend to take to deliver those objectives set.

Section 16(2) of the Act sets out a number of specific requirements relating to the Duty, which the council must comply with when 'seeking consensus or compromise'. The requirements are intended to ensure that trade unions are fully and properly involved when a public body sets its well-being objectives, or when making strategic decisions. It states that: in order to seek consensus or compromise, a public body must include its recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff in the process of setting objectives or making decisions, by (in particular):-

- (a) consulting them at a formative stage of the process, and
- (b) otherwise involving them throughout the process by:
  - (i) providing sufficient information to enable them to properly consider what is proposed, and
  - (ii) providing sufficient time to enable them to adequately consider what is proposed and respond.

### **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

To fulfil these statutory requirements, in 2023, the Council re-introduced the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to engage with Trade Union colleagues in respect of key policies, the delivery of robust and balanced budget and key service changes.

The role of the Joint Consultative Committee is to discharge on behalf of the Council the following functions:

- (a) To provide a forum for the exchange of views between elected Members and trade unions on matters affecting employees.
- (b) To consider specific matters affecting employees that are referred to it by Council Members, the unions and officers.

This approach seeks to compliment the ongoing dialogue which takes place between Human Resources, senior officers and trade unions as part of the day-to-day activity of service delivery across the local authority.

### **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

**County Borough Councillor:** Maureen Webber BEM (Chair)

**County Borough Councillor:** Andrew Morgan OBE

**County Borough Councillor:** Ann Crimmings

**County Borough Councillor:** Rhys Lewis

#### **Trade Union Attendees**

Unison - M. Edwards

GMB - Mr C Jones, Mr G Morgans; L Chapman

Unite - M Gilroy

#### **Education Trade Unions - Invited attendees**

M Thomas – NEU

S Evans / A Webb – ASCL

M Davies – UCAC

M Cleverly – NASUWT

E Williams / L Doel - NAHT

### **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Joint Consultative Committee is required to meet bi-annually, and with the permission of the Chair, additional special meetings can be arranged, where necessary, to consider and discuss any emerging matters. To further promote the importance and transparency of the discussions, the JCC meetings are held in the public domain and recordings of the meetings are available on the Council website. A link to the Meetings and recording can be found [here](#).

In the last Municipal year, the Joint Consultative Committee has been convened to consider:

- Budget Consultation Phase 1 & 2
- Peer Review Panel Performance Assessment
- Senior Management Restructure

- Health & Safety Data
- Scrutiny Engagement
- Future Committee Work Programme

In support of these areas the Senior Leadership has sought to ensure that trade unions are provided with appropriate information to inform their involvement in any formal consultation processes and to enable them to effectively represent the interests of their members during the decision-making process.

## **DISCUSSIONS HELD WITH TRADE UNION MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF THE ABOVE AGENDA ITEMS**

***November 18<sup>th</sup> 2025***

### **BUDGET CONSULTATION 2026-27 (PHASE 1)**

Members of the Joint Consultative Committee were provided the opportunity to formally respond to the first phase of the Council's 2026/27 Budget Consultation. This feedback was incorporated into a Budget Consultation report, alongside all other feedback received from stakeholders, for consideration by Cabinet as part of developing a draft Revenue Budget Strategy for 2026/27.

Members considered the Council's overall financial position and fed back that the currently anticipated two percent local government settlement uplift from Welsh Government for 2026/27 would present significant challenges for the Council in the context of addressing a forecasted budget gap of £22million for next year. Members also fed back that the current settlement position would present significant challenges for all local authorities across Wales and stressed the need for the Council to lobby Welsh Government to set out the case to secure an improved funding allocation, noting that any uplift over the proposed two percent would make a positive difference to local authority budgets. During the meeting the Chair reassured Members that lobbying was taking place, with the Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council playing a key role in the process as Leader of the WLGA.

Members highlighted the importance for the budget strategy to protect staff, ensure statutory responsibilities are discharged and that the most vulnerable within communities are safeguarded.

A Member noted the pressure already on household budgets and acknowledged that difficult decisions may be unavoidable for the Council if the current local government settlement level via Welsh Government did not improve.

### **Schools**

Members supported the Council's approach of treating schools as a priority area within the Council's budget over a number of years, acknowledging that schools have experienced year-on-year pressures, particularly around staffing, supply costs and additional learning needs. A Member fed back that the prioritisation of the school's budget has enabled the sector to maintain provision and noted that on-going

prioritisation will be increasingly challenging to achieve in light of the financial outlook facing the Council.

Another Member noted the challenges with teacher workload, increasing class sizes, wellbeing concerns, and long-term sickness absence driven in part by increased workload pressures.

Members discussed that given the scale of the Council's forecasted budget gap, the level of budget savings required may now need to be shared more evenly across all service areas. Another Member emphasised that cuts to education ultimately impact on children's outcomes and should be approached cautiously and informed by an assessment of the implications on staff and learners.

### **Social Care**

Members highlighted the importance of both Adult and Children's social care, and the essential role these services play in supporting the most vulnerable from childhood to older age.

Members noted the significant cost pressures across adult and children's services and felt the Council has a track record of prioritising social care, with substantial increases to the budget in recent years.

Members fed back support to maintain social care as a high priority for continued investment and noted that the delivery of further savings from social care may be unavoidable due to the wider financial pressures facing the Council. Members also noted that social care staff already operate within a challenging environment and further savings could lead to increased sickness absence and recruitment and retention difficulties.

### **Fees and Charges**

Members discussed the Council's approach to fees and charges and considered that applying a blanket approach to reviewing fees and charges was not favoured and suggested a targeted approach.

Members expressed broad support for increasing fines and penalties, particularly for fly-tipping, above inflationary levels to act as a deterrent.

Members were not supportive of increasing the price of school meals, indicating that this would place additional pressure on families, especially those with more than one child of secondary school age.

Members considered that an increase to parking charges should be carefully considered to ensure affordability for residents and staff, and competition with private parking operators.

Members stressed that fees and charges need to remain affordable and competitive, particularly where private sector alternatives are in operation, for example, leisure services providers.

## **Service Levels**

Members discussed the on-going programme of work in place to restructure services and other possible savings options such as reducing operating hours at quieter times for specific services and further rationalising of council buildings. Members noted that further service reductions to opening hours may compromise the Council's ability to effectively deliver core services and that some services have already adjusted hours and were operating at minimal levels.

A Member commented that whilst digitalisation of services supports modernisation of service delivery, it was stressed that alternative service provision for residents who cannot access services digitally must continue to be easily available to the public. Another Member highlighted the importance of maintaining the ability for residents to contact the Council by telephone, given the rise in scams and the need for caution around unknown callers.

## **Council Tax**

Members discussed the important considerations that need to be taken into account in respect of council tax levels and noted that cost-of-living pressures continue to adversely impact on household budgets and wage increases have generally not kept up with inflation. Members indicated that a Council Tax increase of between 3 and 5 percent, as referenced in the presentation, would result in additional cost pressures for already stretched families and also noted that consideration needs to be given to increasing the level of council tax to help protect essential council services and safeguarding jobs.

A Member noted public feedback around reductions to services at the same time as council tax increases and stressed the need for clear messaging in respect of what council tax funds. The Chair acknowledged this point and stated that council tax currently funds around 21% of the Council's budget, with the Council committed to continue to provide clear communication to residents on the range of services provided and how they are funded.

Members added that some level of increase to council tax is unavoidable to protect the Council's vital services and in turn residents and fed back that the increase should be the lowest level possible to enable a balanced budget to be set.

## **Efficiencies**

Members recognised the extensive savings already delivered by the Council over the past 10 years and noted that opportunities for further efficiencies are becoming increasingly hard to find without impacting on service quality and staff wellbeing.

Members agreed that services should continue to explore saving opportunities, noting the importance of a realistic approach given the scale of savings delivered to date.

## **Council Reserves**

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Members were supportive of the Council's prudent and responsible approach to the management of its reserves and noted they provide financial resilience in responding to emergencies such as recent flooding events.

Members were reassured that the Council's reserve levels, and utilisation are reviewed regularly and publicly reported to elected Councillors and form a key part of the Council's financial management arrangements.

### **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

No objections were raised in respect of the current Scheme in place, with Members noting its importance to support low-income households.

**Outcome** – The detailed feedback of the Committee was captured and presented to the Cabinet meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026 to form part of Cabinet's consideration and to agree the Cabinet's final revenue budget strategy for recommending to Council.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Director of Human Resources presented the Committee with a report which provided a summary of the employee incident/accident statistics for the financial year 2024/2025. The statistical performance information assists in providing Senior Management of the Council with an overview of employee incidents/accidents. The Committee were reminded that the Corporate Health and Safety Team of the Council continue to meet quarterly with Trade Union partners to discuss local/strategic issues.

A summary of the key statistics is included below, together with the previous year's figures where relevant to provide a comparison. It should be noted that incidents/accidents involving agency staff and members of public are recorded separately and were not included in the following figures.

- The total number of employee incident/accidents reported was **361**, which is an increase from **296** in 2023/2024. The increase in figures can be attributed to a number of factors, including increased awareness of reporting in educational settings.
- Physical violence was the main cause of incident/accident in 2024/2025 and accounted for **193** (53%) of the total number. This was an increase from the **112** physical violence incident/accidents recorded in 2023/2024.
- **129** of the physical violence incidents/accidents towards employees were recorded in Education in 2024/2025. This replicates the increase in physical and non-physical incidents recorded locally and nationally across the Education sector. Violence at Work (VAW) continues to be an issue for school leaders and has been identified and highlighted through our continuous discussions with our Trade Union partners

over the last 12 months. VAW in Education settings appears to be an issue across Wales and has received press following incidents or industrial action.

- **64** physical violence incidents/accidents were reported in the Community & Children's Services Group in 2024/2025, which is generally the main cause of incidents/accidents within the group based on previous years statistical reports.
- The second main cause of incidents/accident was slips/trips and falls from the same level, accounting for 41 of the 361 reported.
- **RIDDOR** – The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations. Under these regulations, certain work-related incidents/accident are reportable to the relevant enforcing authority - Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The total number of RIDDOR employee reportable accidents was **32** for 2024/2025 and comparable with the previous year. These incidents/accidents are generally reported under the following two categories:
  - i. **13** – Specified injuries (e.g. fractures, dislocation)
  - ii. **19** – Over 7 Day injuries (Unable to carry out their normal work for over 7 days as a result of an injury).
- **Days Lost** (*information on days lost for employees has been collated from the itrent system*).
  - i. The total number of 'days lost' by employees as a result of an incident/accident at work was **1709** in 2024/2025. This was an increase from **1396** days lost in 2023/2024.
  - ii. 'Slips, trips from the same level' was the main cause of *working days lost* and accounted for **716** (42%) of the days lost, which is comparable with the previous year when 41% of the days lost resulted from 'Slips, trips'.
  - iii. **198** of the total days lost in 2024/2025 were attributable to 'Falls from height'; which is the most common cause of fatal workplace accidents in the UK (HSE Stats 24/25).

Whilst physical violence accounted for 193 (53%) of the incidents/accidents recorded in 2024/2025, this accounted for only 241 of the overall days lost (14%).

The Chair was able to further elaborate on the information provided to the Committee by advising of regular meetings with the Director to review information and statistics during scheduled one to one meeting and also commented on the quarterly meetings that took place with Trade Union colleagues and Council Officers.

A Member commented on the Health and Safety Team for their support and timely responses to incidents stating that officers act promptly when concerns have been raised previously.

Members discussed the increase in violence at work and noted that while physical violence was rare, verbal and challenging behaviour were noted as concerns, particularly in schools. Members recognised the value of accurate reporting to give a clearer picture of pressures faced by staff.

Concerns were also raised regarding rising mental health related sickness. The Director confirmed that sickness coding is regularly reviewed, and the Council continues to strengthen its wellbeing initiatives and support for staff.

Another Member highlighted ongoing work in another local authority to refine school incident reporting and offered to share best practice. The Director welcomed this noting that more data could risk identifying individuals but committed to exploring improvements.

**Outcome** – That the Committee had a further understanding of the Health and Safety data which is used by Senior Managers to inform strategic and service area risk management processes and action plans; identify trends, patterns and main causation and target issues and allocate resources.

## **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE.**

The Director Human Resources provided details of the new management structure chart following recent changes endorsed by Council in October 2025. Members were reminded of the process taken forward in relation to new appointments and the consultation undertaken with Trade unions as part of the process.

The Director explained that the new structure for the Senior Management took effect from the 1st November and was attached to the report for Members information

The Chair who also Chairs the Appointments Panel noted that all appointments were agreed unanimously and praised the quality of officers within the authority.

**Outcome** – Committee members were provided with the most up to date information in relation to Senior Management changes of the Council.

## **PEER REVIEW PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT**

The Service Director Democratic Services, Welsh Language and Communications provided a verbal update to Members on the recently completed Panel Performance Assessment which the Council undertook at the beginning of October 2025 and once again thanked Trade Union colleagues for their involvement in the process.

Members were reminded that the inspection exercise was undertaken with a wide range of engagement involving staff, Members, external organisations and trade unions.

The following key points were highlighted during the meeting:

- The panel has given the Council strong and positive support of its governance arrangements, use of resources and organisational leadership.
- The panel highlighted the maturity of both political and officer leadership and recognised a well-established culture of collaboration across the council. It also found the Council's planning and financial frameworks to be robust and commended the Council's approaches and long-term investment strategy
- The assessment gave credit to the Council's commitment to its workforce noting the focus on developing internal staff, supporting leadership capability and its strong emphasis to equality and inclusion.
- The panel also considered the Council's work on community resilience and empowerment although this work is still being developed the feedback was constructive.
- The panel encouraged the Council to continue to strengthen its approach to community involvement, to build the digital and workforce infrastructure, and to thoroughly test new models before implementation across the wider council.
- Three recommendations were made which focused on improving readiness for the next phase of the programme and these were consistent with existing internal priorities.

The Service Director confirmed that the full report will be considered by the Governance and Audit Committee before being presented to Council in January. The Chair welcomed the positive outcome and noted the panels recognition of the Councils strong engagement with the voluntary sector and the working relationship with Trade Unions.

**Outcome:** The Committee were provided with the recent findings of the Peer Review Panel following the assessment of the Council in October 2025.

## **SCRUTINY ENGAGEMENT**

The Committee were reminded of the opportunities to engage in the Council's scrutiny function and highlighted the recent review of the Community Meals on wheels facility following a request from trade Union Members at a previous meeting of the JCC. The Committee discussed how Trade Union involvement could help continue to identify areas where scrutiny could support improvement or address workforce priorities.

A Member raised concerns regarding recruitment and retention pressures in key service areas including social care and school catering and Members were advised that these pressures had already been recognised as strategic risks and were to be the subject of further scrutiny work with outcomes fed back to the JCC.

**Outcome** – Continued engagement and involvement with Trade Unions in the Council's Scrutiny function, demonstrating how Trade Union requests have been previously taken forward.

*3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026*

## **BUDGET CONSULTATION 2026/2027 (PHASE 2)**

The Director - Financial Services and Transformation provided Members, via a PowerPoint presentation, with key information on the Council's phase 2 budget consultation process covering the following areas:

The Chair commented on feedback received from consultees as part of phase 1 of the budget consultation process and noted that 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agree to continue to make social services a high priority for investment, which is a view supported by the Cabinet. The Chair also noted that the on-going delivery of efficiency savings is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve each year.

In respect of efficiency savings, a Member fed back that the delivery of efficiency savings can only be taken so far before it starts to impact on service delivery and noted that the protection of staff and services must remain at the forefront of considerations.

As part of the update, the Committee were requested to provide their feedback and observations on Cabinet's proposed 2026/27 Revenue Budget Strategy.

### **Council Tax**

On balance, Members of the Committee considered the proposed Council Tax increase of 4.00% (excluding Community Council and Police precepts) as reasonable, taking into account the budget gap of £6.4M and it likely to be one of the lowest increases across Wales.

Members commented on the importance of setting Council Tax at a level that would support maintaining Council services and jobs and acknowledged the importance of affordability for residents, as a higher increase may be met with frustration and negativity. Members also commented on the importance of clearly communicating the agreed position with the wider public.

The Chair highlighted the challenges when setting the level of Council Tax, ensuring it is reasonable for residents and at the same time supporting the many Council services that meet the needs of residents across Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Chair also highlighted the proactive and successful approach taken by the Leader of the Council over a number of years that has supported keeping Council Tax levels as low as possible.

### **Schools Budget**

Members acknowledged the advantages the proposal to allocate additional funding to cover, in full, all pressures in schools would bring in terms of protecting jobs and being able to maintain the school-based services provided to the most vulnerable children and families. One Member noted the Council's approach to prioritise funding for schools and education at a time when funding and investment for both teaching

and support staff is required to help alleviate the pressures currently experienced by staff due to, for example, increased class sizes.

Members welcomed the additional £1M to enhance capacity across additional learning needs (ALN) and special school provision which they considered a 'significant investment'. In respect of ALN, Members sought clarification as to whether the overall increase in funding for schools includes the additional resources provided by Welsh Government for ALNCos.

The Director, Financial Services and Transformation confirmed that the ALNCo funding provided by Welsh Government in the final local government settlement does form part of the overall funding increase for schools, this amounting to £323k for Rhondda Cynon Taf for the 2026/27 financial year and has been ring-fenced for schools.

### **Efficiencies**

Members provided feedback on the Council pursuing the identified efficiency savings for next year with one Member emphasising the importance for each efficiency proposal to be considered in detail to understand the impact. Another Member fed back that opportunities to deliver further efficiencies are becoming increasingly difficult to deliver without impacting on jobs.

The Chair referred to the Council's successful Apprenticeship and Graduate Programmes that provide the opportunity for the Council to 'grow its own' and emphasised that the Council recognise its staff as its greatest asset. The Chair also referred to the delivery of budget reduction measures without any detrimental impact on front line services and acknowledged that they are becoming increasingly difficult to deliver. The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services echoed the sentiments that Council staff have been proactive and are best placed to identify efficiency savings within their own service areas such as the 'Learning to Swim' initiative and associated income generation opportunities, adding that good collaboration exists between staff, managers and the Executive.

A Member thanked the Chair and Cabinet Member for their comments regarding valuing staff as often they can feel they are not listened to and added that there has been a clear commitment in this regard under the current Administration.

Another Member commented on the practicalities of delivering the proposed efficiencies and asked how this process will be undertaken. The Director of Financial Services and Transformation provided an overview of the ongoing programme of work in place, that included an assessment of saving opportunities and review arrangements by the Senior Leadership Team, and noted examples of the proposed savings to provide assurance to the Committee that adverse impacts on frontline service delivery can be mitigated.

## **Fees and Charges**

As part of considering the proposed changes to fees and charges that will raise £412,000 of additional income in a full year, Members were advised that an alternative proposal from the Non-Majority Group of Members had been received in respect of car parking charges, and this detail had been included as part of the consultation process.

Members highlighted the proposed increases specifically in relation to Meals on Wheels and non-residential care services, noting general concerns for adult social care nationally across Wales and also reducing numbers of people using the Meals on Wheels service in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Members also highlighted the need to carefully balance generating additional income versus it not having a detriment impact on services, and referenced the Council's Leisure for Life provision and the potential for the Council to price itself out of the market as customers could look to move to other providers.

One Member commented on the car parking fee increasing by 40p (for the long stay provision) which equates to a 25% increase and referenced staff members who are agile workers and are unable to maximise the benefits of paying for a monthly parking permit due to their working arrangements. The Member went on to highlight that in such cases, where a staff member pays by direct debit, this will equate to £23 per month, which is not cost effective. A Member also emphasised the impact car parking fees could have on town centre footfall and suggested a freeze on car parking fees for a year to benefit staff who work within the town centres.

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services fed back that Leisure for Life membership numbers are at one of their highest levels, at over 11,000 members, noting the wide range of quality provision on offer, the availability of experienced staff and full transparency on the charges in place.

The Director, Financial Services and Transformation noted the points raised and explained that with regard to non-residential care charges, these are subject to a means tested financial assessment to determine whether service users have the financial means to contribute to the cost of their care and, if so, the level of contribution to be made and also noted that the current maximum charge per week is £100 as set by Welsh Government. In respect of the Meals on Wheels Service, the Director referred to the need for prices to contribute to covering rising food costs to help ensure the delivery of the much-valued service and noted that the proposed meal price within Rhondda Cynon Taf for 2026/27 would continue to be lower than neighbouring local authorities.

## **Local Business Rate Reduction Scheme**

Members had no specific feedback to relay with the proposed increased level of financial support to qualifying businesses for 2026/27 via the Council's Local Business Rate Reduction Scheme and welcomed the support to local businesses.

### **Reserves**

Members had no concerns on the use of Transitional Funding to fund the remaining budget gap.

**Outcome** - Detailed *discussions and challenge of the Cabinet proposed draft Revenue Budget Strategy as part of phase 2 of the Council's Budget Consultation.*

## **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

The Director of Human Resources provided the Committee with a further update on the Senior Management structure following the appointment process for the role of Director of Education & Inclusion, following the retirement of the post holder Gaynor Davies in December 2025.

**Outcome** – Committee Members were kept abreast of important updates to the Senior Management Structure following ratification of the appointment at Council the week previous.

## **PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FINAL REPORT AND COUNCIL'S RESPONSE**

The Committee were presented with a report which served to provide the Committee with a copy of the Panel Performance Assessment Final Report along with the Council's response to the areas for improvement / recommendations made by the Panel, following consideration by Full Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

At the meeting the Service Director summarised the Panel's conclusions, following the Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) which had been undertaken between 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025, which concluded that the Council *'is a good, well run and ambitious Council, focused on improving the lives of its citizens'*.

Members were advised that the conclusions represent a strong message of endorsement, that *'The Council demonstrated that it has a strong track record of delivery underpinned by an ethos of continuous improvement. The Council is working to better understand the impact and outcomes of its work, moving from a service-focused approach to one which is person-centred, and which will help to deliver its ambition to strengthen communities' resilience'*.

The Service Director advised that the Panel recognised that strong corporate financial planning and management functions are already in place as well as identifying that the Council invests in its staff and is valued by its partners and stakeholders. He commented that the Panel recognised the challenges ahead, as the Council takes the next steps in achieving the ambitions of its Corporate Plan but

praised it for its early identification and response to budget pressures. The Panel noted that Schools have been prioritised, with full funding of identified pressures with a £1B invested across all schools.

The Service Director confirmed the endorsement that the Council has a *'well supported scrutiny and assurance functions'* and *'that scrutiny is taken seriously and there is an appropriate balance between pre and post scrutiny of decisions with some work to support policy development also undertaken'*. There was also positive feedback in respect of the Council's investment in its procurement functions ensuring as much as possible the Council invests locally to support the local economy and how the Council is embedding those key considerations in terms of social value alongside some of the net zero priorities.

In terms of areas for improvement, the Service Director referred Committee to the relevant sections within the report which set out the improvement opportunities for the Council which include continuing to demonstrate impact and outcomes for its communities and communicating that effectively. In addition, developing community resilience, recognising that it is important in terms of public sector financing that the Council adapts its services for the future. The Service Director commented that the PPA concluded that the Council does fulfil its functions in line with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, particularly its performance functions and the Council's response to the recommendations are set out in the appendices attached to the report.

The Chair commented on the overall positive comments resulting from the PPA and the enlightening experience of having been involved in the process. The Chair added that the resulting report demonstrated that the Council engages positively with its Trade Union colleagues, likewise has good collaboration between Members, Cabinet and Senior Officers. The Chair reflected on the response of the Panel to the Schools Investment Programme and Capital Programme which are to be applauded. Members of the Committee agreed and commented on the positive Panel Performance Assessment of the Council.

**Outcome** – Engagement with Trade Unions within the Panel Assessment and resulting positive outcome report, recognising the positive working relationship between the Council and Trade Unions.

## **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee were presented for comment and approval, a forward Work Programme on the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by the Committee for future meetings.

At the meeting, Officers clarified that in respect of the RCTCBC Employment Practices, as set out in the Work Programme, a discussion on the new Workers' Rights Bill had taken place at the recent council meeting resulting in a request for a

report to be brought forward, at the next available opportunity, to set out the implications of the Bill and the timelines in respect of delivery.

The Service Director welcomed suggestions and feedback from Members on any additional items to be included in the forward work programme. He acknowledged the request from Mr C Jones, GMB, for an additional item in respect of the Charter, specifically that the JCC Nationally is looking to engage with the local Joint Consultative Committees in respect of examples of good practice.

**Outcome** – Work programme drafting to allow all Members to bring forward items for Committee consideration, to demonstrate the Committee is not Council led, but an equal contribution by all.

### ***URGENT ITEM***

In conclusion and as this was the last Joint Consultative Committee the Leader of the Council, Councillor A Morgan OBE, would attend before stepping down, the Chair wished to place on record her sincere thanks to him for his considerable contribution as Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and as Leader of the WLGA. As Chair, she was sure that members of the Committee would like to join her in extending their thanks to the Leader for his contribution and commitment over many years to local government.

### **QUARTERLY MEETINGS WITH THE LEADER & DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

To further support the Council's statutory requirements as set out in the SPPP Act, regular meetings are held between the Political Leadership of the Council, senior officers and Local Authority Trade Unions representatives.

These meetings have been convened prior to the introduction of the SPPP Act or the requirements of the Local Government & Elections Act (Wales) 2021. These meetings seek to provide an early opportunity for trade unions partners to inform considerations of key policy proposals and represent the potential interests of trade union members.

Additional agenda items discussed during the meetings included but were not limited to:

Budget Consultations

Changes to Welsh Government Grants

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

As we look ahead to the coming year, the Joint Consultative Committee remains committed to strengthening its partnership and ensuring that Rhondda Cynon Taf

County Borough Council's employment practices continue to reflect not only the letter but the spirit of the Employment Rights Act. Our shared work has demonstrated the value of open dialogue, mutual respect, and a collective determination to create a fair, supportive, and forward-thinking working environment.

We will continue to focus on embedding fair and transparent contractual arrangements, ensuring that every employee has clarity, security, and confidence in the terms under which they work. Alongside this, we will build on our progress in expanding flexible working opportunities—recognising the diverse needs of our workforce and the positive impact that modern, adaptable working practices have on wellbeing, productivity, and retention.

Equality will remain at the heart of our agenda. Through ongoing equality action planning, we will work together to identify barriers, challenge disparities, and champion inclusive policies that enable all employees to thrive. This includes maintaining robust monitoring, engaging meaningfully with staff and representatives, and ensuring that our actions translate into measurable, positive change.

The year ahead offers us the opportunity to deepen our collaboration, refine our shared priorities, and continue shaping an employment landscape that is fair, equitable, and reflective of the values we collectively uphold. The Committee's commitment to constructive partnership will remain central to this work, and we look forward to building on the strong foundations we have established together.

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