Our improvement priority – Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and ‘green’

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

The overall picture

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

- 99.8% 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%.
- 411 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.

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 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.
- Pontyclyn Rugby Ground, Pontyclyn.
- 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 incidents within 5 working days. This represents 3644 of the 3729 reported incidents being cleared within 5 working days. 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 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
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 biodegradeable 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 (379.99llb) and Porth Infants 11 stone (158.78llb) 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 (4,532.16llb) 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 www.rctcbc.gov.uk/toomanyblackbags. 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, Penywau 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 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 9.9% in 2013/14 to 9.3% 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, 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 Bwlf Ra Road, Cwmbrde have benefitted from these schemes and in total 411 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](image1.jpg) ![After](image2.jpg)

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 Bryncelynnog 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.
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

How will we know if we have made a difference?

- We will recycle at least 58% of the waste we collect, currently 54.08%
- At least 95% of our streets inspected will be of a high/acceptable standard of cleanliness, which is lower than we achieved last year, 99.7%
- 85% of streets returned to Grade A standard within one working day, which is lower than our current performance of 100% but we have to take account of service changes and few resources
- 10% of all roads will be in an overall poor condition - which is slightly worse than last year when our performance was 9.3%
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.

**Outcome Reference:** 2

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.

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.

**How will we know if we are making a difference:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Description</th>
<th>Outcome Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

  - **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.

Nigel Wheeler - Director of Highways and Streetcare Services - March 2015
### Outcome 1: Deliver Clean Streets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13</th>
<th>Annual Target</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Performance</td>
<td>Annual Performance</td>
<td>Quartile</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Annual Target</td>
<td>Annual Performance</td>
<td>RAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Me01 - The cleanliness index (Local)</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>74.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>![ Downwards Arrow ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me02 - % of streets, highways &amp; relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness (Statutory)</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>99.7</td>
<td>![ Upwards Arrow ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me03 - % of streets, highways &amp; relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness (LEAMS) (Local)</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>![ Leftwards Arrow, Rightwards Arrow ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me04 - % of streets returned to Grade A standard within 1 working day (Local)</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>91.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>85.00</td>
<td>85.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>![ Upwards Arrow ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me05 - % of reported abusive graffiti removed within 1 day (Local)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>![ Leftwards Arrow, Rightwards Arrow ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me06 - % of all reported graffiti removed within 5 days (Local)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>![ Leftwards Arrow, Rightwards Arrow ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me07 - Average number of working days taken to remove fly tipping (Local)</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>![ Downwards Arrow ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me08 - % of reported fly tipping incidents on relevant land cleared within 5 working days (Statutory)</td>
<td>99.51</td>
<td>99.26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>95.03</td>
<td>95.00</td>
<td>97.72</td>
<td>![ Downwards Arrow ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me09 - % of reported fly tipping incidents which lead to enforcement activity (Local)</td>
<td>12.44</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.13</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>18.42</td>
<td>![ Upwards Arrow ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Key Priority:** Keeping Rhondda Cynon Taf Clean and Green (Streetcare Services & The Natural Environment)

**Lead Officer:** Nigel Wheeler (Director of Highways and Streetcare Services)
### Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>2012/13 Annual Performance</th>
<th>2013/14 Annual Performance</th>
<th>2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data Quartile Rank Average</th>
<th>2014/15 Annual Target</th>
<th>2015/16 Annual Target</th>
<th>Overall Direction of Performance 2014/15 against 2012/13</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me01 - % of municipal waste that is sent to landfill (Statutory)</td>
<td>38.19</td>
<td>41.56</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37.72</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>35.01</td>
<td><img src="images/green.png" alt="Green" /> <img src="images/red.png" alt="Red" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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)</td>
<td>46.20</td>
<td>49.31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>54.33</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>54.08</td>
<td><img src="images/green.png" alt="Green" /> <img src="images/red.png" alt="Red" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me03 - % of local authority collected municipal waste diverted from landfill (Local)</td>
<td>61.81</td>
<td>58.44</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>69.08</td>
<td><img src="images/green.png" alt="Green" /> <img src="images/red.png" alt="Red" /></td>
<td><img src="images/green.png" alt="Green" /> <img src="images/red.png" alt="Red" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me04 - No. of visits, presentations, campaigns to discuss enviro-crimes and recycling including school visits (Local)</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>432</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>400</td>
<td>271</td>
<td><img src="images/red.png" alt="Red" /> <img src="images/green.png" alt="Green" /></td>
<td><img src="images/red.png" alt="Red" /> <img src="images/green.png" alt="Green" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Me05 - % of residents in Glyncroch taking part in recycling scheme for a) Dry recycling b) Food waste recycling (New) (Local)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>a) 95.5</td>
<td><img src="images/red.png" alt="Red" /> <img src="images/green.png" alt="Green" /></td>
<td><img src="images/red.png" alt="Red" /> <img src="images/green.png" alt="Green" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Provisional data

**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
### 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>2012/13 Annual Performance</th>
<th>2013/14 Annual Performance</th>
<th>2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data Quartile</th>
<th>2014/15 Annual Target</th>
<th>2014/15 Annual Performance RAG</th>
<th>2015/16 Annual Target</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Me01 - % of Principal (A) roads in poor condition (Local)</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Me02 - % of Non-Principal / Classified (B) roads in poor condition (Local)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Me03 - % of Non-Principal/ Classified (C) roads in poor condition (Local)</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Me04 - % of Principal (A) roads and Non-Principal / classified (B) and (C) roads that are in overall poor condition (Statutory)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Me05 - % of maintained streetlights 'in-light' (Local)</td>
<td>93.75</td>
<td>95.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>95.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Me06 - The average number of days taken to repair street lamps during the year (Local)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.
### Theme: Safety

**Me01 - No. of homes / businesses where the risk from flooding has been minimised by flood alleviation schemes (New) (Local)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2013/14 All Wales Comparative Data</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
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<td>Rank</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Annual Target</td>
<td>Annual Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>349</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>