

Council Priority - ECONOMY - Building a strong economy

Summary of progress

2016/17 has been a very positive year in “Building a strong economy” in Rhondda Cynon Taf. During the year:

- The Council and the nine other South East Wales councils signed up to the £1.2bn Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, that has set out to create 25,000 jobs and attract additional investment of £4bn to boost the economic prosperity of the Region. A key element of this investment will be the new Metro that will significantly improve rail and bus access for all within Rhondda Cynon Taf and across the Region;
- Played a key role in facilitating a number of major town centre projects in Pontypridd and Aberdare, which include the Taff Vale Development and the Boot Hotel. The focus on these two key town centres has seen average weekly visitors to both towns rise during the year;
- An additional 716 new homes have been released on the market, a further 241 affordable homes have been built and we have brought back 138 empty properties back into use;
- Educational performance at all key stages continues to improve, with the results at GCSE being the best ever for the County Borough. For three key GCSE performance indicators the Council’s schools were in the top three of local authorities in Wales;
- We continued to invest millions of pounds in new schools, with the new secondary school for Y Pant, Pontyclun, being completed and construction work has commenced on new schools in Tonyrefail, Tonypandy, Porth, Cwmaman, Cymmer, and Treorchy;
- We have supported 39 new apprenticeships in the Council, and supported over 300 work placements. The number of 16 year olds not in employment, education or training in Rhondda Cynon Taf has now reduced to 1%, the lowest level in Wales.

Nevertheless, we still have significant challenges we face, in particular to ensure:

- all pupils on free school meals are able to achieve at the same level as those pupils not on free school meals;
- we reduce the number of empty retail units in all our town centres, and continue to encourage residents to support town centre businesses.

Residents will see a responsible approach to regeneration, with new homes being built and job opportunities created...

We have made positive progress in this priority.

We worked with other local authorities to deliver the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal for South East Wales, to bring investment and jobs to the region

This year, as one of ten local authorities, we have progressed the £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, which was formally ratified by local authority partners on 1st March 2017. A [regional City Deal Joint Cabinet](#) has been established, to make the decisions necessary to deliver the investment priorities and governance arrangements have been put in place. The aims of the City Deal are to create jobs and boost economic prosperity by improving productivity, tackling worklessness, building on foundations of innovation, investing in physical and digital infrastructure, providing support for business, and ensuring that any economic benefits generated as a result are felt across the South East Wales region. The City Deal also includes funding for the South Wales Metro, which will be key to improve transport connectivity and economic prosperity. Recent City Deal developments that directly affect Rhondda Cynon Taf include confirmation that the organisation that will oversee the South Wales Metro will be based at the new Taff Vale office development in Pontypridd and Programme Management of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal will be located in Treforest. New actions to deliver the City Deal are set out in the 2017/18 Economy Plan.

We worked with businesses to improve our town centres.

Individual well-being is affected by our built and natural surroundings, which is to do with how we plan and build our towns and communities.

In Pontypridd, the work to deliver an office-led major redevelopment of the Taff Vale site has progressed well with outline planning permission granted and major site preparation works completed. Walters UK Limited were appointed as demolition contractor in December 2016 and successfully completed the site demolition at the end of March 2017. Significant progress was also made with National Procurement Service tenders and an EU tender process with Rhomco Consulting appointed as Project/Cost Managers in November and DarntonB3 appointed in December to lead the Multi-Disciplinary Design Team. In March 2017, the Welsh Government Minister for Skills and Science visited the project site and formally opened a two day public exhibition hosted by the Council. The exhibition provided an opportunity for local residents and businesses to meet the design team and to discuss the redevelopment plans. Significant progress was also made in securing the occupation of the buildings with an announcement made in March that the Transport for Wales Headquarters would be located at Taff Vale. See pictures of the scheme in development [here](#).

Working in partnership to deliver this and other schemes including the YMCA, and new homes on upper floors, is making the town centre a more diverse and vibrant place for people to live, work and have leisure time. The Townscape Enhancement Programme (TEP+) has made a positive impact within the town centre, creating over 13 jobs (FTE) and moving quickly towards the completion of improved and increased business floor space (see 'Our Work in Action below).

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We have made positive progress in this priority.

Overall, our grant support programmes, including TEP+ have created 51 jobs and supported 114 businesses this year. Despite good progress in supporting businesses, we have not created as many job opportunities as we expected. This is because the organisations supported, have 6-months to create the required number of jobs. In some cases, these jobs have not been created in time for the data to be included in the reported year.

The new Pontypridd Business Improvement District (BID) company '[Your Pontypridd Ltd](#)' is now operational and comprises a group of 230+ businesses. Its focus will be to improve the town centre through investment. Its achievements this year include:

- making a case for the reduction of business rates following the closure of Marks and Spencer;
- developing partnership arrangements with Pontypridd Town Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC;
- organising a marketing and entertainment programme for Pontypridd town centre, and
- representing business views with planning applications e.g. Taff Vale site, which has made positive progress this year and will bring much needed investment to the area.

Within our town centres, there are slightly higher rates of vacant business premises than last year in Porth, Pontypridd and Aberdare, although the rates compare favourably to national trends. We are continually looking at ways to encourage growth in our town centres. Generally, across Rhondda Cynon Taf, more new businesses are opening with a 17% increase on last year, but the same number of businesses have closed (600) in the same period. Our focus is to encourage and support local business, as they are key to bringing investment and jobs to Rhondda Cynon Taf. Footfall indicators show an increase in the weekly average number of people that visit Pontypridd and Aberdare but there has been a decline in visitors to Treorchy and Porth. Following the Council's introduction of reduced car parking charges in Aberdare and Pontypridd, and free parking in Porth, Tonypany and Mountain Ash, we anticipate an improvement in visitor numbers during 2017/18, and will be monitoring the impact of this closely throughout all our town centres. In recent years, we have seen notable developments in all our town centres because of focussed investment and attracting sources of funding. Pressure on the availability of this funding in the future including European Union funding may have an impact on the future delivery of projects within our town centres.

Our work in action

Townscape Enhancement Programme (TEP+)

56 – 58 Taff Street is a prominent 3 storey building, situated within the Conservation Area and retail core of Pontypridd Town Centre. The property was previously vacant and in poor condition. An effective partnership approach between Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Trivallis Housing Association, and a Private Developer resulted in a significant redevelopment of the building through the Welsh Government's Vibrant & Viable Places Programme.

External improvements included reinstating a high quality shopfront, reinstating traditional timber bay and sash windows to both the front and rear elevations, cleaning the expansive stonework and repairing the roof. Internal works were undertaken to the commercial ground floors allowing the vacant floorspace to be brought back into use, which led to Pep & Co, a high street fashion retailer, moving into the premises.

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The upper floors were refurbished to create much needed high quality affordable housing units in the town. This was delivered through the Homes Above Retail Premises (HARPs) scheme. The following outputs were achieved –

- 4 Gross Jobs Created (FTE)
- 1 Enterprise Accommodated
- 605 sqm Business Premises Created or Refurbished
- 30 Jobs Accommodated
- 12 Affordable Housing Units Created

See before and after renovation [pictures](#)

Has our work made a difference?

We can demonstrate improvement in the average number of visitors to some of our town centres, but this is not the case for all. We have also seen an increase in vacant business properties, which is difficult for us to influence. However, we actively participate in local business activity e.g. overseeing the creation of Pontypridd as Business Improvement District, 'Your Pontypridd Ltd'.

Key: ↑ Better/↓ Worse than 2015/16

Average weekly number of visitors to:

- ↑ Pontypridd - **64,647** – Better
- ↑ Aberdare - **23,465** - Better
- ↓ Porth – **11,037¹** - Worse
- ↓ Treorchy – **15,516** – Worse

% Vacant retail premises in town centres

- ↓ Pontypridd - **8.8** - Worse
- ↓ Aberdare - **10.4** - Worse
- ↓ Porth – **14.0** - Worse
- ↑ Treorchy – **5.8** – Better

Residents have told us

In discussions with residents as part of the 2016 Residents' Survey, they told us that within our town centres:

- *There is a need for benches for people to sit down.*
- *There should be free parking at Sardis Road car park, to encourage people into town and help business.*
- *More buses are needed in the evening.*

¹ Data has been estimated following a camera fault, which is now being resolved.

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- *There are too many private rented properties, which are not maintained , and,*
- *Bank closures have adversely impacted on our town centres.*

We have focused on the renovation of empty properties, and providing more affordable homes.

The quality of the home has a substantial impact on health and well-being. Whilst houses in our area are more affordable than others in Wales, they are still beyond the reach of young people and those on low incomes.

Our achievements this year have exceeded our expectations. We have delivered 716 additional housing units², and provided 241 new affordable houses, and attracted an additional £4m of social housing grant investment into RCT. Housing developments include:

40 units at [Ty Heulog](#), Talbot Green, [Hafod's extra care scheme](#); 33 units at the former [Bryncae Industrial Estate, Llanharan](#) i.e. Rhondda Housing's [Ffordd Y Gwaith Glo](#) scheme, and 23 of the total 39 units at [Cwrt Castellau](#), Beddau ([Rhondda Housing's scheme](#)). The delivery of these housing initiatives have improved the appearance of the area and provided residents with an affordable property.

Similarly, we have brought 138 empty properties back into use; this has included 78 Brook Street, Blaenrhondda and 6 High Street, Llantrisant (see Our Work in Action below). From our Empty Property Grant (EPG) fund, we have allocated approximately £1M, and approved and surveyed 65 empty properties for renovation. We have also been working with owners of empty properties to help them to make their properties safe and secure so that they are not subject to vandalism and invasion. Our work to bring empty properties back into use has helped restore the confidence of residents, and the improvements to the vacant property have led to an improved housing market. More importantly, the work has provided housing opportunities for first time buyers.

Other areas of note within this priority include: Our Local Development Plan review; The development of an intervention plan to overcome barriers to housing development; A Regeneration Plan and Local Development Order (LDO) for Treforest Industrial Estate and the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan for South East Wales

Our work in action

Bringing empty properties back into use

78 Brook Street, Blaenrhondda, had been empty for 12 years. Enforcement action and the potential threat of enforced sale led to a change of ownership. The new owner applied for £25,000 'Houses into Homes' Empty Property Loan and has now completely renovated the property to a very good standard. See [Before and after renovation pictures](#)

² This includes business properties that have changed to residential use

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6 High Street, Llantrisant, had been empty for 15 and half years. The property is in a conservation area and residents had complained to the Council about its condition. As a result of our involvement and with advice and guidance, significant visual improvements were made by the owner's family in January 2017. The property remains unoccupied, but discussions are ongoing to assist completing the internal refurbishment. See [Before and after renovation pictures](#).

Has our work made a difference?

Key: ↑ Better/↓ Worse/ ↔ Same as 2015/16

We have :

- ↑ Delivered **241** affordable new housing units which is 114 more than last year - **Better**,
- ↑ Provided **716** additional housing units, 147 more than last year - **Better**
- ↓ Brought **138** empty properties back into use, which is **less** than last year (144) - **Worse**

Residents have told us

Homestep Satisfaction Survey –helping first-time buyers to get on to the property ladder, offering brand new homes at an affordable price

All reported the 'Homestep' service as **Excellent**, and would recommend the scheme to others

Those responding told us:

- "I wouldn't be able to afford a house buying on my own without the help of 'Homestep'.
- "The interview regarding the process was held at the site office of the development which meant I could view all plans; ask any questions to the developer there and then".

Rhondda Cynon Taf's Schools will be amongst the best in the country, with all children achieving the best they can

We have made further positive progress in the last year.

Overall, pupil attainment continues to improve across all Key Stages. The Key Stage 4 results³ for the 2015/16 academic year were the best ever results for many indicators. This means that more pupils gained 5 or more GCSEs than ever before (Level 1 threshold⁴), with more pupils also achieving both A* to C grades (Level 2 threshold⁵) and A* to C including English/Welsh and Mathematics (level 2+ threshold⁶). The Level 1 threshold, the Level 2 threshold and the capped points score for Rhondda Cynon Taf were in the top 3 of local authorities in Wales.

However, despite this positive progress, the schools and the Council had expected the performance to be even higher for the Level 2+ threshold. The Council and the Consortium will continue to work with the schools that did not achieve their targets and ensure the necessary pupil support and interventions are in place to maximise pupil performance.

Attainment across the foundation phase⁷, Key Stage 2⁸ and Key Stage 3⁹ continues to improve, with outcomes in the foundation phase rising above the Wales average for the first time. Key Stage 2 results have also improved significantly and closed the gap with the Wales average. The rate of improvement at Key Stage 3 is faster than across the country as a whole, however performance is still some way below the Wales average and this will continue to be an area of focus.

We have supported the well-being of children and young people in our Schools, helping them to overcome barriers to attending school and participating in learning. We have also worked with the Central South Consortium to develop ways of supporting disadvantaged children so they can achieve to the best of their ability and close the 'Gap' with their classmates

Children growing up in poorer families leave school with lower levels of educational qualifications, which reduces their prospects for employment.

Our support for our most vulnerable pupils has reduced the gap between those pupils in receipt of free school meals and their peers at foundation phase and Key Stage 2. This improvement was supported by the 'Valleys Schools' Project (case study below) which focussed on the aspirations of pupils in primary schools. However, at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4¹⁰ the gap remains wide. Addressing this gap remains a priority for the Council and work to support the resilience of

³ Key Stage 4 - Year 11 pupils, typically aged 16

⁴ 5 GCSE grade G+ or equivalent

⁵ 5 GCSE grade A* to C or equivalent

⁶ 5 GCSE grade A* to C or equivalent, including English or Welsh (first language) and Mathematics

⁷ Foundation Phase - Year 2 pupils, typically aged 7

⁸ Key Stage 2 - Year 6 pupils, typically aged 11

⁹ Key Stage 3 - Year 9 pupils, typically aged 14

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learners, to enable them to cope more effectively with difficult situations and recover from setbacks, is being introduced in Key Stage 3. It is hoped that, alongside more specific interventions to support pupils eligible for free school meals, this will give pupils the tools they need to achieve their potential.

Educational attainment of children looked after improved significantly at Key Stages 3 and 4; however, fewer achieved the top grades than their peers. The use of vulnerability profiling to identify and support those children and families in need early continues to be developed with partners. As a result of this work, the 'RCT Resilient Families' programme has been developed. The aim of this programme is to make sure that all services delivering support to families do so in a co-ordinated way and at an earlier time to prevent the challenges families face escalating to crisis point. *(More detail can be seen in the People plan)*

Our work in action

Valleys Project, Glenboi Primary School

Glenboi Community Primary School is located in Mountain Ash. The school has 126 pupils, 67% of whom receive free school meals. In 2014, only 64% of pupils achieved the expected level at foundation phase. The school participated in the valleys project with the aim of improving outcomes for learners with a particular focus on those children receiving free school meals (FSM).

As part of this project, the school worked in partnership with three other primary schools and digital experts, 'The Big Learning Company', to deliver a project to explore the impact of a shared learning approach using Digital technology and collaborative activities. Each term, pupils worked on a new activity – Film making, Writing computer code and 3D games, and Mine craft – working in groups to design, build, test and share their products.

The pupils who took part in the project not only showed increased confidence and motivation as result of the project, but also all improved standards in ICT, literacy and numeracy, with improvements particularly noticeable for those pupils eligible for free school meals.

In 2016, pupils achieving the foundation phase indicator had risen from 64 to 85%. In addition, pupils eligible for FSM are now outperforming their peers, with over 90% of those pupils eligible for FSM achieving the expected level. At Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject indicator has improved from only 77% in 2014 to 90% in 2016, for the first time also exceeding the Wales average.

(Data taken from My Local School March 2017; Case study information from South Wales Valleys Project Evaluation report)

Has our work made a difference?

Key: ↑ Better/↓ Worse/ ↔ Same as 2015/16

We set ambitious targets for qualifications and although we didn't quite meet them all, these targets have driven significant improvements:

- ↑ We closed the 'gap' between pupils eligible for FSM and other pupils at the Foundation phase by over 5% to **14.4% - Better**

Rhondda Cynon Taf's Schools will be amongst the best in the country, with all children achieving the best they can

We have made further positive progress in the last year.

- **↑57.1%** of Year 11 pupils achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A* to C including English/Welsh and Maths, the best ever performance by our schools. However, this is still below the Wales average- **Better**
- **↑30.9%** of pupils entitled to FSM achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A* to C including English/Welsh and Maths, improved performance but still substantially behind their classmates- **Better**
- **↑351.2** Average capped point score for students in Year 11, the third highest in Wales- **Better**
- **↑**We closed the 'gap' between pupils eligible for FSM and other pupils at Key Stage 2 by 7% to **12.8%**- **Better**
- **↔ 0.1%** of pupils left school without qualifications, including no pupils in care. This performance is maintained from the previous year and represents an extremely small number of pupils.

There were no inspections of the Local Education Authority or Central South Consortium in this financial year, but inspections of individual schools can be viewed on the Estyn website www.estyn.gov.wales.

We continue to develop excellent leadership and management in our schools

Work continues to improve teaching and learning within all schools. In the recent school categorisation, 84% of Rhondda Cynon Taf schools are now in the Green and Yellow categories which means they require least support and challenge from the Consortium and local authority compared to 78% in the previous year. 53 Headteachers and 37 Deputy Headteachers have participated in a range of leadership development programmes to develop their skills. Initial feedback from participants on these programmes has been positive, with more detailed evaluation due to take place in the next year.

Our work in action

School Leadership - Y Pant School

Y Pant Comprehensive is an English-medium 11-18 school with 1,271 pupils on roll. The roles of the senior leadership team have recently been revised to better support the school's priorities. The school has established whole-school strategic lead roles for emerging leaders to develop their leadership skills and to support the senior leadership team with priority areas. Middle leaders understand their roles well and heads of department work with senior leaders to develop their areas of responsibility proficiently to raise standards.

The school has well-refined systems of data tracking to monitor progress against its improvement targets, for example attainment targets for specific groups of pupils such as those receiving free school meals. Data is used by leaders to evaluate the performance of teachers and deal with underperformance sensitively, robustly and successfully, as evidenced in the recent Estyn inspection. The school provides many opportunities for teachers to improve their skills, including participation in research, which benefits both their own practice and that of other colleagues.

Leadership at the school was recently rated Excellent by the school inspection body Estyn. The inspection report stated

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“Senior leaders have developed a strong ethos of improving practice and high expectations. This includes a very good emphasis on professional learning that results in highly consistent and effective classroom practice.”

Estyn has invited the school to prepare a written case study describing the best practice identified during the inspection.

(case study info taken from Y Pant Estyn inspection report)

We continue to invest in improving school buildings and facilities to provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.

We continue to deliver on our 21st Century Schools programme. All Business cases in the Band A programme for the first round of Welsh Government funding, have received formal approval from the Education Minister. Works are well underway at Tonyrefail, Porth and Treorchy 'through' schools, where Headteachers have been appointed and are now making good progress working on the new 6th form curriculum and forming their new temporary Governing bodies. A new school building has been completed at Y Pant Comprehensive. Research has been undertaken to prepare for Band B funding the criteria for which has recently been released by Welsh Government, where if successful, building and facilities improvements will be targeted at additional schools.

This investment also includes measures, which will help to keep RCT 'green'. Our new school buildings include measures to reduce carbon emissions and water usage such as solar panels and rainwater harvesting. At Y Pant school, we have used Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which replicate natural drainage systems, to reduce surface water flooding. Swales, which are shallow, grassed or vegetated channels, which are allowed to flood in wet weather, also provide a habitat for species including newts and various invertebrates and microorganisms, increasing the biodiversity of the area. All our new buildings projects achieve BREEAM¹¹ Excellent, which means that our work to make these buildings sustainable has been highly rated in a series of categories, ranging from energy to ecology, including low impact design and carbon emissions reduction; design durability and resilience; adaption to climate change; and ecological value and biodiversity protection.

Residents have told us

We previously engaged with young people through a detailed survey, 'Viewpoint' with results published in 2015/16. This year, we have focussed on acting on these findings and feeding back to young people about the changes that are taking place as a result. For example,

- Young people told us that they prefer to find information, advice and guidance using social media, so we have developed eight new social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat to communicate in their preferred way.
- Young people told us they were unsure what the role of School Councils and Youth forums was, so we have developed an RCT wide Youth Forum, which will set an agenda driven by issues, which are important to young people, with Mental Health as the first issue to be addressed.

During 2017/18, we will plan the next 'Viewpoint' survey to gain an up to date understanding of young people's views.

¹¹ Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method is a recognised method of assessing, rating and certifying the sustainability of buildings.

There will be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages

We have made positive progress in the last year.

We have provided a range of options across the Council to support young people to develop their careers, including Apprenticeships, Traineeships, a Graduate Programme and Work Experience.

In Rhondda Cynon Taf more people are in employment, and fewer are unemployed, but we are still not doing as well as other areas in Wales.

Building on our previous year's success in providing young people with a valuable insight into the working world, we have provided approximately 300 work experience placements across the Council. In 2016, we supported the greatest number to date, employing 39 new apprentices into various posts including Engineering, Finance & ICT. 17 of our existing apprentices completed the programme in 2016/17, all of whom achieved accredited qualifications¹² relevant to their field. All 17 secured employment following the scheme, with 12 remaining with the Council in permanent employment and 5 securing employment within the private sector. The Apprenticeship Scheme has been very successful, providing opportunities for apprentices to learn a trade, develop skills and provide leaders for the future. We are extremely proud of our Apprenticeship programme and of the individuals that have taken part in the scheme.

We continue to work to ensure more of our young people remain in education, employment or training both through directly engaging with young people and signposting them to support which suits their circumstances. It is pleasing to note that the number of 16 year olds not in employment, education or training in Rhondda Cynon Taf has now reduced to 1%, the lowest level in Wales. We have also seen a decrease in the numbers of 17 and 18 year olds not in employment, education or training.

Our work in action

The Council's Apprenticeship Scheme

C took up a Building Surveying apprenticeship with the Council in September 2013, following which he obtained a full time job.

He said, *"During the Apprenticeship you go to college or university for one day, and the other four days are in the office or on site – which is where I learned most about the job. Around 18-months into the Apprenticeship, I applied for a permanent post at the Council as a trainee-building surveyor – and the Apprenticeship was so important in that. I didn't know an awful lot about the role before I joined the scheme – I had a basic understanding. I would definitely recommend an Apprenticeship with the Council, for anyone considering it"*.

¹² All Qualifications achieved were between level 2 and 4 of the Credit and Qualifications Framework Wales, an all-inclusive framework that recognises all forms of learning across all levels and abilities. Level 2 is the equivalent to GCSE; Level 3 is equivalent to AS/A Level and Level 4 a Higher National Certificate (HNC).

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We have made positive progress in the last year.

Has our work made a difference?

- 50.0% of Young people **leaving care** are in education, training and employment 12 months later
- 53.3% of Young people **leaving care** are in education, training and employment 24 months later

These are new measures for 2016/17 and have no previous data by which to compare.

Key: ↑ Better/↓ Worse/ ↔ Same as 2015/16

- ↑ Less Young People leaving school are not in Education, Training or Employment
 - **Aged 16** - 1.0% - **Better**
 - **Aged 18** 4.1% - **Better**
- ↔ 0.0% young people in care left school without a qualification - **Same**

Feedback from participants

Apprentices completing the scheme have told us:

"Being accepted as an apprentice was a life changer for me. I wanted to find a role that really suited my skills and personality and allowed me to help others".

"Successfully completing qualifications I thought I would never achieve and working with great colleagues past and present have been major highlights".

"I have always been fully supported throughout my time here and I was kindly given the opportunity to continue with my studies.... This has allowed me to develop year after year and has set me on the right path to reach my career goals".

We utilised targeted European funding to support people most in need to access support and training

We have also focussed on providing support for adults of all ages to improve their skills and employment opportunities, with different programmes targeting people needing different levels of support. 180 learners have attended our pre-employment programmes, helping them gain the skills and confidence to become 'job ready' and move onto employment programmes.

Worked with Partners to support people into work, delivering courses for Adults and Learners in Community First areas

Our 'Employment Routes' programme links with large employers such as Cwm Taf UHB, Admiral Insurance, Makro, Silvercrest Care and local construction companies to provide specific training for jobs, which are available in the area. We engaged with 530 people through the programme, including 433 from Communities First Areas. All individuals carried out Essential Skills assessments and if support was required were directed onto essential skills training and pre-

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employment programmes. 416 people progressed onto training through 'Employment Routes', of which 400 gained one or more sector specific qualifications. As at March 2017, as a result of the programme, 187 individuals had attended a job interview, 60 had obtained a work placement or job trial and it was confirmed 159 had gained paid employment. We are still following up the outcomes of a number of people who completed the programme and expect these numbers to increase further.

Our work in action

Employment routes – NHS Prepare to Care

D met our 'Employment Routes' officer at an information day at a local jobcentre. She had not worked for over 12 years due to a number of factors including being a lone parent, suffering from some mental health issues, lacking in confidence and self-esteem. After an in-depth discussion and a few days consideration, D attended the induction of the NHS Prepare to Care course.

D completed a literacy and numeracy assessment and a brief interview before starting the full training programme. At the end of this, she was successful at a formal interview with the Bank Nursing Manager, boosting her self-confidence. D has now started her in house training with Cwm Taf NHS, following which she will join the staff 'bank' and receive paid employment.

Has our work made a difference?

Key: ↑ Better/↓ Worse/ ↔ Same as 2015/16

Population and Context measures

- ↑ 5.4% of economically active people aged 16 and over are unemployed - **Better**
- ↑ 3.6% of people aged 18-24 claiming out of work benefits (including JSA) - **Better**
- ↓ 73% of people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are economically active - **Worse**

Council Priority:	ECONOMY - Building a strong economy
Lead Director:	Chris Bradshaw

Measuring Success

Measures to support Priority 1 - Residents will see a responsible approach to regeneration, with new homes being built and job opportunities created

PI Ref	Performance Measure	2014/15	2015/16		2016/17		Actual 2016/17 to 2015/16	Actual 2016/17 Compared to 2015/16 Wales Average	Comment
		Actual	Actual	Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual			
LPSR103	No. of new affordable homes delivered	117	127	N/A	200	241	Better	N/A	
LRGN014b	% vacant retail premises in town centres: Pontypridd	9.0	8.7	12.5	A decrease year on year would reflect positive performance	8.8	Worse	Better	Town centre vacancies, and footfall are difficult to influence, but we continue to closely monitor these areas, particularly those that are areas of priority work in 2017/18.
LRGN014c	Aberdare	9.0	9.0			10.4	Worse	Better	
LRGN014a	Porth	14.0	10.8			14.0	Worse	Worse	
LRGN014d	Treorchy	7.0	9.0			5.8	Better	Better	
LRGN015a	Footfall - Average weekly number of visitors (Calendar Year) to: Pontypridd	63,909	63,992	N/A	An increase year on year would reflect positive performance	64,647	Better	N/A	
LRGN015b	Aberdare	19,906	19,204			23,465	Better	N/A	
LRGN015c	Porth	11,373	11,184			11,037	Worse	N/A	
LRGN015d	Treorchy	17,510	16,379			15,516	Worse	N/A	
LRGN019	No. of additional housing units provided during the year	553	569	N/A	600	716	Better	N/A	
LRGN016	The stock of registered enterprises/businesses in the Borough	5,210	5,485	N/A	An increase year on year would reflect positive performance	5,745	Better	N/A	
LRGN017	The rate of registered enterprises /business births (start ups)	15.1 (785)	14.4 (790)	12.1	16.1 (925)	Better	Better		
LRGN018	The rate of registered enterprises /business deaths (closures)	9.1 (475)	10.9 (600)	9.1	A decrease year on year would reflect positive performance	10.4 (600)	Better	Worse	

PI Ref	Performance Measure	2014/15	2015/16		2016/17		Actual 2016/17 to 2015/16	Actual 2016/17 Compared to 2015/16 Wales Average	Comment
		Actual	Actual	Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual			
LPSR101	No. of empty properties brought back into use per annum	114	144	N/A	190	138	Worse	N/A	The target for this measure was increased in 2016-17 to take into account the impacts of requests for the Empty Property Grant. Whilst a large number of grants have been awarded this year, it has proven to take longer than originally anticipated for them to become ready for occupation. Positive benefits from this grant funding will be realised in 2017/18 when grant work to refurbish empty properties in 2016/17 will be complete and the properties will be re-occupied
LPSR102	Total number of interventions aimed at bringing long term empty properties back into use	254	324	N/A	400	536	Better	N/A	Whilst Empty Property Officers have actually increased the number of interventions they have undertaken in relation to empty properties, there has been an increase in the number of complex empty properties they have been dealing with. The benefits of this work should be reflected in 2017-18.
PSR004	% Private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 st April that were returned to occupation during the year	3.37	5.17	11.08	5.50	4.90	Worse	Worse	
LRGN008	No. of jobs created through grant support programmes	116	62	N/A	65.0	51.0	Worse	N/A	Organisations have 6 months from the date of payment in which to create the required number of jobs. 16 organisations were financially supported within the last 6 months of the financial year which should create 26 jobs. Unfortunately these weren't achieved in 2016/17 so will be carried forward into 2017/18.
LRGN009	No. of businesses/ organisations supported through grant support programmes	82	73	N/A	115	114	Better	N/A	Marginally below target for 2016/17. This measure will continue to be monitored in 2017/18

Key:

Within Top Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16	Performance met or exceeded target	Performance within 5% of the target	Performance below target
Within Bottom Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16			

Bolded PIs denote that an existing Corporate Plan high level measure

Measures to support Priority 2 - Rhondda Cynon Taf's schools will be amongst the best in the country, with all children achieving the best they can									
PI Ref	Performance Measure	2014/15	2015/16		2016/17		Actual 2016/17 to 2015/16	Actual 2016/17 Compared to 2015/16 Wales Average	Comment
		Actual	Actual	Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual			
Foundation Phase									
EDU235	% pupils assessed at the end of Foundation phase (Year 2, typically aged 7) achieving the Foundation phase indicator	81.8	86.3	88.1	87.7	87.2	Better	Worse	Although we have not achieved our challenging target, performance has improved from the last academic year and has now moved above the 2016/17 Wales average of 87.0, with the RCT ranking improving from 14th to 11th in Wales.
LEDU501	% difference between pupils eligible for FSM and non-FSM who were assessed at the end of the Foundation phase (Year 2, typically aged 7) who achieved the Foundation phase indicator	-	19.5	N/A	15.0	14.4***	Better	N/A	
EDU003	% of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6, typically aged 11) achieving level 4 or above in the Core Subject indicator (CSI)	84.3	85.8	88.1**	88.7	88.5	Better	Better	Although we have not achieved our challenging target, performance has improved significantly from the last academic year. Closing the gap with the 2016/17 Wales average (88.6) to 0.1 percentage point and with the RCT ranking improving from 19th to 15th.
LEDU502	% difference between pupils eligible for FSM and non-FSM who were assessed at the end of the Key Stage 2 (Year 6, typically aged 11) who achieved the Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	-	20.5	N/A	15.0	12.6***	Better	N/A	
LEDU406*	% of looked after children assessed at the end of Key Stage 2, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving Core Subject Indicator as determined by Teacher Assessment	62.5	66.7	N/A	71.4	66.7	Same	N/A	Performance against this indicator remained in line with the previous year but was below the target. Due to the small cohort involved, results of a small number of pupils have a significant influence on performance. The difference between performance and target equates to 2 extra pupils achieving the core subject indicator.
29b*	% of looked after children achieving the core subject indicator at Key Stage 4	New	New	N/A	New - Baseline	7.7	N/A	N/A	

Key:

Within Top Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16	Performance met or exceeded target	Performance within 5% of the target	Performance below target
Within Bottom Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16			

Bolded PIs denote that an existing Corporate Plan high level measure

*2 different datasets are collected to monitor the educational performance of looked after children. Education indicators include those children looked after by RCT Council educated within RCT schools (LEDU406, LEDU407, LEDU411, LEDU012). Social service indicators include all children looked after by RCT Council, including those who are educated outside the authority (29a and 29b). Both data sets have been included as they monitor different aspects of our performance in supporting vulnerable young people.

** Wales average data for 2015/16 published as 88.1 in National Strategic Indicator set does not include independent schools. Wales average data published as 86.8 by Stats Wales, this includes independent schools in the All Wales figure in addition to local authority maintained schools. 2016/17 all Wales data is available for Education attainment indicators only. The 2016/17 all Wales data quoted in comments is sourced from Stats Wales and also includes independent schools.

*** Data relating to performance of FSM pupils amended from data published in Q2 following final confirmation of data by Welsh Government. LEDU501 amended from 14.5% to 14.4%. LEDU502 amended from 12.8% to 12.6%.

PI Ref	Performance Measure	2014/15	2015/16		2016/17		Actual 2016/17 to 2015/16	Actual 2016/17 Compared to 2015/16 Wales Average	Comment
		Actual	Actual	Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual			
Key Stage 3									
EDU004	% of pupils assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, (Year 9, typically aged 14) achieving the Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	78.4	81.6	84.1**	85.3	84.0	Better	Worse	Performance has improved by 2.4 percentage points from the previous academic year, a faster rate of improvement than in Wales as a whole (Wales average increase to 85.9 in 2016/17). Despite this, performance in RCT remains some way below the Wales average and did not achieve our challenging target. There are still too many children not making sufficient progress at KS3 and this will continue to be a focus in 2016/17.
LEDU242	% pupils eligible for FSM assessed at the end of KS3 (Year 9, typically aged 14) achieving the Core Subject indicator	61.6	65.2	N/A	71.5	67.8***	Better	N/A	There was a 21.7% gap between those pupils eligible for FSM and those pupils not eligible for FSM achieving the Core Subject Indicator. Schools will be supported to continue to focus on performance of FSM pupils at KS3 and KS4, with a planned expansion of the Valleys project
LEDU407*	% of looked after children assessed at the end of key stage 3, in schools maintained by the local authority, achieving Core Subject Indicator as determined by Teacher Assessment	36.4	38.5	N/A	45.5	58.1	Better	N/A	

Key:

Within Top Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16	Performance met or exceeded target	Performance within 5% of the target	Performance below target
Within Bottom Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16			

Bolded PIs denote that an existing Corporate Plan high level measure

** Wales average data for 15/16 published as 84.1 in Public Accountability Measures dataset does not include independent schools. Wales average data published as 83.9 by Stats Wales, this includes independent schools in the All Wales figure in addition to Local authority maintained schools. 16/17 All Wales data is available for Education attainment indicators only. The 1617 All Wales data quoted in comments is sourced from Stats Wales and also includes independent schools.

*** Data relating to performance of FSM pupils amended from data published in Q2 following final confirmation of data by Welsh Government. LEDU242 amended from 66.0% to 67.8%

Note: headline wording of the attainment performance indicators in this report has been amended following audit recommendation, to provide a more accurate reflection of the data reported. The way this data has been calculated has not changed and continues to be comparable with previous years reporting.

PI Ref	Performance Measure	2014/15	2015/16		2016/17		Actual 2016/17 to 2015/16	Actual 2016/17 Compared to Wales Average	Comment
		(Academic year 2013/14)	(Academic Year 2014/15)		(Academic Year 2015/16)				
		Actual	Actual	Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual			
Key Stage 4									
LEDU339	Average capped points score for pupils in year 11 (typically aged 16), in schools maintained by the local authority**	336.5	345.6	343.5	353.8	351.2	Better	Better	The performance was the third highest in Wales, but was slightly below the target set, showing a further improvement from the previous academic year.
EDU209	% pupils in year 11 (typically aged 16) who achieve the L1 threshold (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade A* to G or approved equivalent qualification)**	93.2	95.7	94.4	95.6	96.7	Better	Better	Third highest performing Council in Wales
LEDU210	% of pupils in year 11 (typically aged 16) who achieved the L2 threshold (5 GCSE C or above, or equivalent)**	84.6	87.1	84.1	87.0	90.3	Better	Better	Second highest performing Council in Wales
EDU017	% of pupils in year 11 (typically aged 16) who achieved level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A* to C in English or Welsh (first language) and Maths**	50.5	54.6	58.3	59.0	57.1	Better	Worse	This is the highest % achieved by the Council's schools. However, whilst the performance improved compared to the previous academic year, it did not meet the aspirational target and was below the Wales Average for Academic Year 2015/16 of 60.3%. Three schools did not achieve their targets and performed below predictions which was unexpected. Two of these schools have now been placed in the Amber support category and are in receipt of support and regular progress meetings with officers
LEDU243	% of pupils entitled to FSM in year 11 (typically aged 16) achieving Level 2 Threshold including a GCSE grade A*- C in English or Welsh (first language) and Mathematics**	26.3	27.9	N/A	32.0	30.9	Better	N/A	Performance was slightly below target due to the issues described above; however there was an improvement of 3.0 percentage points compared to the previous academic year
LEDU411*	% of looked after pupils attending RCT schools in year 11 (typically aged 16) who achieved the L1 threshold (5 GCSE grade G + or equivalent)	77.3	35.0	N/A	42.3	64.0	Better	N/A	
LEDU412*	% of looked after pupils attending RCT schools in year 11 (typically aged 16) who achieved the L2 threshold (5 GCSE grade A* - C or equivalent)	New	New	N/A	15.4	52.0	N/A	N/A	
29b*	% of looked after children achieving the core subject indicator at Key Stage 4	New	New	N/A	New - Baseline Year	7.7	N/A	N/A	

Key:

Within Top Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16	Performance met or exceeded target	Performance within 5% of the target	Performance below target
Within Bottom Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16			

Bolded PIs denote that an existing Corporate Plan high level measure

*2 different datasets are collected to monitor the educational performance of looked after children. Education indicators include those children looked after by RCT Council educated within RCT schools (LEDU406, LEDU407, LEDU411, LEDU012). Social service indicators include all children looked after by RCT Council, including those who are educated outside the authority (29a and 29b). Both data sets have been included as they monitor different aspects of our performance in supporting vulnerable young people.

** Data for previous years is based on pupils aged 15 and not pupils in Year 11, due to a change in the way national statistics are produced. In addition, a limit to the contribution of non-GCSE qualifications has been introduced; and data now includes all pupils educated other than at school (EOTAS), including those who did not attend a PRU. Change from aged 15 to year 11 cohort has a slight positive impact on results; change to inclusion of EOTAS pupils has a slight negative impact on results. The impact of limiting non-GCSE qualifications cannot be quantified. Although data is broadly comparable, the combined impact of these changes may have slightly decreased reported performance compared to the previous methodology.

PI Ref	Performance Measure	2014/15	2015/16		2016/17		Actual 2016/17 to 2015/16	Actual 2016/17 Compared to Wales Average	Comment
		Actual	Actual	Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual			
Key Stage 4 - continued									
NEDU002i	% of all pupils, including those in care, in any local authority maintained school, aged 15 as at preceding 31 August who leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without qualification	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	Same	Better	
Attendance									
PEDU016a	% of pupil attendance in primary schools (excludes special schools)	94.5	94.8	95.0	95.3	94.6	Worse	Worse	Data relates to the 2015/16 academic year. Sickness absence was higher than anticipated in the spring term with high absence rates due to infectious diseases e.g. Norovirus, scarlet fever and chicken pox. Many schools required deep cleans to ensure sites were fit for business. This was compounded by a high number of term time holiday requests during the summer term. Press coverage of the Minister's statement was grossly misconstrued creating significant problems for schools and the local authority. The firm stance on holidays in term time has been difficult to maintain in the wake of this, with some schools noticing a negative impact on their attendance. In relation to specific cases where attendance is an issue, schools state that most pupils are being offered appropriate support, but lack of support for those with mental health needs are taking longer to resolve and therefore, are disengaged from education/learning for longer periods of time.
PEDU016b	% of pupil attendance in secondary schools excludes special schools	93.2	93.7	93.9	94.2	93.9	Better	Same	
LEDU218	% attendance at PRU/EOTAS provision	80.4	82.2	N/A	N/A	82.6	Better	N/A	
LEDU506	% difference in the attendance of FSM / non FSM pupils in primary schools	2.4	2.2	2.6	<2.2	2.6	Worse	Same	Issues impacting on Primary School attendance included high instances of infectious diseases; this has had an adverse impact on this indicator.
LEDU507	% difference in the attendance of FSM / non FSM pupils in secondary schools	5.1	4.6	5.0	<4.6	4.5	Better	Better	
Exclusions									
LEDU409a	No. of fixed term exclusions per 1,000 pupils in Primary schools	7.7	8.8	N/A	11.5	13.5	Worse	N/A	There has been an increase of almost 50% in the number of fixed term exclusions in primary schools in 2015/16 compared with the previous academic year. During the last academic year the focus was to reduce the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions within secondary schools and this has been very successful. Focus within the service will now shift from secondary to primary schools, supporting and challenging primary schools on their rates of exclusion.
LEDU409b	No. of fixed term exclusions per 1,000 pupils in Secondary schools	81.8	89.4	N/A	78.7	72.0	Better	N/A	
LEDU410c	Average No. of days lost through fixed term exclusions (All Schools)	2.2	2.4	N/A	2.0	2.1	Better	N/A	This indicator has been significantly impacted by the exclusion rates within primary schools (see LEDU409a above). Secondary schools reduced their number of days lost by 32%; however in primary schools days lost increased by 48%

Key:

Within Top Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16	Performance met or exceeded target	Performance within 5% of the target	Performance below target
Within Bottom Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16			

Measures to support Priority 3 - There will be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages

Population & Contextual Measures		2013/14 ¹	2014/15 ²		2015/16 ³		2016/17 ⁴		Target 2020
		Actual	Actual	Wales Average	Actual	Wales Average	Actual	Wales Average	
PMe01	No. and % of economically active people aged 16 and over, who are unemployed	10,900 9.5	7,900 7.2	6.8	6,900 6.1	5.4	5,900 5.4	4.7	Wales Average
PMe02	% of people aged 18-24 claiming out of work benefits (including JSA)	8.2	5.2	4.5	4.7	4	3.6 ⁵	3.4 ⁵	Wales Average
PMe03	No. and % of economically active people in Rhondda Cynon Taf	116,600 77.0	109,600 72.1	74.4	114,300 75.1	75.3	111,300 73.2	74.8	Wales Average

Footnotes

¹ Apr 13 - Mar 14

² Apr 14 - Mar 15

³ Apr 15 - Mar 16

⁴ Oct 15 - Sep 16

⁵ Dec 16

PI Ref	Performance Measure	2014/15	2015/16		2016/17		Actual 2016/17 to 2015/16	Actual 2016/17 Compared to Wales Average	Comment
		Actual	Actual	Wales Average	Annual Target	Actual			
Measure 34a SSOF34a	% of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 12 months after leaving care	N/A	N/A	N/A	NEW	50	N/A	N/A	
Measure 34b SSOF34b	% of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 24 months after leaving care	N/A	N/A	N/A	NEW	53.3	N/A	N/A	
LEDU223	% 16 year olds (Yr 11) leaving school who are known not to be in education, training or employment	3.9	3.7	2.0	3.6 ⁶	1.0	Better	Better	Performance exceeds Wales average 2016/17 of 2.0% and ranked Best in Wales.
LEDU225	% 18 year olds (Yr 13) leaving school who are known not to be in education, training or employment	5.9	6.4	3.1	5.9 ⁶	4.1	Better	Worse	Performance below Wales average 2016/17 of 3.1%
NEDU002ii	% of pupils in local authority care and in any local authority maintained school aged 15 as at the preceding 31 August who leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification	0.0	0.0	0.5	7.6	0.0	Same	Better	

Key:

Within Top Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16	Performance met or exceeded target	Performance within 5% of the target	Performance below target
Within Bottom Quartile performance for all of Wales 2015/16			

Bolded PIs denote that an existing Corporate Plan high level measure

⁶ 2016/17 Wales Average Figure

Council Priority:	ECONOMY - Building a strong economy
Lead Director:	Chris Bradshaw

Challenges and Opportunities linked to this Council Priority	1 - Residents will see a responsible approach to regeneration, with new homes being built and job opportunities created...
Lead Officer	Jane Cook

Actions - The Council will...		Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action	
10.2	Identify a future 'pipeline' of regeneration sites, to build the new homes that residents need. This will include making better use of the Council's entire commercial property and land portfolio to promote coordinated business and housing growth	Undertake LDP review and participate in the Strategic Development Plan in order to deliver housing development and encourage economic activity on our employment sites				The Local Development Plan review report has been prepared but consultation with key stakeholders has not been undertaken. However, discussions are ongoing at a regional level in respect of focussing attention on the merits of preparing a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) at a city region level. Given these circumstances the consultations with stakeholders, etc. has been deferred until there is greater clarity on the regional plan position.
		i) Undertake Viability Assessment of Allocated Sites	Jul-16	Complete		
		ii) Consult with key stakeholders	Sep-16 Revised TBC	Not on Target		
		iii) Seek Cabinet approval of consultation and review report	Jan-17 Revised TBC	Not on Target		
		iv) Submit Report to Welsh Government	Mar-17 Revised TBC	Not on Target		
		Review current approaches to funding affordable housing with the aim of identifying opportunities to maximise existing funding	Mar-17	Complete		
		Identify new and innovative mechanisms to fund affordable housing	Mar-17	Complete		

Actions - The Council will...		Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action
HOU-P4A01	Improve the standard and make the best use of the existing housing stock by increasing the number of empty properties brought back into use across the County Borough	Revise and update the Council's Empty Property Strategy and ensure that it includes the new £1.5M new grant scheme alongside the other range of grant and loan schemes and provides a framework for evaluating the outcomes of these schemes and the opportunities of securing more and future income	Sept-16 Revised Mar-17	Target Missed	Empty Property Strategy has been carried over into 2017/18 Business Plan.
		To launch a specific and targeted campaign to raise awareness of the issues caused by empty properties, the benefits of bringing them back into use and the available grant and loan support to do so. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a brand • Use of various media e.g. website, radio, posters • Improve Council's website and reporting mechanisms • Improve and update the Council's empty property pack 	Sep-16	Complete	
		Implement Housing Action Plan for Treforest with the aim of improving the housing stock in the ward, rebalancing the tenure profile, improving the visual appearance of the area and the function of the housing market overall.	Mar-17	Complete	

Actions - The Council will...		Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action
CXR&P-P3	Assist the development of employment and housing areas, either existing or allocated in the LDP, through partnership working, to maximise the delivery of homes and jobs to support the economy. Enable relevant landowners (including Welsh Government) to promote development on their sites	Start the viability/deliverability study of allocated housing sites to better understand the issues as to why the developments have not proceeded as planned	Apr-16	Complete	
		Develop an intervention plan to overcome the barriers to development on the identified housing sites	Jun-16 Revised Oct-16 Revised Mar-17	Target Missed	Whilst a detailed intervention plan for each site has not yet been prepared, in March, Cabinet approved the work completed to date. It was also agreed that officers prepare a programme of interventions and explore funding opportunities to present to Cabinet in due course. This work is to be shared regionally by officers, to develop wider initiatives. This work is ongoing
		Continue to promote sites at the Developer Forum	Ongoing	Complete	Developer forums have taken place throughout 2016/17, and housing sites have been promoted at these meetings. Further meetings are scheduled for 2017/18 with the next scheduled for June where we will continue with our promotion.
		Develop a Regeneration Plan for the Treforest Industrial Estate	Sep-16 Revised Mar-17	Complete	Report completed with Action Plan. In the light of wider Cardiff Capital Region work, further development required during 2017/18.
		Deliver Treforest Industrial Estate action plan	Dec-16 Revised May 17	Target Missed	To be included for monitoring in 2017/18
		Identify a set of interventions required to enable the development of Strategic Sites	Dec-16 Revised 2017/18	Target Missed	
		Contribute to and support the instigation and preparation of a Strategic Development Plan for South East Wales	TBC	On Target	Options discussions ongoing and still being considered at a regional level
		Deliver Treforest Local Development order (LDO)	Mar-17	Target Missed	Progress has been made and reports ready for Member consideration following the Council's Annual General Meeting
		Submit LDO to Welsh Government for approval	Aug- 16 Revised Dec-16	Target Missed	
		Establish mechanism for reviewing and evaluating the LDO	Mar-17	Complete	Complete and included in the draft LDO 'Statement of Reasons'

Actions - The Council will...		Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action
10.3	Actively engage with Cardiff City Council and other South East Wales Councils over the next 10 years to maximise the benefits to the region and the residents of RCT of the new Capital Region City Deal	Develop and support of City Deal process/projects and delivery. The key City Deal actions to be completed during 2016/17 are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the governance arrangements for the shadow period; • Develop the project assessment criteria and assurance framework; • Appoint an Independent Growth and Competitiveness Commission, to report to the Shadow Joint Cabinet in November 2016; • Establish a Regional Transport Authority; • Establish a Regional Skills and Employment Board; • Establish a Regional Economic Growth Partnership, and • Encourage the business community to establish a Regional Business Organisation, to represent the business sector. 	TBC	On Target	The Housing theme of the City Deal is developing well, with good participation across the ten Council's, and effective engagement with Welsh Government and the private sector. In the next year, detailed proposals will be presented to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Cabinet for consideration.
		Provide lead on the Regional officer group, South East Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration, for Business Support for the 10 South East Wales local authorities as part of the City Deal	TBC	On Target	
10.5	The larger town centres of Aberdare, Llantrisant/Talbot Green, Pontypridd and Treorchy will see significant investment through Welsh Government, private sector and Council funding to improve access infrastructure. We will continue to work with business and local communities to ensure that the town centres benefit from growth, with a tailored package of support to help them adapt successfully to a changing world.	Improve town centre business premises			
		- Increase business floorspace and - Create new jobs (Townscape Enhancement Programme+)	Mar-17	Complete	The agreed output targets for 2016/17 have been achieved. This initiative has been successfully implemented resulting in improved retail premises, residents living in the heart of the town, and significant property improvements.
		Agree Budget and outputs to be delivered for 2016/17 TEP	Mar-17	Complete	The agreed budget for 2016/17 has been expended.
		Facilitate the redevelopment of the Taff Vale Site			
		a) Engage with Developers and agree appropriate delivery model	Sep-16	Complete	
b) Prepare initial concept design	Jun-16	Complete			
c) Prepare detailed design	Oct-16	Complete			

Actions - The Council will...	Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action	
10.5	The larger town centres of Aberdare, Llantrisant/Talbot Green, Pontypridd and Treorchy will see significant investment through Welsh Government, private sector and Council funding to improve access infrastructure. We will continue to work with business and local communities to ensure that the town centres benefit from growth, with a tailored package of support to help them adapt successfully to a changing world.	Establish new Business Improvement District (BID) company for Pontypridd	Sep-16	Complete	
	Complete Pontypridd Town Centre Strategy	Mar-17	Target Missed	This will now be monitored during 2017/18.	
	Work with Aberdare Business & Tourism Association (ABTA) to secure BID development support funding	Mar-17	Target Missed		
	Complete delivery of Town Centre Partnership initiative for Aberdare and Porth town centres	Sep-16	Complete		
	Develop a robust marketing plan to promote Lido Ponty to residents and visitors	Apr-16	Complete		
	Agree priority programme and management arrangements for Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid as part of a coordinated programme of Heritage Lottery funding applications	Jun-16 Revised Jul-16	Complete		
	Develop and manage EU funding bids for key town centre buildings under the Building for the Future initiative	Sep-16	Target Missed	Welsh Government have now approved and launched the scheme. A priority project for Pontypridd town centre is being taken forward as part of the 2017/18 Delivery Plan.	
	Develop, manage and submit bid for Vibrant and Viable Places 2 Programme	Sep-16	Not on Target	Welsh Government have not launched the scheme and is subject to review in terms of the referendum result.	

Council Priority:	ECONOMY - Building a strong economy
Lead Director:	Chris Bradshaw

Challenges and Opportunities linked to this Council Priority	2 - Rhondda Cynon Taf's schools will be amongst the best in the country, with all children achieving the best they can
Lead Officer	Esther Thomas

Actions - The Council will...		Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action	
4.2	Continue to work in partnership with schools to raise standards and close the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The focus will be on improving the quality of leadership and teaching through effective school to school support	Develop excellent leadership and management within all our schools				<p>The senior leaders in Education programme has been completed and evaluations from the programme are very positive. Headteachers trained on the Central South Consortium consultant leader programme and INSIGHT executive leader programme continue to provide support to other schools where needed. 13 deputy heads have now completed the MPQH qualification, required in order to take up a headship, expanding the potential group of future school leaders. Central South Consortium are reviewing their current leadership programmes and this work forms part of the delivery plan for 2017/18.</p> <p>Engagement of schools with the School Improvement Group process continues to be monitored, with schools still engaging at different levels.</p> <p>The peer review programme is impacting positively on school improvement. RCT schools continue to be well represented in the Hub school and professional learning school delivery programme and this has now been extended to free provision for those schools in the region most in need of support (amber and red schools).</p> <p>Exploring federation and collaboration between schools has been placed on hold until the next academic year due to changes in governor arrangements introduced nationally.</p>
		i) Deliver, accredit and evaluate the first year of the leadership development programme to make sure all aspects of leadership are supported	Review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target		
		ii) Explore opportunities for collaboration including federations across the County Borough	Review Mar-17 Revised date review Mar-18	On Target		
		Develop new models of leadership through a consultant/systems leadership programme	Review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target		
		Establish a senior leaders in education programme and evaluate	Review Mar-17	Complete		
		Use joint practice development and collaboration between schools to improve leadership at all levels, so every school is part of a high quality school improvement group	Review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target		
		Roll out the peer review programme as appropriate		On Target		
		Develop and share the key features of good and excellent learning and teaching across schools in RCT led by schools both in RCT and across the region	Review Mar-17	Complete		

Actions - The Council will...	Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action	
4.2	Continue to work in partnership with schools to raise standards and close the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The focus will be on improving the quality of leadership and teaching through effective school to school support - continued	Identify reasons for and challenge in school and between school variance in performance, in collaboration with Central South Consortium			Progress report meetings continue to demonstrate schools are improving where needed and systems are in place for immediate intervention if required. However there is concern over the pace of improvement in some areas and focussed work will continue to improve this. RCT schools and clusters engaged with the regional teacher assessment process well and outcomes have been positive. In light of ongoing discussions with Welsh Government new processes are expected for the next academic year. The recommendations of the Scrutiny working group into Governor support services have been presented to and agreed by Cabinet and final feedback was provided to Scrutiny committee on 1st February 2017.
		Intervene swiftly where there is insufficient progress, with clear roles, evidencing impact of action	As appropriate and review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	
		Secure improvement at pace in red and amber support schools, reflecting what works through effective intervention	Review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	
		Improve the quality and consistency of teacher assessment	Review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	
		Work with elected Members to consider ways in which we could improve the recruitment and retention of school governors	Jun-16	Complete	
		Improve attainment and attendance			Training for the final cohort of the Hands on Literacy Project (DEST), the final part of the CLIC project, will now be in spring term 2018 . Cohort 1 and 2 schools continue to receive support and training from the service. Work has continued to develop systems to provide more timely and accessible performance data. Additional Learning Needs reports have been uploaded onto the SIMs system and 95 SEN Co-ordinators have received training on how to update and use them. The first year of the Seren project has been completed and a report was presented to Scrutiny on 28th November 2016.
		i) Further develop service management information systems and data reports to inform the deployment of resources	Jan-17	Complete	
		ii) Raise attainment of vulnerable groups of learners by continuing to roll out the CLIC project across RCT schools to improve early assessment of speech and language and pre-literacy levels to support early intervention in the Foundation phase	Jan-17 Revised Jan-18	On Target	
		iii) Improve the quality of teaching and learning through collaboration with the Central South Consortium, identifying regional lead schools across the age range who can support the improvement of teaching and learning in RCT, in particular for literacy and numeracy	Review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	
		iv) Support more Able and Talented pupils to reach their potential, evaluating the success of the WG funded Seren Network to increase the numbers of pupils in RCT accessing the UK's most respected universities	Review first year in Sep-16	Complete	
		Continue to improve the availability and use of data by schools to support improvement, increasing the use of SIMS Discover by schools to monitor and track performance	Mar-17	Complete	

Actions - The Council will...	Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action	
4.2	Continue to work in partnership with schools to raise standards and close the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The focus will be on improving the quality of leadership and teaching through effective school to school support - continued	Promote the social inclusion and well being of all children and young people			
		Support and challenge schools to reduce the number and duration of fixed term exclusions and further expand the use of Restorative Approaches in Schools	Ongoing	On Target	Restorative approaches continue to be embedded within pilot schools and during the summer term a strategic approach will be agreed for the next academic year for this ongoing initiative.
		Continue to develop approaches to improving behaviour management in schools through the implementation of the Wellbeing and Behaviour Strategy	Jul-16	Complete	Access & Inclusion and Engagement & participation school self evaluations and subsequent action plans, joint visits with challenge advisors and involvement in case conferences ensures that schools are monitored in a timely fashion and any issues are actioned promptly.
		Continue to support and challenge schools to ensure that young people are supported to overcome barriers to attendance, engagement and participation in learning	Mar-17	Complete	Agreement has been given by Senior Leadership Team to establish the RCT resilient Families programme as a single Integrated family support network. Vulnerability profiling will be the primary method of identifying families
		Continue to develop the scope of Vulnerability Profiling to facilitate its wider use across the Council and its partners as a diagnostic tool to drive improvements in planning, delivery and review of targeted prevention and early intervention services for children and young people	Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	Work continues to further close the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for Free school meals and their peers. A new cohort of schools is now receiving training as part of the Valleys project. This work is ongoing and will continue into the new financial year. In secondary schools, the 'Building the Learning Athlete' project aims to help pupils improve their performance in school by supporting them more holistically, for example in improving their eating and sleeping habits and learning to manage their own emotions and learning. The project has initially focussed on small groups of year 7 and 9 pupils in 15 schools. Progress will be evaluated at the end of the academic year and if positive impacts are identified may be rolled out further.
		Reduce the attainment gap between FSM / non FSM pupils by improving the performance of eFSM pupils in collaboration with the Central South Consortium	Review Mar-17	On Target	Work continues to improve educational outcomes for Children Looked After. Performance at KS2 is at the same level as the previous year, but achievement of the KS3 CSI has improved by over 19 percentage points since the previous year. A data report was presented to Scrutiny on 19th December 2016, which can be viewed on the Council's website.
		Reduce the attendance gap between FSM / non FSM pupils by continuing to closely monitor attendance and challenging and supporting schools to close the gap accordingly	Sep-16	Complete	
		Work with Central South Consortium to develop and grow expertise across the region in effective strategies to close the gap for Children eligible for FSM and evaluate progress	Review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	
		Close the attainment gap between boys and girls through improving the literacy skills of boys in the Foundation phase, KS2, KS3 and KS4 in collaboration with the Central South Consortium	Review Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	
		Improve Educational Outcomes for Children Looked After (CLA) - working with Children's Services, rigorously evaluate outcomes for CLA, ensuring effective targeting of resources (CLA Pupil Deprivation Grant) and effective implementation of CLA Action Plan	Dec-16	Complete	

Actions - The Council will...		Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action
4.1	Continue to invest in improving school buildings and facilities, to ensure the County Borough's pupils have the learning environment fit for the 21st Century	Submission and approval of all business cases within Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme	Jun-16	Complete	<p>All business cases received formal approval from the Education Minister .</p> <p>Good progress being made on site with all the projects , a new 3G pitch been completed and handed back to Tonypandy Community School, so this new facility can be used prior to completion of the rest of the project. Open evenings have been held for prospective 6th form students and their parents who have now made their school choices and are being supported through the transition. Work is continuing on developing wider curriculum choices for introduction in September 2018.</p> <p>The new school building at Y Pant has been completed and is now occupied by pupils. External works at the site are progressing well and demolition of the original building is in progress. A recent Estyn inspection commented "many pupils are particularly positive about the impact that the recent move to the new school building is having on pupil behaviour. The behaviour of nearly all pupils in classes, assemblies and around the school is exemplary".</p>
		Planning approval received for all projects under the Rhondda and Tonyrefail Programme	Jun-16	Complete	
		Building works commenced on site for all projects under the Rhondda and Tonyrefail Programme	Sep-16	Complete	
		Complete building works on extended Y Pant Comprehensive School	Mar-17	Complete	
		Co-ordinate new sixth forms across the Rhondda and Tonyrefail Programme	Mar-17	Complete	
		Work with schools to establish a programme of transition activities	Mar-17	Complete	
		Establish new Governing Bodies for Rhondda and Tonyrefail Programme in line with requirements	Dec-16	Complete	
		Complete statutory consultation process of: Ferndale Infants School into Darran Park. Ynyscynon Nursery into Pontrhondda	Sep-16	Complete	
		Amalgamate Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior into new Cymmer Primary School	Sep-16	Complete	

Council Priority:	ECONOMY - Building a strong economy
Lead Director:	Chris Bradshaw

Challenges and Opportunities linked to this Council Priority	3 - There will be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages
Lead Officer	Esther Thomas/Deb Hughes

Actions - The Council will...		Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action
6.1	Continue to work with schools to track young people at risk of becoming 'NEET' and work with partners to ensure a broad skills offer for young people, encompassing a range of options including apprenticeships and employment opportunities.	Implement a range of programmes such as apprenticeship schemes, traineeship and graduate programme	Ongoing from Sep-16	Complete	Recruited individuals are now in post and have completed induction. They will now be working towards qualification frameworks linked to their job role. Currently recruiting for Apprentices/Graduates & Trainees for September 2017 intake.
		Work with our partners to support a range of work experience opportunities to develop work skills	Ongoing	On Target	This work will continue throughout 2017/18, supporting Universities, Colleges, Schools, Training Providers & Job Seekers with work Experience opportunities
		Deliver a range of employability programmes to young people informing them about areas of growth, skills and qualities required for sustainable employment	Ongoing	On Target	This work will continue throughout 2017/18. We have recently expanded this provision, and are currently delivering a pilot programme "Positive Achievement" to primary schools within the Tonypany, Porth and Tonyrefail cluster.
		Provide an up to date Health & Safety vetting work experience database	Apr-16	Complete	There are currently 895 employers on the Health & Safety vetting work experience database.
6.2	Work with Job Centre Plus, Communities First, Welsh Government Careers Wales, Coleg Y Cymoedd and other European Social Fund programmes operating across the region to reduce unemployment, with a focus on supporting vulnerable and hard to reach people into work; developing career pathways into higher level jobs in the care sector; and maximising retail and construction opportunities that derive from regeneration	Ensure the delivery of the 'Inspire to Work' European Social Fund Programme in RCT aligns with existing SEET arrangements to support vulnerable and hard to reach young people into work by utilising Vulnerability Profiling data to ensure the effective targeting of ESF programme participants	May-16 onwards	On Target	Recruitment of staff is complete for Inspire to Work and the ESF programme will start in May 2017. Operational procedures will utilise Vulnerability Profiling data to target participants
		Ensure the delivery of the 'Inspire to Work' European Social Fund Programme in RCT aligns with existing SEET arrangements to support vulnerable and hard to reach young people into work by extending the engagement of young people in education, employment and training post 16 by locating young people identified as Tier 1 (unknown to services) by Careers Wales	Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	Awaiting formal confirmation from WG in relation to changes to the Careers Wales Data Management System and processes. Youth Engagement and Progression Officers provide dedicated Lead Worker function for young people in Tier 1 to move them to Tier 2 - confirmation this will continue to be funded by Families First grant until September 2017
		Ensure the delivery of the 'Inspire to Work' European Social Fund Programme in RCT aligns with existing SEET arrangements to support vulnerable and hard to reach young people into work by extending the engagement of young people in education, employment and training post 16 by reducing the numbers of young people in Tier 2 by moving them into Tier 3	Mar-17 Ongoing	On Target	

Actions - The Council will...		Milestones/Sub Actions that will help to achieve overarching Action	Delivery Date	Progress to date	Overall progress to date on Action
6.2	Work with Job Centre Plus, Communities First, Welsh Government Careers Wales, Coleg Y Cymoedd and other European Social Fund programmes operating across the region to reduce unemployment, with a focus on supporting vulnerable and hard to reach people into work; developing career pathways into higher level jobs in the care sector; and maximising retail and construction opportunities that derive from regeneration - continued	Organise and deliver suitable literacy and numeracy courses for learners of different ability levels and needs by ensuring that embedded literacy and numeracy courses are also developed for people with learning disabilities through the Independent Learning Skills programme financed through the franchise agreement with Coleg y Cymoedd	Jul-17	Complete	12 pre-employment programmes have taken place with 180 learners attending and 255 qualifications awarded. Digital skills have been embedded in the pre-employment programme to increase the skills and confidence of learners in using information technology. This includes accredited courses in Using Emails and Completing and Using a CV. An accredited digital tablet course has also been run several times in response to demand from learners. There have been a total of 116 enrolments onto the Independent Learning skills programme, with 7 withdrawals to date. Provision was expanded into the Cynon Valley in February.
		Ensure all programmes involve an element of digital literacy skills to address digital exclusion by developing a tailored programme of activities designed to enhance the skills of participants and embed the activities within the wider employability programme	At appropriate stages within the 60 hour programme	Complete	
		Organise and deliver a range of employability courses for learners who are addressing barriers to work in Communities First areas, liaising with the Communities First central team: - to identify the courses required, - geographical areas for delivery and - anticipated number of referrals. Ensure through liaison with the ACL Partnership that there is no duplication of the proposed provision with that delivered by partners in RCT	Mar-17	Complete	