



2018/19

Corporate Performance Report

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

Planning the Way Ahead

This is the Council's Corporate Performance Report. It sets out our priorities for 2018/19 and how we performed in 2017/18.

We welcome your views on this report, our plans for the future and how we did last year. We would also like to know how you, your family and your community have been affected by our work to improve services. **You can get in touch by :**



• **Via the web:**
www.rctcbc.gov.uk/sayit *or* www.rctcbc.gov.uk



• **Via Twitter:**
[@rctcouncil](https://twitter.com/rctcouncil) *or* www.twitter.com/RCTCouncil



• **Via Facebook:**
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• **Email the Consultation Team:**
consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk

• **Join the Citizens' Panel:**
www.rctcbc.gov.uk/jointhepanel

• **Cwm Taf Engagement Hub:**
www.ourcwmtaf.wales

• **Help us improve by providing your comments, compliments and complaints:**
www.rctcbc.gov.uk/feedback

• **Find the contact details of your local Councillor:**
www.rctcbc.gov.uk/councillors

• **Sign up to the Council's free eNewsletter:**
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• **If you are interested in taking over the running of a Council run building or service:**
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This document contains the Council's priorities as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and also the Council's Well-being objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. To all intents and purposes, Well-being objectives and Improvement Objectives can be treated as one and the same. Therefore, by integrating processes for setting and reporting on these key objectives, the Council has discharged its duties under both areas of legislation.



A message from the Leader of the Council - Councillor Andrew Morgan

Welcome to the Council's Corporate Performance Report for 2018. This report brings together how well we delivered our priorities last year and sets out our plans to deliver our priorities in 2018/19. It contains a huge amount of information and you will be able to see for yourself how the Council is doing, including what the independent auditors of the Council think. It contains many examples of how the Council is working to improve the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural well-being of the residents and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

I hope you find this report useful and that it helps you to understand and challenge what we are doing. It also includes links to more detailed reports and data for people who would like further information. I especially hope that you use the information to tell us where you think we are doing well and where we can do better. The data about the Council's performance overall tells us that despite austerity, we are continuing to improve, with some of our services amongst the best in Wales. This includes

- % of pupils achieving the expected levels in English or Welsh, Maths and Science at Key Stage 2.
- the cleanliness of our highways that are inspected.
- reducing the amount of waste we landfill.
- the condition of our (C) roads.

As well as the positive news, we know that there are areas where we need to improve, which is why, for example, we continue to support significant investment into a number of areas, such as highways, in particular our A and B roads. In 2017/18, we improved the condition and safety of roads and highways infrastructure as part of our 'RCTinvest' programme, e.g. Rhigos Mountain Road, Llantrisant Road bridge, replacement footways, repairing safety fencing barriers and putting in place new safety measures. Continuing to maintain, improve and make sure that our highways and structures are fit for the future remains a key priority, as is continuing to work on the 7% of roads that require urgent attention. To achieve this we are investing £23.6Million in this coming year, bringing the total investment to £115Million in eight years. Our scheme to repair and improve the Maerdy Mountain Road as part of this programme, carried out by our contractor, Alun Griffiths last year has been awarded the **Institute of Civil Engineers** award for outstanding engineering achievement.

We continued to deliver our 21st Century schools project, including the construction of 3 new 'through' schools i.e. Porth Community School, Tonyrefail Community School and Ysgol Nant Gwyn (Tonypanddy) which will open in autumn 2018. We also secured funding to improve the condition of more schools and provide more Welsh medium places. Linked to other 21st Century school projects, we also invested in 3G pitches that provide facilities for the benefit of pupils and the wider community. These include Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, Church Village and Tonyrefail Community Schools.

By changing and strengthening how we plan and work with other public bodies, we have improved services that haven't performed well previously. For example, working with Cwm Taf University Health Board and Merthyr Council in its first full year of operation, our Stay Well@home service, has supported people leaving hospital to return to their home or care home more quickly and safely when they are well enough.

Whilst setting our budget for 2018/19 we needed to make savings of £9.8Million. We were able to do this by becoming more efficient in how we purchase goods and services, changing how the Council is structured, investing in technology and improving how we work with others. We were also able to keep Council Tax increase to 3.3%, the lowest increase in Wales.

We know it will be harder to deliver year-on-year savings in the future, particularly with the demand for some services, e.g. social care, increasing and that is why we are continuing with our approach of examining every part of the Council's budget alongside a programme of significant investment in key services.

We are investing £180Million as part of our capital programme for 2018/19 to 2020/21, to further improve infrastructure and facilities for residents. This includes regeneration projects, building better schools, improving the condition of roads and community assets such as parks and playgrounds as well as further investment in Leisure Centres.

Within this report there are many examples of where the Council is working with others to get most benefit for our residents both now and in the future. Our plans as part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal extend over ten years, with the Council playing a central role in delivering an exciting and ambitious plan to improve the economy of South East Wales with the aim of creating 25,000 jobs and attracting additional investment of £4Billion to boost the economic prosperity of the Region. More locally we are supporting the redevelopment of our town centres including leading on the Taff Vale project in Pontypridd and a major town centre improvement scheme in Tonypanddy.

We will continue to focus on early intervention and also prevention in our services to improve the lives of our residents. Our Resilient Families Programme and Resilient Families Service aims to reduce the number of children who need the Council to intervene in their lives by working with families, so they receive the support they need to help them 'bounce back' more quickly when they experience difficulties.

Finally, we could not do any of this work without the continued commitment of staff, councillors and partners. I would like to put on record my personal thanks to everyone who is working hard to continue to make Rhondda Cynon Taf one of the most successful Councils in Wales so that our residents get the best possible services.

I hope this Performance Report helps you understand how the Council is approaching the challenges and opportunities it faces both now and in the future. Please let us know what you think of our progress and plans, tell us what matters to you and give us your ideas about what we can do to further improve the positive impact of the Council's work.

A. Morgan

Councillor Andrew Morgan
Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Continuing to deliver our priorities in 2017/18

The Council's **Corporate Plan for 2016/2020**, 'The Way Ahead' continues to put residents at the centre of what we do.

The priorities set out in the Corporate Plan were originally shaped and informed by residents, staff and partners who told us what mattered most to them. Importantly, it continues to set the direction for everything we need to do in the Council and with others between now and 2020.

The Corporate Plan sets out a Vision for the future

A County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all, and focuses on three priorities:



Economy

Building a strong economy



People

Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone



Place

Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work

The Plan also sets out the key principles we follow to deliver these priorities, i.e.

- ▶ **providing essential services well;**
- ▶ **helping people and communities to help themselves;**
- ▶ **building a sustainable County Borough; and**
- ▶ **living within our means.**

These principles and our longer term Vision mean that we need to involve people and communities in shaping services, think about the effect of what we do now on people and communities in the future, carefully plan what we do so that we can work with others where it is best to do so, and put in place services that will help prevent problems from happening or getting worse.

Details of what we planned to do to deliver these priorities in 2017/18 were set out in our **Corporate Performance Report for 2017/18** and we have been continually monitoring our progress throughout the last year. The Corporate Plan doesn't show all the services we deliver to or organise for our residents, communities and businesses. You can find out more about what we do on the **Council's website**.

What the Regulator says...

In its most recent report in June 2017, our independent regulator, the Wales Audit Office, indicated that "the Council continues to meet its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement" and has:

- arrangements in place which are likely to help to make continuous improvements.
- complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources.
- appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We expect to receive the next report from the Wales Audit Office in August 2018.

Since the implementation of the Plan in 2016, we have made positive progress in tackling our three priorities. Our work has been reviewed and checked by Councillors every 3 months and at the same time, reports have been put on the Council's website so that everyone can see the progress for themselves. We are at the end of the reporting year, so this report contains an assessment of how we have performed in these three priorities over the past year and the difference our work has made to the people that live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Council's three priorities will remain in place until 2020. However, how these priorities will be delivered, our targets and next steps have been refreshed and strengthened as part of the plans we are putting in place for 2018/19.



In order to better meet our ambitions and respond to the impact of austerity and increasing financial pressures, we have also put in place five work streams to improve essential services. These are

DIGITALISATION...

so that customers can access more of our services online and also helping to increase access to technology for people and communities.

COMMERCIALISATION...

so that the Council takes more opportunities to act as a business to earn income rather than cut budgets.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION...

so that we spend more on stopping problems and less on trying to fix them once they have happened.

INDEPENDENCE...

so that our vulnerable residents stay as well as they can for as long as they can.

EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION...

so that we challenge everything we do to see if we can do it better.

In 2017 we also continued our work to embed the **Well-being of Future Generations Act** into the Council's work and priorities, with the three priorities being adopted as our Well-being Objectives in **March 2017**. We are also strengthening those aspects of our Corporate Plan that have changed or moved on since it was introduced in 2016.

The Act means that as well as the Council demonstrating that it is continually improving, we also need to show how our work is improving economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being and contributing to seven national Well-being goals

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

Our three current priorities have provided a clear starting point to help us to show how our work is contributing to the seven national Well-being goals, but we know we need to do more.

The Act also strengthens how 'sustainable' we need to be by asking us to work differently, where we are not already doing so. The sustainable principles are described in the Act as the five ways of working i.e.

1. **Balancing short and long term needs and planning for the future**
2. **Working together with other partners to deliver our priorities**
3. **Involving those with an interest and seeking their views**
4. **Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse**
5. **Considering how well-being goals impact on those other bodies.**

These five ways of working make all public bodies in Wales, including the Council, think more about the long-term, work better with people, communities and each other, look to prevent problems and also take a more joined-up approach to the work we do.

We know we have more to do to make sure we meet everything asked by the Act. We believe that we can best do this by making sure it is part of and not separate from our every day work.

There are already good examples in place across the Council where we can show we are working sustainably, including **working with other partners**, e.g. by

- working with the Cwm Taf University Health Board (UHB) through the new Stay Well@home service where we are getting people safely home from hospital more quickly and reducing the number of cancelled operations, and
- tackling long standing problems in new and different ways in our Resilient Families programme.

Both are described in more detail in the **PEOPLE** section.

Another more long standing example of where we are working sustainably is our work in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal which will include bringing jobs and improved transport links into the region. You will see many more examples throughout this report where we show that we are contributing to the seven national Well-being goals. However, we need to continue to build and improve on this positive platform.

section

2

Delivering for the future

For many years, Councillors have had to make the tough choices and difficult decisions needed so that the Council can prioritise services, particularly for those who are most vulnerable, whilst continuing to make the savings needed to balance the books.

We have reduced management structures and 'back office' functions, put in place partnerships with other councils and public bodies and made better use of Council buildings which has allowed us to reduce the number of Council buildings and make better use of office space.

We have achieved these changes because we regularly **review every service** across the Council and challenge everything we do to see if it can be done differently or better. These reviews mean that we know the strengths and areas for improvement and are better able to respond quickly to change and continue to provide quality services with reducing resources, including fewer managers and staff. We are also talking more to our residents of all ages to find out what is important to them and seeking their ideas and suggestions for improvement. We are making best use of limited resources by working with others where it makes sense to do so. By looking at and challenging what we know about our services and the needs of our residents and communities, now and in the future, we can better understand how and what we need to change to focus on improving what matters most to make sure that the needs of future generations can be met.

As a key partner of the Cwm Taf Public Services Board and also the Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board, in the last year, we have contributed to the development of two key plans for the Cwm Taf areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.

The Cwm Taf Public Services Board developed a Well-being Plan which sets out four Well-being Objectives

1. **Thriving Communities**
2. **Healthy People**
3. **Strong Economy**
4. **Tackling Loneliness and Isolation**

The Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board developed a **Regional Plan** which set out how partners will work better together in relation to

- **children and young people**
- **older people**
- **health/physical disabilities**
- **learning disability/autism**
- **mental health**
- **sensory impairment**
- **carers who need support**
- **violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence**

with priority given to

- **older people with complex needs and long term conditions, including dementia.**
- **people with learning disabilities.**
- **carers, including young carers.**
- **integrated Family Support Services and**
- **children with complex needs due to disability and illness.**

As a Council, and working in partnership with others, we strive to improve everything we do so that we can provide better, more efficient and effective services to our residents and communities.






section

3

How are we performing?





There are 16 national indicators where we can compare our performance. We have used the most recent all Wales comparisons for 2016/17 to compare our 2017/18 data.

This showed...







-  we were in the top quartile in Wales for 4 of 16 indicators;
-  10 indicators showed improved performance and 6 were better than the Wales average;
-  3 indicators remain in the bottom quartile in Wales despite improved performance;
-  5 of our indicators showed that performance declined from last year;
-  performance in 1 indicator remained unchanged and continued to be in the top quartile in Wales.

To see a full summary of how we performed compared to the rest of Wales in 2017/18 please view our **Statutory PI comparison**



We were among the top quartile in Wales for 4 indicators..

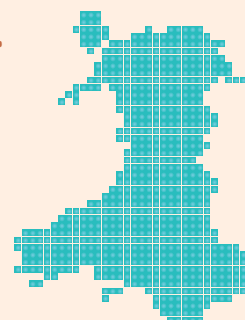
-  % of pupils achieving the expected levels in English or Welsh, Maths and Science at Key Stage 2.
-  the cleanliness of our highways that are inspected.
-  reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.
-  the condition of our (C) roads.

We were among the bottom quartile in Wales for 7 indicators...

-  the number of visits to Public Libraries.
-  pupil attendance in primary schools.
-  pupil attendance in secondary schools.
-  the amount of waste we recycle.
-  the condition of principal (A) and non principal (B) roads.
-  food establishments meeting food hygiene standards.

Comparing our performance against our 2017/18 targets...

-  10 indicators met or exceeded our targets, although performance for 5 indicators were below the Wales average
-  6 indicators missed the target, 5 of which were below the Wales average.



When the 2017/18 all Wales information becomes available in September we will provide an up to date comparison to Councillors as part of our regular performance reports and also put the **information on our website** for everyone to see. You can see more detail about how Councils across Wales compare at **My Local Council**.

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

In 2019 there will be fewer strategic measures in place that are nationally set, this means that we will have fewer measures with which we can compare. But we are keen to look at other ways we can compare our performance.

In 2017 the Welsh Government published its first report that sets out the progress being made across Wales, to meet the seven national Well-being goals. Although the information contained in the report is not about Rhondda Cynon Taf, what we do locally helps to contribute to the seven **national Well-being Goals**.

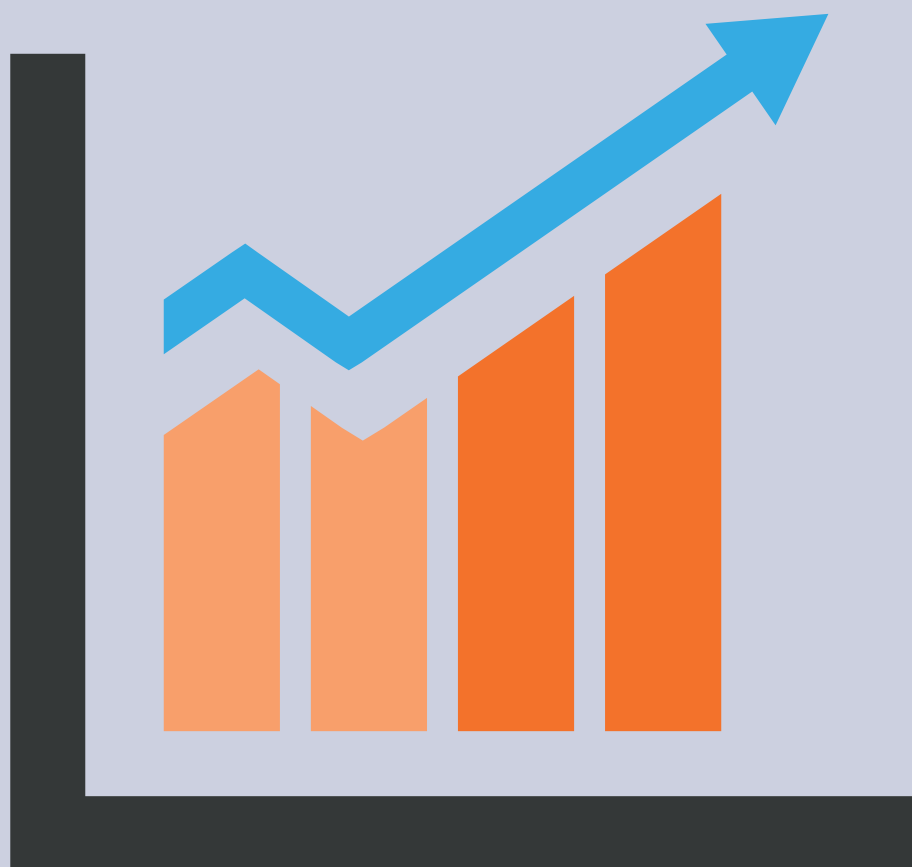
The key messages from the report are:

- “Life expectancy has been broadly increasing and the amount of time spent in good health has been on the up. However, inequalities remain across different groups.
- Smoking and drinking are falling, but overall one in ten people follow fewer than two good healthy lifestyle behaviours. Obesity in adults has risen over the long term.
- In terms of a healthy start to life there has been good progress in areas such as breastfeeding and dental health, but obesity in children remains a challenge.
- People are more likely than ever to be in work in Wales, although historical economic challenges remain. Whilst having a job reduces the chances of being poor, in-work poverty is increasing as more people enter work. Two-thirds of workers are considered to be in “decent work”.
- As in the rest of the UK, there has been little improvement in people’s incomes, although the gender pay gap has reduced and educational attainment is increasing.
- Relative income poverty has remained stubborn and is highest amongst children, although a lower percentage of the population report themselves to be in material deprivation. Socio-economic disadvantage remains a key inequality for some outcomes such as educational attainment and life expectancy.
- Inequalities persist in different indicators and across different population groups. For example, black and ethnic minorities are less likely to say that they feel they belong to the local area, and women feel less safe in their communities than men.
- People’s sense of community and belonging depends on a range of factors. In general most people are satisfied with where they live, although one in five people feel lonely.
- Many adults attend and participate in culture and sports and trends are generally upwards in recent years. However participation varies according to age and background.
- One in five people speak Welsh and in recent years, data suggests that there is an increase in those speaking Welsh but not fluently, whilst use of the language has remained steady.
- Water quality and air quality in Wales continues to improve and greenhouse gas emissions have fallen. However, air pollution continues to be a significant health issue.
- Renewable energy generation has been on the rise. But our ecological footprint suggests that our key natural resources are being depleted faster than they can be replenished.
- Overall, biological diversity is declining, and no ecosystems in Wales can be said to have all the features needed for resilience.”



section

4



ECONOMY:

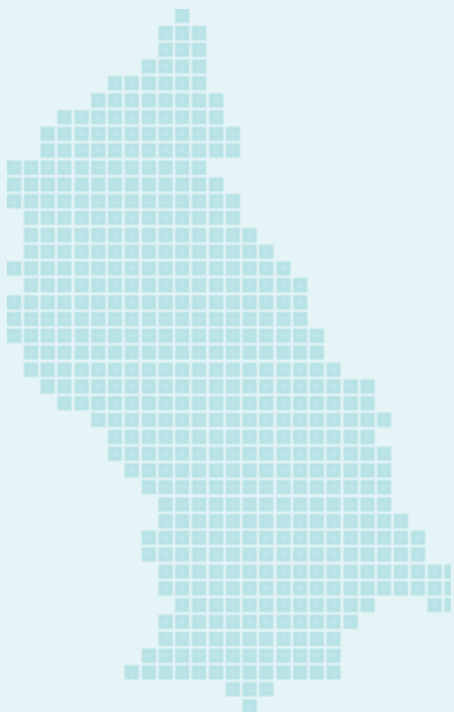
Building a Strong Economy

ECONOMY

Building a Strong Economy

Key information about Rhondda Cynon Taf

- 5,800 people (5.2%) were unemployed in the year to December 2017 compared to 5,900 (5.3%) the previous year. Unemployment is still higher than the Wales average of 4.8%. However, unemployment is falling in Rhondda Cynon Taf whilst rising in Wales overall.
- 17,200 households are workless (21.7%), which is higher than Wales (17.8%) and UK (15.1%).
- 47% of areas in Rhondda Cynon Taf are within the most deprived half of areas in Wales.
- 10.1% of adults have no qualifications at all and 18.2% of adults have less than 5 grade C GCSEs.
- The gap between eFSM and non-FSM pupils at foundation phase and also at Key Stage 2 is closing. The gap at Key Stage 3 continued to grow, from 21.2% to 21.7%, and remains wide at Key Stage 4 at 32.7%, previously 32.0%.
- 17.8% of children are living in poverty. However, when the cost of housing is deducted from household income, this figure increases to 28%.
- 3,556 private sector dwellings have been vacant for over 6 months, 738 more than last year.



In 2017 we said that we would continue our work to Build a Strong Economy.

We have made positive progress towards a number of long term projects. In the last year...

- we continued to work towards a prosperous long term future for Rhondda Cynon Taf by working with partners on the City Deal and Valleys Taskforce;
- we supported ongoing projects to revitalise our town centres, including Taff Vale and the YMCA in Pontypridd and the Boot Hotel in Aberdare redevelopment;
- we continued to deliver our 21st Century schools project, including the construction of 3 new 'through' schools which will open in autumn 2018, and securing approval for further funding to improve the condition of more schools and provide more Welsh medium places;
- we further reduced the overall number of young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training to 1.4%.

However, we still face significant issues in some areas, in particular...

- improving the number of pupils achieving good results at GCSE and reducing the gap between pupils eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) and their class mates;
- reducing the number of pupils excluded from schools;
- increasing visits to our town centres and reducing the number of empty retail units in some towns.



You can see more detail of our progress against what we set out to achieve in **2017/18 in our Performance Evaluation.**

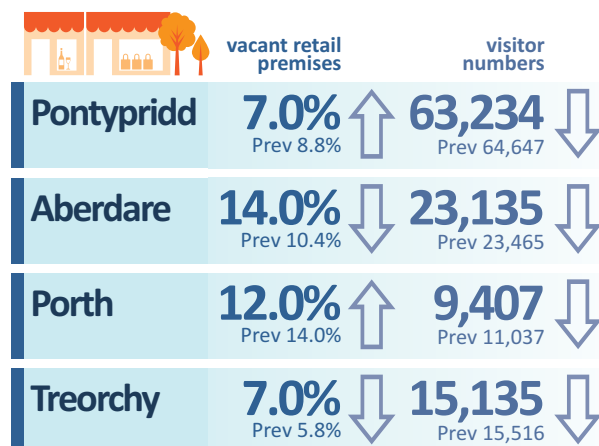
This includes how RCT is contributing to the seven national Well-being goals, and in particular a Prosperous Wales, a More Equal Wales and a Wales of Cohesive communities. We will continue to develop our understanding of how we can maximise our contribution across all of the goals. An example of how we will do this is the development of the **Taff Vale Project.**

So that residents see a responsible approach to regeneration, with new homes being built and job opportunities created

Among other things, we have...

- continued to lead and work with partners to support the City Deal projects that will bring investment, improved transport, housing and jobs into the region, including agreeing 5 **areas in RCT** where we can encourage additional investment;
- started construction work on the Taff Vale development and discussions with potential tenants for the office buildings are already taking place;
- supported 75 businesses/organisations through grant support and 62 jobs were created and safeguarded. This was less than the previous year when 90 businesses were supported to create 100 jobs. Job creation was an essential part of the grant support, which prevented some businesses from applying for support. The support programme is now being reviewed to see if other measures of business success and growth could be considered;
- supported new housing development and brought homes back into use. This resulted in 552 additional housing units, 226 new affordable homes and 204 empty properties being brought back into use;
- launched the new Rhondda Cynon Taf Tourism Association in November 2017 and worked alongside local businesses to understand their views and experiences. Promoted RCT as a visitor destination for tourists.

Since last year, there have been fewer vacant retail premises in our Town Centres, which is generally positive. However, this was not the same in Aberdare where there were more. The number of people visiting each of our Town Centres fell slightly, with the biggest fall in visitor numbers in Porth, which has experienced major necessary works to upgrade water pipes.



CASE STUDY

BRINGING PROPERTIES IN TYLORSTOWN BACK TO LIFE

A block of 8 flats had been empty for several years and was falling into severe disrepair because the owners and leaseholder did not carry out necessary repairs to the roof. The Council served a notice requiring the building to be demolished or renovated. The owners carried out repairs to the roof, windows and elevations. 7 of the 8 flats have now been occupied.

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- continuing to work with our partners to support long-term improvements to the local economy through the City Deal and Valleys Taskforce to bring investment, improved transport, housing and jobs to the area;
- working with partners to develop key areas within RCT, including Pontypridd and Tonypandy town centres;
- involving businesses and local communities in work to help our other town centres benefit from growth;
- continuing to tackle unsuitable housing and empty properties so that people and communities can better enjoy their local areas;
- building on the strong heritage and natural beauty of the area to promote RCT as a visitor destination, celebrating the culture and history of the area.

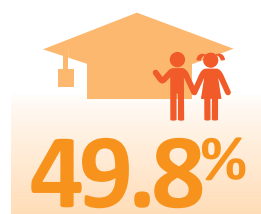
You will know if we have made a difference because...

- there will be further progress in the City Deal, Valleys Taskforce and local redevelopment projects;
- we will continue to deliver affordable homes and bring empty properties back to life;
- we will be promoting RCT to more visitors by developing interactive walking trails and gaining Museum of Wales accreditation for Rhondda Heritage Park.

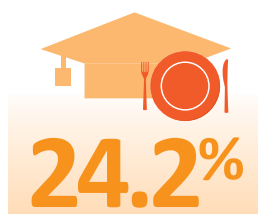
To make Rhondda Cynon Taf's schools amongst the best in the country, and with all children achieving the best they can

Among other things, we have...

- strengthened our work to ensure consistency in the teaching quality and approach to tackling pupil absenteeism across all RCT Schools;
- continued to focus on raising standards and closing the achievement gap between children who are disadvantaged and their peers although we have not made as much progress as planned;
- continued our school improvement programme at Treorchy and Ferndale Comprehensive Schools. We also established Cymmer primary school by merging the existing infants and junior schools and begun remodelling and refurbishment of the school buildings;
- started construction of a new primary school at a new site in Cwmaman which will also provide facilities for the wider community, with the relocated and remodelled play area which is already being well used. Other facilities will include multi use games areas, grass pitches and a community room;
- started work on three new through schools i.e. Porth Community school, Tonyrefail Community School and Ysgol Nant Gwyn (Tonypany), which will open in Autumn 2018;
- continued to invest in improving other school buildings so that more pupils across the County Borough benefit from better facilities;
- provided more places for pupils choosing to study in Welsh through refurbishing classrooms and increasing capacity in YGG Llwynceilyn and YGG Tonyrefail. We also relocated the Tai Centre Pupil Referral Unit to a newer modern building with improved facilities.



Pupils who achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A* to C including English/Welsh and Maths.



eFSM pupils in year 11, typically aged 16, achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A* to C including English/Welsh and Maths.

We aren't able to compare these results with last year because of changes in exams and also those non GCSE qualifications that can be included in the measure. Many of the vocational qualifications for less academic pupils are now not included in the results. Overall, performance in schools was mixed and RCT performance was below the Wales average of 54.6%.

We know we have more work to do in some areas...

- more pupils eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) achieved the expected outcomes in the Foundation Phase, closing the gap between them and their classmates. However, for Key Stages 2 and 3 the gap has widened. Whilst a new way of measuring pupil performance recently introduced makes it difficult to compare progress from last year, we know we still need to do more to close the gaps;
- the attendance gap between eFSM and non FSM pupils increased by 0.4%. We are continuing to challenge and support schools, particularly those causing most concern.

CASE STUDY

SUPPORTING FREE SCHOOL MEAL PUPILS IN SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The School holiday enrichment programme 'Food and Fun' was piloted at Heol y Celyn and Penywaun Primary Schools, both schools with high numbers of pupils entitled to Free School Meals. To prevent 'holiday hunger' pupils were given a nutritious breakfast and lunch and encouraged to have a go at cooking, sports and educational activities as well as socialising with friends.

Parents felt the programme...

"encouraged the children to eat new foods at home".

While pupils said...

"I wish there were more days at club and longer sessions – I liked everything".

Following this good feedback the programme will now be rolled out more widely.

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- working with our regional partners in the Central South Consortium to strengthen the links between improvement and well-being services to improve outcomes for pupils;
- continuing to focus on raising educational standards by improving pupils readiness to learn and closing the achievement gap between children who are disadvantaged and their classmates;
- supporting families in most need, including providing our 'Food and Fun' programme to more schools and improving support for learners with mental health needs;
- improving support to pupils who are struggling at school as a result of problems at home by improving how we work with our partners as part of the Resilient Families Service;
- continuing with long-term improvements to our school buildings through the 21st Century Schools programme, including three 'through' schools and involving parents and communities in developing plans for future projects.

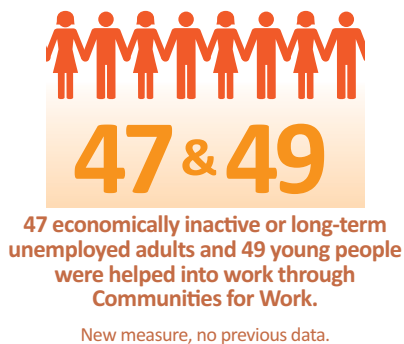
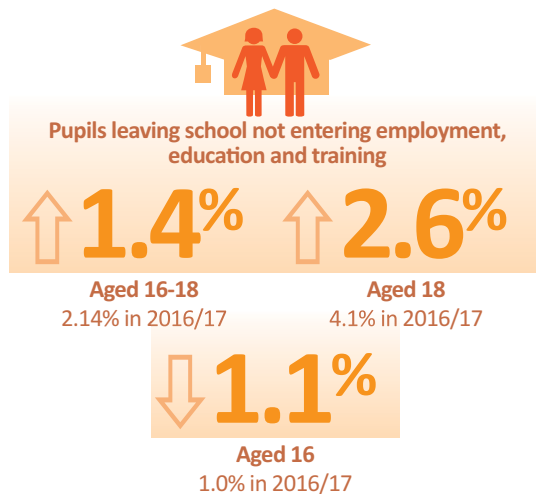
You will know if we have made a difference because...

- more pupils including pupils eligible for free school meals, will achieve good results in their GCSEs, which next year will count pupil's best 9 results including core subjects;
- fewer pupils will be excluded from school;
- feedback on the 'Food and Fun' school holiday programme will be positive and we can start to track the impact on overall pupil well-being.

To put in place a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages

Among other things, we have...

- continued to support vulnerable and hard to reach young people into work, using the European Social Fund 'Inspire 2 Work' project, to help supplement our work;
- continued to support unemployed or economically inactive adults to improve their skills, gain qualifications and develop job-specific skills;
- continued to provide a range of options across the Council that will help young people to develop their career including jobs fairs, apprenticeships, traineeships, graduate programmes and work experience;
- provided additional childcare for 301 three and four year olds, as part of a pilot scheme in partnership with Welsh Government, to support working families and help non-working parents into employment;
- put in place apprenticeships, employment and training opportunities as part of the 21st Century schools building projects and contractors have also delivered sessions about careers in construction to schools.



CASE STUDY

Inspire 2 Work

P is a 19 year old from Aberdare. He had been unemployed for 6 months before joining the 13 week employment pathway programme. Through the programme he completed a week's work placement and gained a health and safety qualification and his Construction Skills Certificate scheme card. Following the programme, P secured a job at a local medical supplies company.

P said...

"the course saved me, put me back on the right path".

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- continuing to support people, including those with additional learning needs or disabilities, to gain work;
- working with partners to develop adult community learning opportunities that will support people to gain essential skills, enhance their well-being and confidence;
- working with employers to develop a skilled workforce that will enable more RCT residents to compete for jobs;
- continuing to help people to improve their digital skills through expansion of 'Digital Fridays' and other workshops and courses;
- contributing to improving educational outcomes and removing barriers to work by providing more pre-nursery provision and more free childcare for eligible 3 and 4 year olds;
- working with partners to shape the work involved to deliver the Cwm Taf Well-being Objective - Strong Economy.

You will know if we have made a difference because...

- more people, including young people and those with learning disabilities, will be supported to get jobs;
- more young people will leave school and go on to further education, employment or training;
- more of our residents will improve their digital skills through the courses we provide, which will also provide opportunities to reduce social isolation.

You can see more detail about how we will continue our work to 'Build a Strong Economy' in our **2018/19 ECONOMY plan**. Our work will enable RCT to contribute to building a more prosperous, more equal, healthier and globally responsible Wales as well as contributing to a Wales of cohesive communities, vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.



PEOPLE:

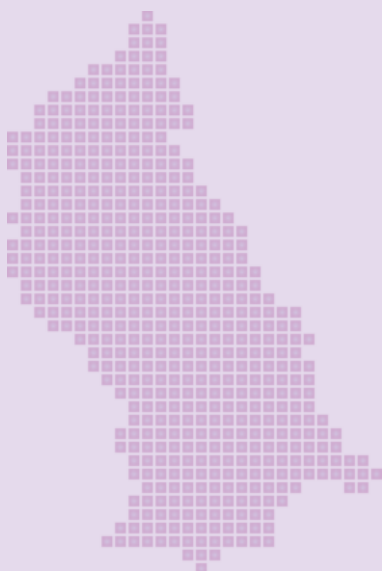
Promoting independence
and positive lives for
everyone

PEOPLE

Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone

Key information about Rhondda Cynon Taf

- RCT has the lowest life expectancy (76.5 years for men, 80.9 years for women) and healthy life expectancy (61.2 years in men, 62.6 years in women) in Wales.
- 94.4% of adults in RCT aged 60+ hold a concessionary bus pass, which enables them to get out and about and help to maintain their well-being.
- 77.8% of children in the foundation phase who receive free school meals have achieved the expected standard at the end of foundation phase (Year 2, typically aged 7). Whilst this has closed the gap, children who receive free school meals don't achieve as well as pupils who don't receive free school meals.
- 62% of referrals to substance misuse treatment services in Cwm Taf are alcohol related, the remaining 38% are substance related.
- 19% of adults aged 16+ asked about their social interactions were identified as lonely.
- A score of 4 for social isolation in the new Welsh Thriving Places Index. A score of 10 indicates exceptionally good conditions for well-being and a score of 0 represents exceptionally poor conditions for well-being.
- A score of 2.34 for deprivation in the **Welsh Thriving Places Index**. A score of 10 indicates exceptionally good conditions for well-being and a score of 0 represents exceptionally poor conditions for well-being.



In 2017 we said that we would continue our work to promote independence and positive lives for everyone.

We have made good progress in our work for the People priority, as a Council and as part of wider partnerships. Our measures demonstrate some positive improvements. However, we are unable to compare our performance across Wales as this information was not available in 2016/17 for the majority of the measures in Social Services.

- We have worked hard to help people leave hospital and return to their home or care home more quickly and safely when they are well enough. There were over 53% fewer people waiting to leave hospital for care reasons. A major contribution to this success has been the first full year of the Stay Well@home service, which we launched with our partners in Merthyr Tydfil Council and Cwm Taf University Health Board.
- We want families to have access to the right support and information earlier, so that fewer children and young people require statutory Children's Services support. In 2017/18, we have had more contacts received by Children's Services and more children progressing to a referral for intervention from statutory services. The introduction of our Resilient Families Programme and Resilient Families Service, will seek to reduce the number of children requiring intervention in 2018/19. The service is focussed on providing early intervention and prevention to families, so they receive the support they need to help them 'bounce back' when they experience difficulties.

CASE STUDY

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

A group of Councillors looked at the impact of 'period poverty' on girls in our schools. As part of this work they talked to pupils about their experiences and also watched an **animated film** produced by pupils of Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg. They found that lessons and information about periods and the availability of sanitary products was different across our schools. They also found that some pupils were unable to afford sanitary products and this was affecting their privacy, dignity and well-being. It was also affecting their attendance and performance at school. As a result of this Councillors agreed a number of recommendations, including

- making **free sanitary products** available to pupils in all schools, which they can access independently in toilet blocks;
- making sure that all female learners aged nine and above know how they can access sanitary products;
- raising awareness of menstrual issues across all schools with learners, staff, parents and carers.

For further information please see the Cabinet report of **19 April 2018**.



You can see more detail of our progress against what we set out to achieve in **2017/18** in our **Performance Evaluation**.

This includes how RCT is contributing to the seven national Well-being goals, and in particular a Wales of Cohesive Communities and a Healthier Wales. We will continue to develop our understanding of how we can maximise our contribution across all of the goals. An example of how we will do this is our work to develop our **Extra Care housing facilities**.

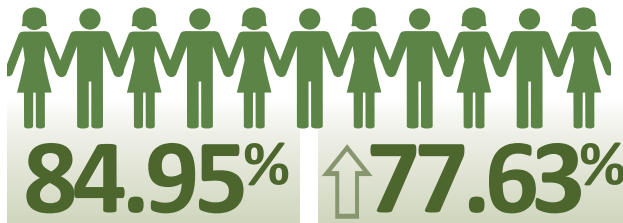
So that Health and Social Care services are personalised and integrated, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes

Among other things, we have...

- implemented the Stay Well@home service to help to get people home from hospital more quickly when they are well enough. It is early days for the service but early signs are that by working differently with Health and other partners, fewer people have been admitted to hospital following a visit to A&E, more people have been sent home safely following a hospital stay and more people have gone home rather than to community hospitals;
- built on the success of our first extra care facility in **Ty Heulog**, Talbot Green by putting in place arrangements to build a second extra care facility on the site of the former Maesyffynnon Care Home in Aberaman. Work is scheduled to begin in July. We have also identified four more potential sites in Pontypridd, Porth, Mountain Ash and Treorchy;
- invested in playgrounds and leisure centres to make them more attractive and accessible for residents and communities to encourage them to become more physically active and stay healthier for longer.



Fewer people have been admitted to residential or nursing care.
456 in 2016/17



Adults who completed a period of reablement needed less support six months later.
No comparable data



Clients after 6 months no longer needed a package of care and support.
77.23 in 2016/17



People returned home from hospital more quickly - per 1,000 population.
4.95 reported in 2016/17



More people are using a direct payment to manage their own care arrangements
14.34% in 2016/17



More visits to local authority sports and leisure facilities per 1,000 population
7,581 in 2016/17

Andrew – resident at Ty Heulog.

"Being here is marvellous. I have my independence, my health has improved and I can get out and about. It's so easy for me to meet other people and socialise and I'm getting involved in activities which I could never have done before. Having people around and the staff being here has giving me lots more confidence and security."

Andrew's family have said that the move to Ty Heulog has saved their brother's life.

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- putting in place new accommodation arrangements for people who need support to live independently which integrates with our older person's housing strategy 'My Own Front Door – A Plan For Housing in Later Life';
- developing services that are based in the community e.g. assistive technology, community alarms and response services, focussing on choice, control and independence which allow people to live in their own homes for longer;
- continuing to invest in our leisure centres to encourage people to be more physically active, help to improve health now and also help to prevent health problems in the future.

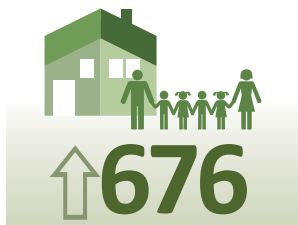
You will know if we have made a difference because...

- fewer people will be admitted to residential or nursing care;
- more adults who complete a period of reablement will need less support 6 months later;
- more people will return home from hospital more quickly;
- more people will be using a direct payment to manage their own care arrangements, so they can choose who provides their care and when;
- there will be more visits to our sports and leisure facilities.

Rhondda Cynon Taf's children and young people will receive a great start in life

Among other things, we have...

- introduced a programme to help families in need to be identified early and to help them to better access the right information and support so that more children can stay with their families;
- developed and implemented an action plan that focuses on admissions to care, a child's journey in care and a child's exit from care. We have involved children in the development of this plan and will continue to do so in the future to ensure that their voices are heard when services evolve.



Fewer children were 'Looked After' by the Council.
690 in 2016/17



Children and young people that do become 'Looked After' are returned to their families as quickly as it is safe to do so.



In less than 12 weeks
24.5% in 2016/17

Within 12-24 weeks
17.5% in 2016/17



After 24 weeks
58% in 2016/17



Fewer young people leaving our care are in education, training and employment.



After 12 months
50.0% in 2016/17

After 24 months
53.0% in 2016/17

Parent supported by the Resilient Families programme...

"I'm really pleased with what I've achieved. I've found out I can actually cope in times of stress. I'm so much more confident in myself, I open the living room curtains every morning now which I never did before. I've asked the GP for help for me and my daughter which I would never have done before. My daughters are receiving support in school and I'm going to start mindfulness classes. And I'm helping out at a local charity event in the community centre this weekend, not bad for someone who never went out!"

CASE STUDY

RESILIENT FAMILIES SERVICE...

...was introduced in January 2018 to help families across Rhondda Cynon Taf by providing the right support to families at the right time, removing practical barriers to change, acting more quickly to provide help through a trusted single contact and making sure it's exactly what the family needs. All this will help to increase a family's 'resilience'. What this means is helping them to 'bounce back' after something difficult has happened. Families are offered short term support, up to 12 weeks which is designed to give practical help to help them manage the challenges they face by focusing on their strengths as a family. To deliver this service we are working with a range of partners including Health Visitors, the Youth Offending Service and the Voluntary Sector.

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- ensuring that we hear the voices of children and young people that need to be 'looked after' by involving them in 'What matters' conversations and their well-being goals;
- developing a plan for a Regional Fostering Service to improve the range of locally available accommodation for children who cannot remain with their own families;
- ensuring that those young people who leave our care are adequately prepared and are able to contribute to the communities they live in.

You will know if we have made a difference because...

- more families will receive support at an earlier time which will mean fewer children will require intervention from Statutory Social Services;
- fewer children will need to be taken into the care of the Council.



To redesign Local Services so that they are integrated and efficient

Among other things, we have...

- put in place new arrangements for substance misuse services so that residents receive the same support, treatment and quality of service no matter where they live in the Cwm Taf area;
- changed the way we offer help to families so that they get the help they need more quickly and problems don't get any worse;
- extended the Communities First employability pathway to the whole of RCT which supports people into employment;
- worked with our partners to maximise the opportunities for people to get involved in sport and physical activity.

CASE STUDY

COMMUNITIES FIRST EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS INTO CWM TAF NHS

N was made redundant after working 17 years as a teaching assistant. N was invited to attend an information event with Adult Education and the Department for Work and Pensions to inform everyone of what was available to them to support them back into employment. N was extremely keen on enrolling on the NHS Prepare to Care course, as this had always been her life long ambition to become a Nurse.

After the initial assessments and two formal interviews, N was given a part-time position on the 'Nurse Bank', but after just a short time, she gained a full time contract within the Health Board. N continues to enjoy this position 4 months later.



More people we worked with reduced their substance misuse

Not comparable owing to changes in the definition for this measure



More adults gained a qualification through Communities First
1,018 in 2016/17



More people aged 16+ were supported to enter employment through Communities First
317 in 2016/17

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- continuing our work to support families as effectively as possible through our Resilient Families Service and wider Resilient Families Programme. We will integrate this work with the Council's development of Community Hubs to ensure that family support is accessible in community locations;
- reviewing the delivery of Early Years in RCT as part of the Welsh Government's Regional Early Years Integration Project, involving parents, families and service users in future developments.

You will know if we have made a difference because...

- more people will reduce their substance misuse;
- more families will be better able to cope following intervention by the Resilient Families Service.

You can see more detail about how we will continue our work to 'Promote independence and positive lives for everyone' in our **2018/19 PEOPLE** plan. Our work will enable RCT to contribute to a more resilient, equal and healthier Wales, as well as a Wales of cohesive communities, vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.



PLACE:

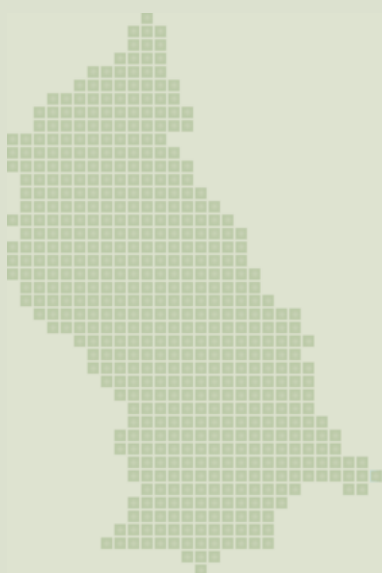
Creating neighbourhoods
where people are proud
to live and work

PLACE

Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work

Key information about Rhondda Cynon Taf

- 85% of journeys in Wales are made by car.
- 94.4% of adults aged 60+ hold a concessionary bus pass.
- The cost of physical inactivity to Wales is estimated to be £650 Million per year.
- Levels of adult physical activity in Cwm Taf are amongst the lowest in Wales.
- RCT ranks second highest in Wales for the rate of alcohol use. Alcohol accounts for 62% of referrals to substance use treatment services in Cwm Taf. Cwm Taf also has the highest rate of alcohol related deaths in Wales.
- RCT has reused, recycled or composted 73k tonnes of waste this year; this is 61% of all waste produced. We are working towards the 2024/25 Welsh Government recycling target of 70%.
- There are 9 **Green Flag Award** areas and 2 **Green Flag Communities** in Rhondda Cynon Taf.



In 2017 we said that we would continue our work to create neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work.

We have made positive progress over the last year...

- we have worked with our partners in the community to continue the delivery the Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) for Porth and evaluated the outcomes. Residents told us that they are witnessing fewer young people drinking alcohol in the area. Our work with young first-time offenders through the delivery of the Cwm Taf 'Divert' Programme has also seen positive results, with the rate of re-offending within 6 months of the programme remaining low. We have also involved our residents in Council decision making through consultation to enforce and prevent alcohol related anti-social behaviour in our town centres;
- we invested in 3G pitches to continue to provide an integrated sports provision for both schools and community use. We continue to maintain our road infrastructure with investment in repaired roads, bridges, pavements and highways schemes like the Cwmbach Road and roundabout. This year following a highways survey, we have fewer roads in an overall poor condition than in previous years, reflecting the investment in improving our highways;
- we continued to engage with residents and communities to understand what they would like to see in our Arts programme and through active participation in our arts projects provided opportunities to build confidence, improve communication, limit isolation, support well being and education and employment opportunities;
- our recycling target has not been met this year because of a national change in what we can include as 'wood recycling' in our figures. Despite this, we know that there have been significant increases in food, nappies and rubble recycling. We have also implemented a successful re-use shop '**The Shed**' at Llantrisant and a successful publicity campaign '**Sort **IT Out!**' to enforce and support the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for dog controls across RCT;

However, we know that there is still more work to do particularly in meeting the Welsh Government 70% Target for recycling by 2024/25.



You can see more detail of our progress against what we set out to achieve in **2017/18 in our Performance Evaluation**.

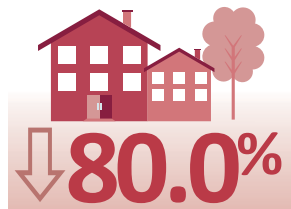
This includes how RCT is contributing to the seven national Well-being goals. We will continue to develop our understanding of how we can maximise our contribution across all of the goals. An example of how we will do this is the development of the **Parks for People Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Project**.

So that Rhondda Cynon Taf's communities are more resilient and involved

Among other things, we have...

- put in place arts events in our theatres that are helping to enrich the lives of our residents of all ages, including Daytime Delights for our older residents and opportunities for budding young performers through initiative like **'Hot Jam'** to develop their skills alongside professional performers;
- changed the way we are working to bring people together and build community resilience and capacity. This has moved from the original Neighbourhood Networks to Community Hubs across the County Borough starting in Aberdare, Ferndale and Mountain Ash;
- worked with families to support parents and children to work together to improve their reading and writing through the **Petra** project.

We have not brought together the Youth and Older People's groups as quickly as anticipated, although this is still in our plans. The new Community Hubs will provide another opportunity to bring together our young and older residents and in the PEOPLE section you will see how this is already happening in the new extra care facilities.



Residents are satisfied with Rhondda Cynon Taf as a place to live

85% in 2016/17
(National Study For Wales data 2016/17)

Hot Jam Participant's Parent told us...

"On a daily basis she has spoken about her worries and excitement on this course. I know she thoroughly enjoys it... Love seeing her develop."

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- developing Community Hubs at Aberdare, Mountain Ash and Ferndale. This work also contributes to the Cwm Taf Well-being Objective for 'Thriving Communities' as set out in The **Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023**;
- enhancing provision at Council libraries, to meet long term community need;
- putting in place an Arts programme that will enrich the lives of all RCT residents, and celebrates 80 years of the Coliseum Theatre;
- developing an effective 'Engagement Strategy' that will involve residents and communities, including those that are seldom heard;
- progressing the new housing allocation scheme to support long term housing need;
- progressing Bryn Pica Eco Park, ensuring integration with other national initiatives, including the Well being of Future Generations Act.

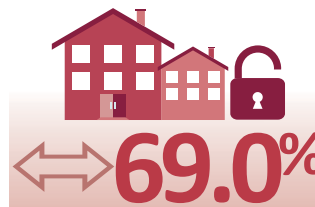
You will know if we have made a difference because...

- our residents will be satisfied with Rhondda Cynon Taf as a place to live

So that Rhondda Cynon Taf will be amongst the safest places in Wales, where people get along together and residents feel safe

Among other things, we have...

- analysed the results of putting in place the Community Alcohol Partnership in Porth. We found that residents saw fewer young people drinking alcohol and fewer hotspots where underage drinking was a problem, leading to a safer more enjoyable environment for all. However, at the same time whilst fewer 15 year olds had drunk alcohol in the past week, more had been drunk in the last four weeks and more thought that young people drink alcohol to look cool in front of their friends;
- continued to monitor and raise awareness of Hate Crimes. Our analysis tells us that more Hate Crime is being reported and that over 60% of the reported Hate Crime is racially motivated;
- prevented re-offending by working with young first time offenders aged 18-25 through the 'DIVERT' Programme. 96% of those attending did not reoffend within six months of attending the programme.



Residents told us they feel safe at home, walking in the local area and travelling
69% in 2016/17

Quotes from DIVERT Programme participants

"I've learnt to stop and think about my actions and who it will affect, and next time will walk away".

"The course has taught me that in future it would be wiser to take a few more seconds to think about my actions and the consequences before acting in certain circumstances".

"I will think before I act when I go out drinking such as drink less, don't give into temptations, think about family and friends as I could affect their life as much as my own".

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- delivering community safety services and programmes that involve residents including...
 - promoting responsible drinking in our communities;
 - launching the Community Action Plan Partnership for Pontypridd.
- taking steps to prevent road traffic accidents in the community including...
 - delivering road safety initiatives;
 - Enforcing parking restrictions at schools.

You will know if we have made a difference because...

- fewer people will reoffend as a result of the preventative programme DIVERT;
- we will also introduce a measure that will show how safe our residents feel in our Town Centres.

To keep Rhondda Cynon Taf clean and attractive, with well-maintained roads and pavements, flowing traffic, increased recycling and less waste sent to landfill

Among other things, we have...

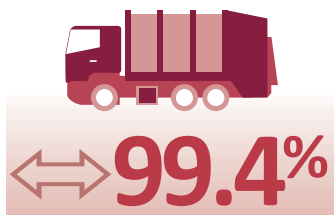
- improved the condition and safety of roads and highways infrastructure as part of our 'RCTinvest' programme, e.g. Rhigos Mountain Road, repairs to Llantrisant Road bridge, replacement footways, repairing safety fencing barrier and putting in place new safety measures;
- delivered transport schemes that promote walking, cycling and public transport across RCT, reducing pressure on our roads e.g. Llantrisant Community Route and Safe routes to schools and routes for cyclists;
- continued to raise awareness of recycling with our residents and increased the amount of food and general waste recycled;
- tackled dog fouling by introducing the Public Spaces Protection Order alongside a hard hitting awareness raising campaign, 'Sort **IT Out' and more enforcement.



Waste recycled

64.41% in 2016/17

This figure is misleading, as the way that recycling is measured has changed so that any wood we collect is no longer counted.



We have maintained our high standards for keeping RCT clean

99.4% in 2016/17



Fly tips cleared in less than 5 working days

96.87% in 2016/17

CASE STUDY

NEW FROM OLD...

Our new, not for profit Reuse Shop, 'The Shed' in Llantrisant, is giving new life to residents' unwanted items from books to furniture, and keeping them out of our landfill site. Since it opened in June 2017, 42,869 household items have found new homes. We created two new jobs at The Shed, provide work experience and welcome volunteers who are contributing around 200 hours every month to this community resource.

One of our 'Shed' volunteers told us.....

"Being at the 'The Shed' has really helped me come out of my shell... I'm naturally an introvert and really shy but that's changed completely. Now I'm confident to talk to anyone. The Shed is literally the hub of our community, everyone loves it here from the volunteers and staff to the customers."

CASE STUDY

LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE...

Our annual 'Love Where You Live' awards celebrate and congratulate the people of RCT who go above and beyond to protect our local environment and help to keep our County Borough a clean, green place to live, work and visit.

In 2017, the overall winner was Sarah Liney, Environmental Champion and creator of the 'Llanharan and Brynna Wimbles' Group that helps keep the local community clean and tidy.

Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for dog controls

In October 2017, residents supported us to implement a **PSPO for dog controls** which was implemented together with the hard hitting dog fouling and enforcement campaign 'Sort **IT Out!'. To date, 170 fixed penalty notices have been issued for dogs unrestricted areas, dog fouling and dogs off leads.

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- improving the condition of our roads and highways;
- progressing major schemes that will be beneficial to communities both now and in the future;
- progressing transport schemes that will join with other transport provision, including active travel;
- working with partners including Natural Resources Wales, to prevent the risk of flooding;
- continuing to involve residents in schemes to increase recycling;
- taking steps to prevent environmental crime through education, engagement and as a last resort, enforcement.

You will know if we have made a difference because...

- more of our waste will be recycled;
- fewer penalty notices will be issued.

So that you continue to value Rhondda Cynon Taf's parks and green spaces

Among other things, we have...

- completed a 3G pitch at Tonyrefail Community School for both school and community use and also at the Garth Olwg campus and at Abercynon Leisure Centre;
- continued to prepare a Biodiversity Plan which will make sure we protect our environment, as well as meet the challenges faced by services, e.g. creating jobs and homes and improving health and education;
- submitted a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to help restore the bandstand and sunken garden and develop a horticultural training facility. We are also working with **Fields in Trust Cymru** to dedicate Ynysangharad War Memorial Park as a **Centenary Field** site as part of a national campaign to mark the centenary of the First World War.

Extract from feedback about Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd.

"The bandstand seems almost pointless. I would love to see bands in the bandstand again".

"Planned days to help keep up maintenance or family fun planting days would be good ...if we could do family weekend sessions, I'm sure locals would help out".

In 2018/19 our plans include...

- progressing grant funding to redevelop our heritage sites and secure the long term future of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Rhondda Heritage Park and Aberdare Park;
- improved online communications and social media to engage with residents;
- progressing the national standard 'Green Flag Award' for Ynysangharad and Taffs Well Parks, and also Aberdare and Dare Valley Country Parks.

You will know if we have made a difference because...

- residents will be satisfied with our parks and open spaces.



You can see more detail about how we will continue our work to **'Create neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work'** in our **2018/19 PLACE plan**. Our work will enable RCT to contribute to a healthier, more prosperous, more equal and globally responsible Wales as well as contributing to a Wales of cohesive communities, vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.



BUDGET:

income, expenditure revenue,
finance, resource, economy,
efficiency.

BUDGET

Making best use of our budget - Living within our Means

Like all Councils in Wales, Rhondda Cynon Taf has operated for nearly a decade in a challenging environment of reduced funding alongside rising demand for services as well as inflation. During this time we have delivered around £87Million in savings without cutting frontline services and have done this by carefully managing our finances, planning ahead and changing how we work.

In 2018/19 the Council received a 0.5% increase in funding, and we needed to take account of inflation of around +2.3%. This meant that, along with rising demand for services, we needed to make saving of £9.8Million to set the budget. We were able to make these savings by becoming more efficient in how we purchase goods and services, changing how the Council is structured, investing in technology and working more collaboratively with others. We were also able to keep the Council Tax increase to 3.3%, the lowest in Wales. Further information on our **2018/19 revenue budget** of £471.6Million is available.

As part of our forward planning, we have estimated that we will need to find further savings of around £50Million by 2021 to off-set continuing reductions in government funding and increasing demand for services, particularly in Social Care. We know it will be harder to deliver year-on-year savings in the future and that is why we are continuing with our approach of examining every part of the Council's budget alongside a programme of significant investment in key services. Our work and investment is focussing on:

- Early intervention and prevention work in a wide range of areas to improve the lives of residents. This includes our new Resilient Families Programme that is supporting an increasing number of families with complex needs and aims to prevent the need for children to be brought into the care of the Council.
- Keeping adults independent through, for example, collaborating with other organisations and integrating our arrangements to create a new regional Stay Well@home service. This Service is in its first year of operation and is already getting more people home more quickly and safely after being in hospital, and helping more older people to stay living independently in their own homes.
- Generating more income from existing or new services, such as offering a fast-track service for planning applications.
- Offering more services on-line by involving customers in the design of services and using digital technology to modernise how the Council works. This includes enabling Council staff to work from any Council office location so that they can provide even more responsive services, and
- Becoming more efficient by thinking long term and investing in the future. This includes invest-to-save energy efficiency schemes and looking at how the Council operates to eliminate duplication and paperwork.

As well as this, as part of our capital programme for 2018/19 to 2020/21 we are investing £180Million in priority areas to further improve infrastructure and facilities available for residents. This includes regeneration projects, building better schools, improving the condition of roads and community assets such as parks and playgrounds as well as further investment in Leisure Centre facilities.

As part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal our plans extend over ten years, with the Council playing a central role in delivering an exciting and ambitious plan to improve the economy of South East Wales.



OUR WORK

Important Themes that underpin our work

WORKING NOW FOR THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

We are continuing to implement the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** across the Council.

This Act means that we have a duty to improve the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of residents, both as an individual public body, i.e. the Council and also working in partnership with others in a Public Services Board (PSB).

As a public body, the Council is continuing to make sure that its business is conducted in a way that integrates the requirements of the Act into everything we do, which is set out in a Policy Statement agreed by Cabinet in **November 2016**. This means that in delivering our priorities of Economy, People and Place, and across all our services we are doing more to

- balance the short term needs with planning for the future.
- work with other partners to deliver objectives.
- involve those with an interest and seek their views.
- put resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse.
- consider the effect of our work with that of other public bodies and organisations.

We also need to apply this thinking to our organisational planning and processes e.g.

- **Corporate Planning**
making sure that all services focus on what matters most.
- **Financial Planning**
making sure that we continue to make the most of our resources and focusing on preventing problems from happening at all or getting worse.
- **Work force Planning**
making sure that all our staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge to support the change in thinking that will help the Council to meet its obligations.
- **Procurement**
making sure that we not only provide value for money but also benefit society, and with minimal impact to the environment.
- **Assets**
making better use of our buildings, making them more widely available for community use, sharing with other public services so that they are sustainable in the long term. Also providing or supporting residents and communities to develop, as well as our staff.
- **Risk Management**
making sure the short, medium and long term risks are well managed, and allow the Council to meet its requirements.
- **Performance Management**
making sure that the Council can show how it is making progress towards its own Well-being goals and those it shares with others. We know there is more to do and we are continually challenging why, what and how we do what we do and are willing to make changes that will benefit the people and communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf, both now and in the future. The Council voluntarily works with public bodies and other organisations in many different partnerships and joint working arrangements.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act sets out that all Councils must work as part of a Public Services Board and means a **different way of working** with other public bodies and involving people and communities.

Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Councils work with many of the same public bodies, e.g. South Wales Police and Cwm Taf University Health Board and in 2016, agreed to join together to form the **Cwm Taf Public Services Board**. This Partnership Board consists of the two Councils as well as public and third sector bodies across the Cwm Taf region.

In May 2018 the Cwm Taf PSB published its **Well-being Plan** for the area. The Plan contains information about the priorities that will be the focus of the work of the PSB over the immediate and long term, which are

- **THRIVING COMMUNITIES**
- **HEALTHY PEOPLE**
- **STRONG ECONOMY**
- **TACKLING LONELINESS AND ISOLATION**

The Council will be actively involved in both leading and contributing to these wide ranging priorities.

The Plan was informed by an **Assessment of Well-being** of the Cwm Taf area and extensive discussions and engagement with residents and stakeholders from across both Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. The information contained in the Assessment of Well-being is being continually updated to shape the work to deliver the Well-being Objectives where more can be achieved by working together. It will also help to increase our knowledge and understanding of the issues affecting Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The PSB will publish its first annual report setting out its progress towards its Well-being Objectives in July 2019.

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has also identified six priorities to give a focus for her work within the scope of the Act.

Creating the right infrastructure for future generations within which the focus will be:

- Housing Stock
- Energy generation and efficiency
- Transport Planning

Also providing support to residents and communities in the transfer of community assets.

- Skills
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- Alternative models for improving health and well-being – often called ‘social prescribing’ where patients are referred to other services to meet their well-being needs, e.g. GPs referring patients recovering from surgery to a leisure centre to help their rehabilitation.

We have a good track record in respect of work in these areas, much of which is included in our progress to date and our plans for the future.

EQUALITY

Last year we said we would review our Strategic Equality Plan. Whilst some progress has been made, it has been slower than we planned, we are now accelerating this work.

We are using information and data about the population in RCT and what residents have already told us, information about our services and external sources such as Equality and Human Rights Commission reports, to shape and determine the Council's proposed Equality Objectives. We will then check with our residents that what we plan to do is relevant to their lives. The new Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) will better reflect the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the seven national Well-being goals and will enable us to establish how as a Council we are contributing to a more equal Wales in particular.

In the meantime we have been continuing to work on our previous Equalities Objectives, i.e.

- **Hate Crime and Addressing Negative Attitudes and Behaviours**
- **Gender Pay**
- **Developing More Robust Monitoring Arrangements**

Tackling Hate Crime and Negative Attitudes in Rhondda Cynon Taf

We have continued to work closely with partners including the South Wales Police and Registered Social landlords, which has enabled us to ensure that residents get a positive and consistent response when reporting Hate Crime.

Developing our partnership with South Wales Police, we now attend the South Wales Police divisional monthly Hate Crime meeting. Attending this meeting ensures we have continuing and accurate data relating to incidents of Hate Crime across RCT and we are able to monitor statistics and identify emerging patterns. Where patterns have been identified, we meet with people in the community, using pop-up stalls in libraries and supermarkets to raise awareness of Hate Crime and also talk to local residents about their experiences of hate crimes and how they can report it.

Emphasis has been placed on education and early intervention. We identified that most hate crime referrals come from Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils, therefore we have taken a more proactive and preventative approach and now deliver sessions to Year 6 pupils. We have worked with primary, secondary, special schools and colleges, to deliver PREVENT training to staff and Hate Crime Awareness training sessions to pupils. As well as raising awareness of Hate Crime, the aim of these sessions is to reduce discrimination and increase Hate Crime reporting. We have collaborated with parties such as Victim Support and the Children's Commissioner to ensure the training is fit for purpose and is relevant to emerging hate crime issues.

We have put in place two new processes in respect of Hate Crime

- Providing support to high risk victims of Hate Crime, providing crime reduction tools e.g. dummy cameras, alarms for windows, stickers for windows stating CCTV is in operation as well as signposting to appropriate services where necessary.
- Taking action against perpetrators of Hate Crime. The emphasis has been placed on education, and restorative justice approaches where we contact perpetrators and deliver one to one sessions with them with the aim of reducing further incidents.

During Hate Crime week 2018, we worked in partnership with South Wales Police to host a variety of community engagement events. These were held in various locations across RCT, including hospitals and supermarkets. These events enabled us to talk to residents about their experiences, raise awareness of Hate Crime and collect statistics, which has helped us to gain a better and more accurate understanding of residents' experiences.

In early 2018, in recognition of our commitment and work towards sexual orientation equality, the Council was included in Stonewall's Top 100 employers. To achieve this status, we participated in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index which is the benchmarking

tool for employers to measure their progress on Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender (LGBT) inclusion in the workplace. The 100 best-performing organisations are celebrated publicly.

Our work to retain this status included engaging with LGBT+ residents at Pride Cymru in Cardiff as part of a partnership with other local authorities under the banner of 'Proud Councils'. RCT residents at the event told us that they want more visibility of LGBT+ issues in the local authority area and more LGBT+ events in their local communities.

For LGBT History Month, Rhondda Heritage Park and Pontypridd Library exhibited Pride Cymru's Icons and Allies exhibition. The exhibit was also displayed within Council offices, where Perthyn and the Allies Network ran coffee mornings to raise awareness of the LGBT+ community. We ran a community event in Clwb Y Bont called 'Proud Valleys Proud Voices' where a LGBT+ panel explores issues such as 'being LGBT in the Valleys' and how Trans is portrayed by the media. We have also supported one of our Councillors, to establish 'Proud Valleys', the Rhondda LGBT+ network.

Many of the Council's buildings, including the Lido Ponty, the Rhondda Heritage Park and our Park and Dare and Coliseum theatres were lit in rainbow colours to mark 'Pride Cymru' and the images were shared on social media. This prompted a wide face book and twitter reach, over 10,000, with over 1,200 "likes/loves" and a number of supportive positive comments being published.

"What a fantastic show of support!! Thank you @RCT Council."

"Thank you for celebrating Pride and for showing you are inclusive."

CASE STUDY

TACKLING COMPLAINTS ABOUT TAXI DRIVERS

During 2017 there were complaints from the public about taxi drivers in RCT not taking fares from customers who are wheelchair users. Council officers responsible for issuing taxi licences together with members of the Disability Forum and Disability and Carers employee network undertook a 'secret shopper' exercise to assess the problem. There was mixed feedback from those involved. The majority of taxi drivers accepted customers who are wheelchair users and provided a good level of customer service. A few however, did not accept the fare. The drivers provided a number of reasons for their actions, which included the boot space of the taxi being full. Once the 'secret shopper' work was completed, the Council officers met with the taxi drivers who had not provided an acceptable service to outline expectations, raise awareness of disability issues and set out the consequences of not providing an inclusive taxi service. Also, all licensed Taxi Drivers in RCT have been made aware of disability issues. We will continue to raise disability awareness throughout the taxi trade, including in regular newsletters to taxi drivers and also through the BTEC qualification which all taxi drivers must complete. We will also take appropriate action where licensed drivers/operators do not provide an acceptable and inclusive service or do not comply with the law.

In January 2018, we again marked Holocaust Memorial Day with an event in Rhydyfelin Library attended by around 100 people. The event was a partnership of, South Wales Police, St John's Baptist Church in Wales School, Hawthorn High School and Treorchy Library's Young Readers Group marking the atrocities of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides as well as raising awareness of modern day prejudice and the need to report hate crime. Following the public event a bilingual workshop was held with Year 6 pupils from Heol Y Celyn Primary School which explored stereotypes and modern hate crime.

Delivering the Time to Change Wales organisational pledge

We continue to tackle the stigma and discrimination around mental health. Last year we said we would hold 'Time to Talk' sessions in schools. A presentation on the 'Time To Change' Campaign was made to Headteachers and 'Time To Talk sessions' were held in schools where we engaged with teaching and non-teaching staff. A counsellor from our Occupational Health Unit attended the sessions and was able to provide on the spot advice and support if needed.

Members of our Allies Network have received training from a 'Time to Talk' Champion and now the Allies Network is regularly involved in supporting the 'Time to Talk' sessions. During these sessions many staff have discussed issues affecting them which they have previously not disclosed. This means we are able to advise and signpost them to suitable support such as the Occupational Health Unit and Valley Steps Mindfulness and Stress Busting courses.

We have also delivered Resilience workshops to primary school Headteachers across the County Borough as part of a wider well-being programme.

Gender Pay

We are continuing to make sure that everyone who works for the Council is treated equally through our ongoing work on the 'WAVE' project (Women Adding Value to the Economy).

Our managers are continuing to receive training to help them recognise and eliminate any bias when they are recruiting or promoting staff. This includes a new e-learning package to go alongside the managers' briefings and other training in place.

We have introduced a number of schemes to provide more flexibility to staff which in turn will lead to improved services to our residents, reduced costs of services and a better work life balance for our staff. This includes Agile Working which is being introduced across the Council. What this means is that officers who spend much of their working day working in the community and travelling across the County Borough are able to make better use of their time by working at shared 'hot desks' in different council offices where it is more efficient and effective to do so. This also means that they spend less time travelling from a set office base. This way of working was trialled in three of our service areas and the feedback has been very positive. There has been a noticeable improvement in productivity and staff have benefited from greater flexibility and an improved work-life balance.

As a result of the success of the trial, Agile Working will be extended to other appropriate service areas.

We have also introduced the 'purchase of additional leave scheme'. Employees are able to purchase an additional 10 days leave per year, which they can pay back in their salary over a 12 month period. This allows greater flexibility for employees to manage their time to suit their individual needs, in some cases it may help with caring responsibilities, whereby reducing some pressure on their work life balance.

As part of our staff surveys, we found that women employed in lower graded jobs are less likely to have a performance review with their line manager. A performance review would provide these women with the chance to find out more about the opportunities that are available to them to progress, e.g. opportunities to progress to job roles on higher wages. As a result of the findings from the service we have put in place arrangements to make sure that these women have a performance review and access to development opportunities.

We are also developing a more detailed understanding of our staff and services so that we can identify where we can do better in terms of equalities but also so that we can recognise where we are doing well. We conducted a staff survey in 2017 which focussed on whether the Council is an inclusive workplace. It asked if staff felt they could be themselves in the workplace and also about mechanisms to report bullying and harassment. Staff who responded told us that they were 'always/often' able to be

themselves at work and that most were not subject to bullying or harassment at work. Research indicates that staff who are being bullied or harassed may not wish to tell anyone or report this, so we will continue to advise employees through training and news articles about how they can report bullying and harassment.

The survey also highlighted that not all staff know about our networks i.e. Perthyn (LGBT+), Allies, and our Disability and Carers networks. These have now been included in our induction arrangements when staff start new jobs and we have put in place arrangements to brief our managers so that they are better able to understand and communicate relevant information.

We assigned a project team to look at the information we collect on our service users and to explore the benefits of collecting equality monitoring information, and how we can best use the information to make decisions that better reflect the diversity of our communities. The recommendations will be incorporated into the new Strategic Equality Plan.

In partnership with the Carers Project, we ran a Disability and Carers event at Hawthorn Leisure Centre. There were a number of exhibits, information stands and activities on offer for the public to participate in. Feedback from people who attended the event was positive. This included the event itself, workshops taking place and the helpfulness of staff.

Feedback from Disability and Carers Event at Hawthorn Leisure Centre...

"Really enjoyed the event and hopefully have another one soon."

Improving our monitoring arrangement so that we can check that what we are doing is making a difference

In everything we do we are seeking to ensure that the Council can demonstrate it is delivering equal and fair services to residents. As part of an annual review of all of our services we have been able to demonstrate where we are doing well and where we need to do more. This has been reported in our **Annual Equality Report 2016/17**. We know we have more work to do and we will be setting out our approach and our measures of success as we develop our new Strategic Equality Plan this year.

What are we going to do next year?

After this year we will involve residents and groups to help shape our new Strategic Equality Plan 2018-22 and take steps to better demonstrate our work to contribute to a more equal Wales.

In the meantime we will continue to

- monitor hate crimes to enable robust scrutiny at the Cwm Taf Community Cohesion Group;
- encourage service managers to gain a greater understanding of customers by collecting equality monitoring data and ensure diversity is represented in decision making;
- provide awareness about our employee networks and increase their membership;
- continue to implement the WAVE action plan with a specific project on whether barriers exist for career development for senior women in the organisation;
- continue to tackle the stigma of Mental Health through our commitment to the 'Time to Change' Wales Pledge;
- encourage new membership to the Disability Forum to ensure it reflects our diverse communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf;
- increase our knowledge and understanding of our workforce.

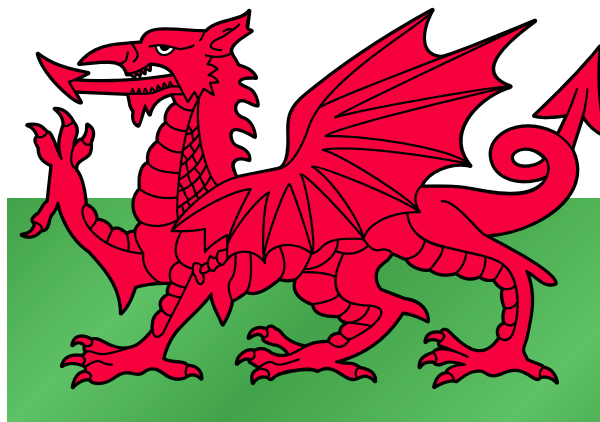
You can see more detail about our work and progress in our Annual Equality Report which was presented to a meeting of the Cabinet in March 2018.

WELSH LANGUAGE - delivering services in the language of your choice

Since the introduction of the **Welsh Language Standards in 2016**, the Council has made good progress in implementing its requirements i.e.

- treating Welsh language the same as the English language, and
- offering people the opportunity to receive their services from us, as well as from those funded by us, in Welsh.

All Councils must follow these standards, which affect all areas of our work and we can receive a penalty of up to £5,000 for each time we are found to be in breach if we don't keep to them. The Council has been subject to a number of statutory investigations and have been found to be in breach of some standards. However, by working closely with officers from the Welsh Language Commissioner's office, we have worked hard to resolve these issues and as a result we have not received any financial penalties.



How we are implementing the requirements in the standards has been set out in two documents that we are required to publish by law, these are the **Welsh Language Standards Action Plan** and the Council's five year **Welsh Language Promotion Strategy**, which was agreed by Council in September 2016. **The Welsh Language Promotion Strategy** also sets out our priorities in the 5 years covered by the strategy.

To promote the Welsh Language we are....

Expanding Welsh-medium education from pre-school to post-16

Encouraging the use of Welsh in the home

Increasing the number of adults learning Welsh

Extending opportunities for children, young people and families to use Welsh in the community and in leisure activities

Expanding the use of Welsh in the workplace

In the last year we have....

Submitted an amended **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020** to the Welsh Government. This sets out what we will do to increase the number of pupils receiving education through the medium of Welsh in our schools.

Put in place more Welsh medium pre-school settings, which we hope will influence the numbers of parents choosing Welsh medium education and support the use of the language at home and encourage parents who choose Welsh medium education for their children.

Reviewed the target for increasing the numbers of Welsh speakers in the Council to align with the Welsh Government's targets.

Agreed a project with the 'Urdd' to ensure swimming lessons delivered through the medium of Welsh are mainstreamed in Council locations at no additional cost to the customer.

Appointed a Welsh language tutor for our staff, so that our customers can access services in the language of their choice. As a result, 175 staff received support to improve their use of Welsh language in less than a year.

We are continuing to work with a wide range of partners to help us achieve our priorities including Rhondda Cynon Taf's Welsh Language Forum (Fforwm Iaith). This forum is made up of voluntary groups, third sector and other public sector bodies which play a key role in the development of the Welsh language.

The detailed report setting out our progress in delivering this strategy was considered by our **Welsh Language Cabinet Steering Group in May 2018**.

We will continue to work on these priorities during in 2018/19.

We will also...

- work more closely with our partners in the community to help achieve our local strategy and meet our national targets;
- consider our plans in the light of the Welsh Government strategy **Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers**. This national strategy is about
 1. increasing the number of Welsh speakers
 2. increasing the use of Welsh
 3. creating favourable conditions, in other words making Welsh more accessible in our every day lives. As part of this work we will review our current targets for increasing the number of staff which can deal with our customers in the language of their choice
- align with the Welsh Government's Action Plan in respect of **Education in Wales** which aims to improve Welsh medium provision across Wales.

As a result of the steps we have already taken, the Council is well placed to meet the requirements of both of these national initiatives as well as contribute significantly to the national Well-being goal of 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language'.

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth and includes all species of plants and animals and the natural systems that support them.

We are continuing our work to meet the requirements of the **Environment (Wales) Act 2016** which came into force in March 2016. What this law asks us to do is to protect our environment, as well as meeting the challenge of creating jobs and homes, health and education. By working in this way, it will also help to make Wales a low carbon, green economy, ready to adapt to climate change.

As well as being the right thing to do, we are meeting the other requirements of the Act by contributing to a more joined up approach to how natural resources such as the land, water, air and wildlife are managed. We are also thinking about how we use these natural resources so they will still be available for the future and consider biodiversity in our decision making and actions.

This law works alongside what we need to do to improve Environmental Well-being and helps to meet the seven national well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations Act described above.

In the last year we have been finding out more detail about what our services are already doing and are developing our Biodiversity plan that will integrate healthy ecosystems with developing infrastructure across the County Borough.



We have also...

- **worked with the Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm developers on planning restorations that will integrate biodiversity and flood risk reduction in one of the largest peat-bog restorations in Wales.**

This will ensure positive nature conservation, landscape improvements and flood risk management for 25 years.

- **continued to work with our partners, including South Wales Fire and Rescue, Natural Resources Wales and the Wildlife Trust on the 'Healthy Hillides' project.**

Starting as a pilot on two sites in the Rhondda, 'Healthy Hillides' will bring extensive hillside areas of land, including land owned by the Council, into grazing management that will both reduce the risk of wildfire and also increase biodiversity. If the pilot is successful the project will be extended to new sites as part of a long term programme of restoration works.

- **continued to work as part of the Local Biodiversity Action Group.**

This Group brings together people and organisations to co-ordinate action for wildlife across Rhondda Cynon Taf. One of its successes included a 'bio-blitz' in the former colliery site in Maerdy in summer 2017. Organised by the **South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SWEBREC)**, the wildlife recording day 'bio-blitz' was described as "our most successful recording day for many years. A great turnout from the recorders, a brilliant site, a great format and hopefully some great records too." So far records of 345 species have been submitted, 10 of which are listed as of importance under the Environment (Wales) Act. SEWBREC have also undertaken biodiversity training with Ferndale Comprehensive school on the former colliery site in Maerdy to encourage pupils to engage with their local environment. The Group is also working with the **Glamorgan Bird Club** to help to stop the decline of the Swift population, including looking to identify sites where swift nest boxes can be located.

In 2018/19 we will continue to...

- ensure that biodiversity is integrated into the plans for new housing estates. This includes sustainable long term management of public open spaces, protecting trees and hedges, meadows and wildlife corridors as well as providing for sustainable drainage, children's play, active travel routes and an attractive environment for new residents and their neighbours.
- look at how all the individual sites, where planning consent has included wildlife mitigation, can be made to work together to provide valuable habitat which is at a landscape scale and for the long term.
- develop and increase the number of sites providing wildflower and pollinating insect habitat, through grassland and grass verge management.
- develop an area in Llantrisant as part of 'Healthy Hillides', reducing the risk of wildfire.
- identify and progress the other priorities for the Council under the 'Biodiversity Duty'.



How we are listening to the Residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf

Over the last year we have continued to make information about Council services easier to find and understand.

We continue to improve the ways in which we talk to and consult with residents in their communities, by having face to face conversations and moving away from the traditional surveys where they have been found not to work well, particularly with those people that in the past have been hard to reach or those that are seldom heard.

These conversations help us to be more visible, accountable and accessible to residents in communities and hear first hand their concerns and the challenges they face. People tend to have strong views and affiliations with their local communities, and this is definitely the case across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Over the last year, as a Council we have continued to embed and strengthen our arrangements for involving and consulting with people and communities. This has included consultation on setting our budget and council tax levels, where we involved 1,500 people in a number of different ways. This included using an online budget simulator, Social Media including a **Youtube video**, Councillors and officers talking to people in Town Centres, Leisure Centres and Libraries and talking to young people in schools as well as a specific event for young people talking about the budget.

We have also...

- consulted with residents on a number of proposals for changes to services in a variety of ways. This included consultations on the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order to prohibit dog fouling and also for Controlled Intoxicating Substance Orders in order to reduce antisocial behaviour in Aberdare and Pontypridd;
- continued to use social media to engage with our residents using @cwmtafconsult to reach more of our residents by promoting consultation events and online surveys, responding to residents enquiries and also retweeting the work of our partners, e.g. Police PACT meetings and Health advice from the Health Board and Public Health Wales. We have also used Twitter to ask people for their views on the budget proposals;
- worked with our partners to support consultation and engagement on the **Cwm Taf Well-being Plan** and supported the development of the Cwm Taf partnership website '**Our Cwm Taf**';
- asked members of our Citizens' Panel...
 - to complete a Travel Diary to find out how people travel across RCT, i.e. walking, cycling, using cars or public transport so that we can identify improvements to the transport network.
 - for their views on Street Cafe Furniture in Pontypridd;
 - for their views on the Public Spaces Protection Order as part of the wider consultation.
- further developed our RCT wide Youth Forum, which is chaired by young people. The Youth Forum is asked for their views about Council services and budget issues. A number of sub groups have been set up by the young people to take forward issues such as mental health, well-being and anti-

bullying. Together, the sub groups have created a video for schools and youth clubs across RCT, to raise the profile of the impact of bullying on the mental health of young people. This is still in development and will be available in the autumn;

- developed closer links to our Older Persons Fora across Rhondda Cynon Taf so that they are better able to provide feedback on issues that effect the well-being of our older residents. We have involved the Older People's Advisory Group on all major Council consultations and supported the Older Person Forums to increase their use of technology to help them engage differently;
- started work to develop an approach to involving our residents that brings together our young and older people so that they each gain a greater understanding of the issues that affect them;
- shared information with our partners through a Public Engagement Group to make sure that we better co ordinate resources and use the information we each receive so that residents are not asked the same or similar questions by different partners and that relevant, appropriate and anonymous responses can be used by different partners.

We continue to welcome feedback from all sources and are grateful to people who give us their views and tell us what we are doing right and where we need to improve. We also value feedback about our plans for the future so that we can better prioritise areas to change and/or improve. Please see our contact details to get in touch.

Listening and responding to you is important to us. We know that by involving you directly and more regularly, we get a better understanding of your needs and expectations, e.g. because of what you told us we introduced the Public Spaces Protection Order to reduce the impact of dog fouling across the County Borough. It also means that you get more information about the challenges, the choices we face and decisions we have to take as a result of reducing budgets.

We know we still have more to do and we are continuing to improve how we meet and talk with people and communities so that we have more opportunities for ongoing conversations and fewer formal questionnaires and complicated surveys.

In 2018 we have plans to...

- continue to talk to people across the communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf;
- refresh and update our Citizens' Panel;
- use the information that residents give us to better focus how we engage and involve them;
- work with our partners as part of the Cwm Taf Public Services Board to support the delivery of the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan as well as other projects that involve working with others including the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, the South Wales Metro and Valleys Taskforce.