

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## The Council's Corporate Plan

2020 – 2024

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council



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## A message from the Leader of the Council

We have already made a real difference. Over the past four years, the Council has delivered on its first Corporate Plan – The Way Ahead 2016-2020, and has invested nearly £400m in priority areas such as:

- **£170m** - 21st Century Schools;
- **£85m** - Highways, Transportation and other infrastructure;
- **£15m** - parks, play areas, leisure centres and outdoor sports facilities; and
- **£95m** in regeneration of our town centres and community assets.

As we look to the future, we want to build on what we have achieved to date and make sure that every town and community in Rhondda Cynon Taf is a great place to live, work and play.

The pace of change in the world is fast, especially in the technology industry, so it is important that we keep up with the pace of change and make the most of the opportunities that come our way, such as technology that enables independent living. In doing so we will embrace change and be innovative in the way that we deliver services to residents. This new Corporate Plan sets out how we intend to continue to invest for the future.

Like all councils, we are continuing to face a difficult financial challenge. More and more people are needing our services, and there is also an increasing uncertainty about the levels of funding in the future. This means that we have had to make some tough decisions around where we prioritise and spend our resources. It has also presented us with opportunities to be innovative. We have had to think about alternative ways of working and more efficient means of delivering services to ensure that we retain the high standards of provision that residents expect. This includes ensuring that there is robust management of our budgets and our contracts, reducing our management and back office costs and ensuring we deliver value for money to the tax payer.

Careful long-term financial planning is key to ensuring that this approach remains successful. Over the past four years we have had the lowest cumulative increase in Council Tax across Wales and we will seek to ensure that Council Tax continues to be affordable over the next four years. The increases we have introduced are the minimum we need to balance the books and pay for

Rhondda Cynon Taf is a great place to live, work and play, and despite the continuing public sector austerity, the County Borough has great potential to become more prosperous and successful over the course of the next few years.



essential services, such as safeguarding our older and younger residents. The budget consultation feedback supports this approach, and there will also be an opportunity to have your say on the level of Council Tax set each year. I am always grateful for the feedback we receive through the annual consultation exercise as it helps to inform us what areas you want to see the Council prioritise for the forthcoming year.

We always listen and look to respond to the outcomes. For 2019/20, the 3.6% rise in Council Tax that the Council approved is less than the 4.45% average increase that residents indicated they would be willing to pay to protect our services and well below the all-Wales average increase of 6.15%.

Despite the challenges, I am remaining ambitious and positive in my outlook for Rhondda Cynon Taf and the people that live and work here. Our plan sets out three main priorities and how we propose to deliver a series of corresponding commitments to achieve these.

Having a clean, pleasant and well-maintained environment remains at the top of the list. We know that efficient recycling and waste collections, welcoming green spaces, clean streets and well-maintained roads are some of the ways we can best support the quality of residents' daily lives. So we will continue to take tough action to tackle environmental crimes such as fly tipping, dog fouling and littering.

As we continue to work to reduce the day-to-day running costs of the Council to make savings, we are investing heavily in the future infrastructure of the County Borough. We have already set aside £170m to invest in building new schools, extra care homes, improvements to our roads and pavements, our green spaces, leisure centres, libraries and community buildings. We have already made good progress in enhancing our town centres to create the environment where businesses flourish and where people want to live, work and visit. Further investment is planned bringing jobs and homes into the town centres and opportunities for leisure and social activities.

The investment in the Council's infrastructure is likely to exceed £400m by the end of the four year period as new schemes come to fruition, and we maximise the benefits of the Welsh Government's investment in the South Wales Metro and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal investments.

Our ambition is for everyone to be as healthy, independent and prosperous as possible throughout their lives. Enabling access to a good education, developing skills and decent employment opportunities are all key priority areas. As we embrace the changes ahead, we remain absolutely committed to ensuring the effective safeguarding of our vulnerable children and adults. This commitment will not change. We will continue to seek to reduce the number of children looked after through early intervention and prevention and look for innovative ways to support our older population.

In the context of reducing budgets and growing demand pressures, the traditional role of the local authority as service deliverer is changing. Working with partners such as the police and health service is essential in tackling the complex and multi-faceted challenges facing our communities and core services. We will also see a different relationship with communities continuing to emerge – one where we work together and both residents and businesses take a shared responsibility for themselves and the communities they live and work in. We are lucky to have strong business, voluntary, community and religious groups across RCT, and they will continue to play an important role in developing this new dynamic throughout the County Borough.

Our greatest challenge will be to deliver the Council's commitment to being "A net-zero Green House Gas Council by 2030" which is 20 years earlier than the recommendation of the UK Committee on Climate Change. This is a challenge we are taking seriously and we look forward to receiving the support from all local residents and businesses in working together to change the way we live our lives to achieve this aim.

I hope this Corporate Plan helps you to understand more about how the Council is approaching the challenges and opportunities over the next four years, and how we can work together for an even better Rhondda Cynon Taf.

*A. Morgan*

**Councillor Andrew Morgan**

*Leader of the Council*



# 1

## What we want to achieve

The Council's vision is:

*“For Rhondda Cynon Taf to be the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy, and prosperous.”*

The Council's purpose and the reason why it exists is:

*“To provide strong community leadership and create the environment for people and businesses to be independent, healthy and prosperous.”*



# 2

## Our Priorities

The Council is committed to delivering three main priorities:

Ensuring  
**PEOPLE**  
are

independent,  
healthy,  
and successful.

Creating  
**PLACES**  
where people are

proud to live,  
work, and play.

Enabling  
**PROSPERITY**  
creating the opportunity  
for people & businesses to

be innovative,  
be entrepreneurial  
and fulfil their  
potential & prosper.

Our priorities and our commitments below, provide a framework that guides everything we do.

section

# 3

## PEOPLE: Are independent, healthy and successful.



**Supporting our residents who are older, vulnerable or who have disabilities, to remain independent and have a good quality of life**



### We will deliver this by...

- Opening new Extra Care schemes for people that need additional support to remain living independently;
- Providing enablement services that help people regain or increase their independence;
- Using technology to enhance independence and assist with care;
- Offering support for carers;
- Providing support and equipment that allows people to stay more independent at home;
- Commissioning a range of community based provision to enable people to remain actively engaged within their community.

**Encouraging all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing**



### We will deliver this by...

- Delivering new indoor and outdoor sporting facilities and enhancing existing sporting facilities such as changing rooms and outdoor play areas;
- Ensuring participation in sport and physical activity is accessible and inclusive for all by maintaining low cost, high value provision;
- Giving residents access to health and wellbeing information and activities through the GP referral schemes, and other health and wellbeing intervention programmes;
- Increasing levels of engagement and participation in the arts and culture, whilst developing our theatres to become more inclusive and accessible to the whole community;
- Continuing to develop community hubs where residents have the opportunity to meet, socialise and access a range of Council and other services.

**Integrating health and social care and providing support for those with mental health problems and complex needs**



### We will deliver this by...

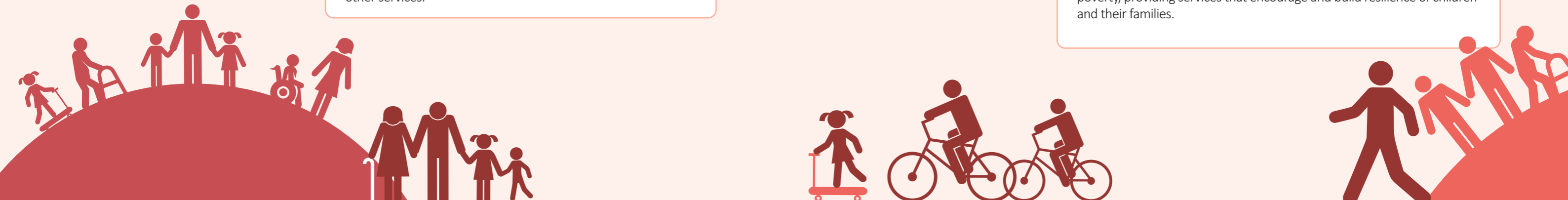
- Working with the local Health Board and GPs to provide more health and care services closer to home;
- Working with Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB to achieve timely discharge from hospital for patients;
- Offering, and signposting to prevention support for people to stay active and more independent in the community;
- Continuing to offer support to working age adults with mental health needs;
- Introducing a social prescribing model for referring people to interventions in the community, including: exercise classes, adult education classes, Digital Fridays, Library reading clubs etc.

**Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do**



### We will deliver this by...

- Seeking to reduce the number of children looked after through working with families to intervene early where issues arise with the focus on intervention and prevention to keep families safe together;
- Improving the social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the range of specialist services available;
- Preventing young people from getting involved in violence, crime, exploitation and anti-social behaviour through a range of cultural, sporting and other forms of early engagement and intervention;
- Being a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers, and supporting and involving them in securing the most suitable housing, employment, education or training provision;
- Working in partnership with Welsh Government, strive to reduce child poverty, providing services that encourage and build resilience of children and their families.





section

# 4

## PLACES: Where people are proud to live, work and play.



**Keeping RCT clean through efficient street cleaning services, minimising the amount of waste we send to landfill, achieving our recycling targets through weekly recycling and regular refuse collections, and reducing our carbon footprint**



### We will deliver this by...

- Supporting residents to reduce waste and increase recycling to 80% by working with them, and businesses on initiatives that promote waste minimisation and re-use materials;
- Investing in technology to increase the amount of waste we recycle and reuse locally;
- Working with residents, landlords and agents to improve recycling rates across all dwellings;
- Working with residents and communities to reduce the number of incidents of littering, dog fouling, fly tipping and illegal parking, using enforcement powers as necessary;
- Procuring a vehicle fleet that is fit for purpose yet has a limited impact on the environment;
- Creating a circular approach to recycling and reusing waste material such as plastic at every opportunity. This will include developing the Eco Park at Bryn Pica;
- Eliminating single use plastics and such as coffee cups across schools and other council facilities.

**Keeping the County Borough moving, including improvements to roads and pavements and public transport, whilst also improving air quality**



### We will deliver this by...

- Continuing to improve the condition of our roads and pavements and investing in our bridges, retaining walls and sustainable flood drainage systems;
- Encouraging the use of public transport through the development of the South Wales Metro, walking and cycling through an investment in active travel initiatives;
- Working with Welsh Government and the Regional Transport Authority to continue to improve access to public transport and explore opportunities to bringing back disused public transport, such as rail lines, for bus routes and active travel;
- Exploring opportunities to develop a cycle network to major destinations in the County Borough without impeding main traffic routes;
- Promoting and investing in the roll out of electric vehicle charging opportunities;
- Using enforcement to increase compliance and support traffic to move smoothly and safely.

**Ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and where residents feel safe**



### We will deliver this by...

- Supporting the voluntary, community and faith sectors to help build active communities, creating the capacity for meeting the needs of residents within their communities;
- Working with the police and Community Safety Partnership to prevent and deter anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in our towns;
- Delivering a multi-agency response to all forms of violence and the criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults;
- Preventing radicalisation and supporting victims of hate crime, including raising awareness.

**Getting the best out of our parks by looking after and investing in our greenspaces**



### We will deliver this by...

- Investing in the parks infrastructure, including playgrounds, pavements, seating areas and horticultural facilities, and developing masterplans for our major parks that will deliver significant improvements;
- Delivering natural carbon storage solutions such as those provided by trees, peat bogs, marshy grassland and other natural habitats across the County Borough to enhance air quality and reduce the impact of greenhouse gasses;
- Offering community grants for creating greener space, encouraging community groups to invest in small and medium scale greening projects in urban locations across the County Borough;
- Exploring opportunities to create and use our own green sustainable energy such as micro hydro-electric schemes which utilise natural river and water course features;
- Bringing cultural and sports events to our parks, such as the National Eisteddfod for Wales in 2024, and Glamorgan County Cricket to Ynysangharad Park to play T20 competitions, investing in the parks infrastructure to hold such significant events.



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5

# PROSPERITY:

## Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.



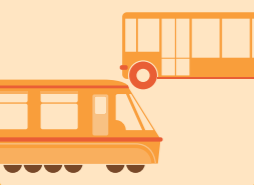
Investing in our town centres, bringing jobs and homes into our town centres to create vibrant, thriving places people wish to live, work and socialise



### We will deliver this by...

- Supporting new businesses to open up in town centres and existing businesses to expand their offer through a wide package of financial support and interventions;
- Where the private sector is unable to tackle empty or rundown sites and premises in town centres, the Council will proactively acquire specific key strategic sites and, in partnership with Welsh Government, seek to develop suitable town centre solutions;
- Developing a tourism offer that encourages people to come to the County Borough and includes attractions such as the Rhondda and Abernant Tunnels, the Zip World Experience, Royal Mint Experience, The National Lido for Wales and the Welsh Mining Experience at the Rhondda Heritage Park. We will support businesses to develop a range of complementary services including offering accommodation in our town centres, such as boutique hotels, quality bed and breakfast and AirBNB locations;
- Continuing to keep town car park charges to a minimum and make it easier for shoppers to visit town centres using public transport or active travel;
- Supporting local small and medium sized businesses to supply goods and services to the Council and to recruit the best local talent available into a range of roles from apprenticeships and graduates to leadership positions.

Delivering major regeneration and transportation schemes, maximising the impact of the new South Wales Metro, to create better places to live and work, whilst protecting and enhancing the County Borough



### We will deliver this by...

- Considering a radically different approach to mobility in the new Local Development Plan to create a socially just, zero-carbon mobility plan. This shifts mobility away from the car by eliminating the conditions that make cars necessary. For example, by 2030, we need to ensure that half of all journeys will need to be taken by bus, bike or walking. All remaining journeys will be via electric vehicles;
- Developing town Centre strategies for our principal town centres, which values the uniqueness of each town, whilst building on the benefits of the Metro and including new office accommodation to increase town centre employment, and homes above shops to create footfall in the towns;
- Delivering of major road schemes such as the dualling of the A4119, the Cross Valley Link, the Llanharan By-Pass and the A465 Cynon Valley link road;
- Investing in a number of Park and Ride facilities across the County Borough at key strategic Metro sites, including Junction 34 of the M4;
- Ensuring all homes and businesses have at least access to superfast connectivity, with all key industrial and commercial hubs having access to ultrafast connectivity;
- Leading on the master planning of the new settlement at Llanillid and the connectivity with the M4 and existing rail connections;
- Supporting housing developers to bring forward major housing developments on former brownfield sites, such as former Cwm Coking Works in Beddau and the former Phurnacite Works in Aberaman.

Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great education



### We will deliver this by...

- Improving pupils' achievement and narrowing the attainment gap;
- Improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities;
- Supporting children to have the best start in life and be ready for learning through an improved early years' system and childcare offer;
- Investing in new and replacement 21st Century Schools, whilst also meeting the demand for Welsh language provision throughout the County Borough;
- Supporting schools to successfully introduce and embed the new curriculum, raising the standards of educational performance for all pupils;
- Supporting pupils to understand the world of work and access good careers advice and guidance.

Increase the number of quality homes available and affordable to provide greater housing choice for residents



### We will deliver this by...

- Increasing the land supply for new sustainable, low carbon homes through an updated Local Development Plan or Strategic Development Plan from 2021;
- Ensuring that new housing and commercial developments include solar, where feasible, and have the capability to generate, store and use renewable energy onsite;
- Supporting small and medium sized house builders to develop new housing through access to the City Deal Housing Investment Fund;
- Providing a comprehensive self-build homes support service, including mortgages, for local people to build new homes on Council owned sites ("Plot Shop" Scheme);
- Continuing to build Extra Care and specially adapted homes for elderly and vulnerable residents, develop innovative housing solutions for younger people in need, and provide suitable housing solutions for the homeless;
- Continuing to bring back empty properties back into use through a range of interventions and support;
- Continuing to support responsible local landlords and agents to ensure we have a good quality, affordable private rented sector. We will maintain our targeted enforcement approach against bad landlords and unsafe rented housing, maximising the Council's regulatory intervention powers to improve housing conditions.

Helping people into work and better paid employment



### We will deliver this by...

- Working with partners to provide employment support, utilising remaining European Funding;
- Offering employment schemes and apprenticeships in the Council, on the regeneration sites, and through other Council contractors;
- Offering specific support to help people find work such as care leavers, people with disabilities and Universal Credit claimants;
- Promoting apprenticeships across the County Borough, and supporting businesses to make use of the apprenticeship levy;
- Continuing to support working parents back into employment through the Welsh Government's 30 Hours Childcare offer.

# 6 Our Approach

To achieve our vision, to make progress in delivering these priorities and respond to the significant financial challenges we continue to face, we will:

## Live within our means by

- Delivering services that matter most by making decisions to prioritise our limited resources;
- Providing value for money for the taxpayer and ensuring we are transparent in how we operate, maintaining low Council tax increases compared to other Welsh councils;
- Taking every opportunity to reduce the Council’s running costs;
- Taking the steps to further reduce the Council’s carbon footprint to ‘Net Zero’ through a sustainable approach to the procurement of energy, supplies and services;
- Ensuring Council vehicles, commissioned home to school transport vehicles, bus operators and taxi vehicles are fit for purpose and are as environmentally friendly as possible.

## Be an efficient and effective Council by

- Managing our finances and contracts robustly;
- Providing residents and businesses with the assistance they need at the first point of contact and greater access to online services and support;
- Treating residents equally, with understanding and respect, with all having access to quality services, whether they wish to engage with the Council in English or Welsh.

## Maximise opportunities by

- Taking a commercial approach to generating income, and looking for new opportunities to generate revenue from our assets. This includes generating green energy for use in local buildings and homes;
- Making use of digital and evolving technology and innovation to help us achieve better outcomes and become more efficient;
- Capitalising on opportunities from Welsh Government, City Deal, or private sector investment growth and development to boost the local economy, creating local jobs through major initiatives, such as the Metro.

## Share responsibility by

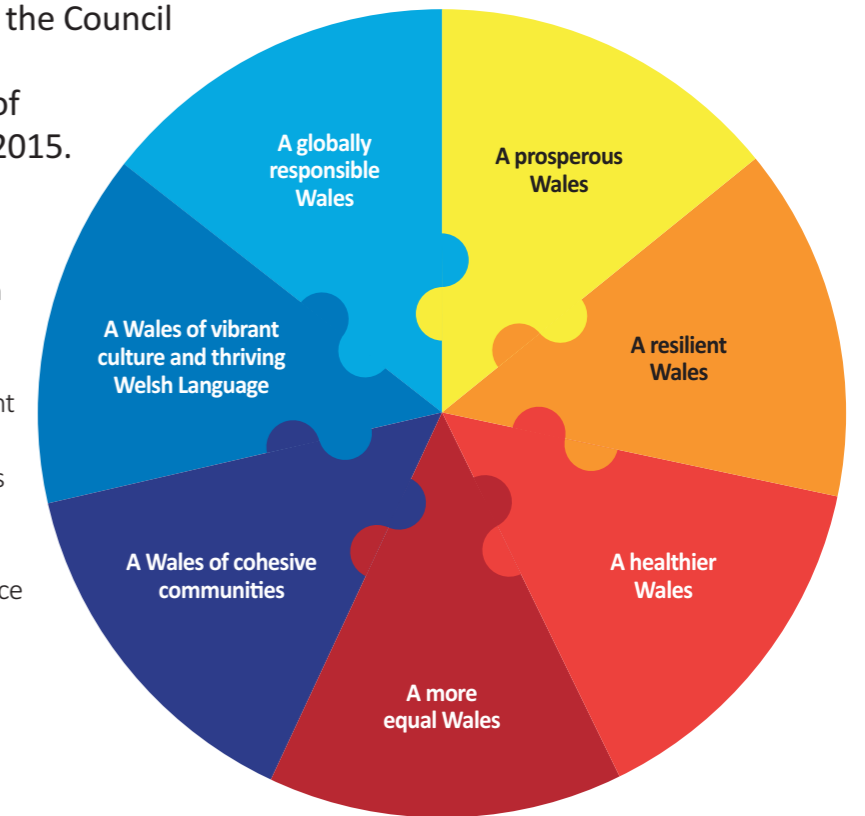
- Working with residents and the community to share responsibility, helping communities to do more for themselves and give them more control over what they can do to support local people in their communities;
- Focusing on prevention and early help in local communities so residents can live independently for as long as possible;
- Working in partnership with other public sector providers to maximise the impact of our resources on improving public services.

# 7

# Well-being of Future Generations

In preparing this Corporate Plan, the Council continues to take account of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Act focuses on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It makes public bodies, such as the Council, think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven national Well-being Goals:



- **A prosperous Wales**
- **A resilient Wales**
- **A healthier Wales**
- **A more equal Wales**
- **A Wales of cohesive communities**
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**
- **A globally responsible Wales**

The Council’s approach to the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#) is to embed its requirements into the Council’s business. The Priorities contained on this Corporate Plan also serve as the Council’s Well-being objectives.

This Corporate Plan sets out a vision, priorities and principles that continue to maximise the Council’s contribution to the seven national Well-being goals. The national goals, together with the five Ways of Working, will continue to be incorporated into the detailed action plans that will deliver the Council’s three priorities.





section



# How we contribute

Examples of how the Council's Corporate Plan contributes to the seven national Well-being Goals currently include:

	PEOPLE	PLACES	PROSPERITY
PROSPEROUS WALES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early intervention with families to keep them families safe together.</li> <li>• Improving the social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the range of specialist services available.</li> <li>• Being a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers.</li> <li>• Continuing to offer support to working age adults with mental health needs.</li> <li>• Offering specific support to help people find work such as care leavers, people with disabilities and Universal Credit claimants.</li> <li>• Continuing to support working parents back into employment through the Welsh Government's 30 Hours Childcare offer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping people and traffic moving on well-maintained roads and pavements.</li> <li>• Progressing schemes that will benefit communities now and in the future including improved public transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing opportunities for businesses to emerge and flourish.</li> <li>• Building new homes.</li> <li>• Creating opportunities for jobs.</li> <li>• Providing schools where all children can achieve the best they can.</li> <li>• Developing Tourism offer and supporting businesses to meet the needs of visitors.</li> <li>• Ensuring all homes and businesses have at least access to superfast connectivity, with all key industrial and commercial hubs having access to ultrafast connectivity.</li> </ul>
RESILIENT WALES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing site disturbance and material waste with shorter construction schedules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing in and valuing our Green Spaces.</li> <li>• Delivering natural carbon storage solutions such as those provided by trees, peat bogs, marshy grassland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting biodiversity by protecting existing habitats where possible.</li> </ul>
HEALTHIER WALES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping people to stay as well as they can for as long as they can by encouraging increased activity.</li> <li>• GP referral schemes, and other health and wellbeing intervention programmes.</li> <li>• Offering and signposting to prevention support for people to stay active and more independent in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to tackle environmental crime.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investing in our playgrounds, leisure centres and community facilities in schools.</li> <li>• Ensuring new housing and commercial developments have capacity to generate, store and use reusable energy.</li> <li>• Making it easier for shoppers to use public transport or active travel to our town centres.</li> </ul>
MORE EQUAL WALES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making sure that residents can access services, no matter what their background or circumstances.</li> <li>• Social prescribing for referring people to interventions in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making sure that our residents of all ages and abilities can enjoy our parks and green spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing opportunities to all our residents to improve their digital skills.</li> <li>• Keeping Car Park charges to a minimum.</li> </ul>

	PEOPLE	PLACES	PROSPERITY
WALES OF COHESIVE COMMUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB and GPs to provide more health and care services closer to home.</li> <li>• Helping people to stay in their own homes for longer.</li> <li>• Providing Extra Care facilities for people that need additional support.</li> <li>• Working with residents and the community to share responsibility, helping communities to do more for themselves and give them more control over what they can do to support local people in their communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining a targeted enforcement approach against bad landlords and unsafe rented housing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing empty properties back to life.</li> <li>• Improving housing for all our residents and creating pleasant neighbourhoods in which communities can thrive.</li> <li>• Providing self-build home support service.</li> </ul>
A WALES OF VIBRANT CULTURE & WELSH LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing engagement and participation in the arts and culture and developing our theatres to become more inclusive and accessible to the whole community.</li> <li>• Preventing young people from getting involved in violence, crime, exploitation and anti-social behaviour through a range of cultural, sporting and other forms of early engagement and intervention.</li> <li>• Providing more opportunities for our residents to communicate with the Council and each other in Welsh.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural and sports events for all in our parks.</li> <li>• Progressing plans for Eisteddfod.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting RCT as a visitor destination.</li> <li>• Ensuring equal access to the Welsh Language across our services.</li> </ul>
GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE WALES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring home to school transport vehicles, bus operators and taxi vehicles are fit for purpose and are as environmentally friendly as possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Council fleet that limits impact on environment.</li> <li>• Circular approach to recycling and reuse.</li> <li>• Eliminating single use plastics across the council and schools.</li> <li>• Progressing the Eco Park in Bryn Pica.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to create and use our own green sustainable energy such as micro hydro-electric schemes which utilise natural river and water course feature.</li> <li>• Increasing the supply of low carbon homes.</li> </ul>