

RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Key Decision

✓

SUBJECT:

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Planning Annual Performance Report 2017-2018.

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended officer decision of the Director of Regeneration, Planning and Housing as described below.

The purpose of the report is to outline the contents of the Planning Service Annual Performance Report 2017-2018, and seek approval for its submission to the Welsh Government.

DELEGATED DECISION (OCTOBER 2018):

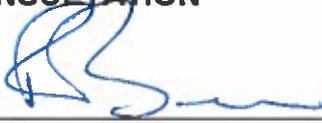
It is agreed that:

The Planning Annual Performance Report for the year 2017-2018 is submitted to Welsh Government.

 <i>Chief Officer Signature</i>	SIMON GALE <i>Print Name</i>	18/10/18 <i>Date</i>
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The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution

CONSULTATION



CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

18/10/18

DATE

CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE

DATE

CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

NO ✓

If deemed urgent - signature of Mayor or Deputy Mayor or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Mayor)

.....
(Dated)

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision cannot be called in and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

PUBLICATION

Publication on the Councils Website:- 18th October 2018

DATE

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Subject to Call In the implementation date will be 24th October 2018 .

DATE

APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :✓

Further Information

Directorate:	Regeneration, Planning and Housing
Contact Name:	Jim Bailey
Designation:	Development Services Manager
Tel. No.	01443 281132



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION, PLANNING AND HOUSING

OCTOBER 2018

RHONDDA CYNON TAF PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017-2018

**AUTHOR: JIM BAILEY, DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER
(APPLICATIONS)**

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the contents of the Planning Service Annual Performance Report 2017-2018.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that:

The contents of the Planning Annual Monitoring Report (attached at Appendix 1) are agreed prior to submitting the document to the Welsh Government.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is considered that the content of the report is a true and accurate record of the monitoring of the Performance of the Planning Service for the year 2017-2018.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Welsh Government, publishes an all Wales Performance Framework for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in Wales. The framework sets out each authority's performance on a Good/Red, Fair/Amber and Improvement Needed/Red, basis judged against a set of published standard measures. These measures include a wide range of issues including status of the LDP and housing land supply; determination times for planning applications; speed of enforcement action; Member

overturns at Committee; appeals performance; public speaking at Committee; and accessibility of the planning website.

- 4.2 In addition to this performance framework Welsh Government has a requirement for each LPA to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) which offers the opportunity to set a narrative around the performance framework itself. The APR will give a description of the geographic, economic and corporate conditions the Planning Service operates in; outlines staffing and budget issues; any major projects that are ongoing and gives the opportunity to highlight any best practice the Service is undertaking.

5.0 KEY FINDINGS OF THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 5.1 The Service had 'Improvement Needed/Red' scores in 4 areas of the 16 measures in Performance Framework. The first related to the fact that the County Borough currently does not have a five year housing land supply; the second relates to the percentage of decisions that Committee made that are contrary to officer recommendation; the third relates to performance in relation to appeal decisions; and the last relates to the award of costs against the Council at appeals.
- 5.2 In support of the APR the Welsh Local Government Data Unit provided each local authority with a range of performance data for their service set against the All Wales average. In 8 out of the 9 areas measured, RCT was above the Welsh average. The one indicator where the Council was below on was the percentage of appeals lost.
- 5.3 The Welsh Local Government Data Unit also undertook a customer survey on behalf of all LPAs in Wales. In RCT, the majority of responses (55%) were from agents. 34% were from members of the public. 5% of respondents had their most recent planning application refused.
- 5.4 The Service was again rated above the Welsh average on all 7 of the questions that were asked. The Data Unit highlighted comments received which included: *"Offers a very professional and proactive service."* And *"A very easy and speedy service for me so very happy"*.
- 5.5 The APR highlights the Service's involvement in major schemes and initiatives such as the Treforest Industrial Estate Local Development Order, our Developers' Forum and cross service work such as the Taff Vale project and the facilitating housing initiative. It also highlights the significant work the Service is contributing to on a regional basis, in respect of its Strategic Opportunity Areas and the Cardiff Capital Region.

5.6 The APR also sets out areas where we will need focus on in the coming year. These include our appeal performance, the housing land supply shortfall, Strategic Opportunity Areas, regional working and the implementation of our new back office system to drive more efficient ways of working and to deliver better services to our customers.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 None required.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The Annual Performance Report is a statutory requirement from Welsh Government.

10.0 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

10.1 The effectiveness of the Regeneration, Planning and Housing plays an important role in delivering the overall objectives of the Council by ensuring the service creates opportunities for people and companies to live and work and invest in the County Borough.

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 The Council's Planning Service generally compares well in relation to the rest of Wales in the suite of measures contained in the Performance Framework issued by Welsh Government. There are areas that need to be addressed but there is also work that is innovative and exemplar in a Wales context.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**A REPORT TO ACCOMPANY A DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
REGENERATION, PLANNING AND HOUSING**

OCTOBER 2018

Item:

Background Papers

Annual Monitoring Report 2017-2018

Officer to contact: Simon Gale

Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA

PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – 2017-18

PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that I am able to introduce the Planning Annual Performance Report for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council for 2017-18. The Regeneration, Planning and Housing Service is key to the Council's ambition to be at the forefront of creating opportunities for people to live, work and invest in the County Borough.

I see planning as being a positive tool in promoting growth and prosperity and I am pleased that the proactive and innovative approach we take to creating opportunities for growth to happen is recognised by the development industry.

2017-18 has seen the scope of the Service expand to include colleagues in the Council's Housing Service. I anticipate that by bringing Regeneration, Planning and Housing together under the same Group Directorate management structure and physical location in the same building that we will realise benefits from these teams working more closely than ever before.

I am also pleased to see that despite the financial pressures we all continue to face in local government that the service is still performing well in many areas and we are committed to address the areas where we are not doing so well within the priorities of the Council and the resources available to us.

Over the year the service has dealt with some major schemes including commercial development providing new, modern manufacturing and business accommodation as well as schemes for renewable energy and new infrastructure provision, including the much needed Cross-Valley link in the Cynon Valley. The Planning Applications team has also worked closely with colleagues in helping to support the Council's school's development and Extra Care housing programmes.

Housing completions in RCT continue to be encouraging and the Council recognise that house building can have significant economic benefits. However, it is appreciated that housing delivery in the valleys is challenging to achieve and in order to help secure a greater range of new housing choice in the northern strategy area officers are currently progressing a number of initiative projects.

RCT is playing a key role at both officer and Member level in engaging with neighbouring LPA's and other stakeholders in respect of wider strategic opportunities that could be delivered under the Cardiff Capital Region initiative. I am confident that these opportunities will not only benefit RCT but also bring benefits to the wider area of South East Wales. Building on the good work already done will be a continuing priority for the Service in the coming year.

(Councillor Robert Bevan, Cabinet Member for Enterprise Development and Housing)

CONTEXT

This section sets out the planning context within which the local planning authority operates.

- Planning background, including previous adopted or abandoned development plans.
- Place and fit within the community strategy and/or wider strategic and operational activity of the authority.
- Existing and previous major influences on land use (e.g. heavy industrial, agricultural, energy, transport).

Rhondda Cynon Taf covers an area of the South Wales Valleys stretching from the Brecon Beacons in the north, to the outskirts of Cardiff in the south. It comprises a mixture of urban, semi-suburban and rural communities, situated in mountains and lowland farmland.

The Northern Strategy Area comprises the upland and valley areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The area covers the Rhondda Fawr and Fach and the Cynon Valley.

The main strategic road links within the Strategy Area are provided by the A4119, A470, A4058, A4233, A4059 and A465. A well-established network of bus and rail routes provides public transport provision. Bus provision is provided by a network, which serves the Key Settlements. Main bus stations are located at Tonypany and Aberdare. The passenger rail service connects the Rhondda Fawr and the Cynon Valley with Pontypridd and Cardiff.

The Northern area of the County Borough suffered significant decline since the widespread closure of the collieries in the South Wales Coalfield in the mid 1980's. The Strategy Area does however, have a strong sense of community pride, many towns and villages with fine architectural history and a spectacular landscape that rivals that of the adjoining Brecon Beacons National Park and the southernmost tip of the Park extends into the County Borough.

The Southern Strategy Area has experienced considerable growth in recent years. The area has seen significant new house building and inward investment that has transformed the economy of the area. The key location of the Southern Strategy area means that it has a vital role to play in ensuring the future economic prosperity of all of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Economic growth however, must be carefully managed in order to ensure that the social and environmental needs of the Strategy Area are fully addressed.

- Historic/landscape setting of the area, including AONBs, conservation areas etc.

Rhondda Cynon Taf is an area with a rich and diverse natural environment. Designations in the County Borough include Special Areas of Conservation, many Sites of Special Scientific Interest, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, numerous scheduled ancient monuments and a Historic Landscape designation in the Rhondda Valleys in the north.

The area also has strategic landscape areas. In the north of the county borough which are designated to protect the distinctive upland/valley landscape area with particular protection given to the unspoilt valley slopes and ridges which form a visual backdrop to the settlement in the area. In the South SLAs have been identified to protect the distinctive landscape of the area. Particular consideration has been given to the protection of the unspoilt low lying farmland, common land and gentle valley slopes which form a visual backdrop to the settlements of the area.

In a Wales context, the County Borough is of particular importance with over 20% of the area being classified as Priority Habitat and the extent and diversity of semi-natural habitat, is very high.

- **Urban rural mix and major settlements.**

Rhondda Cynon Taf covers an area of the South Wales Valleys stretching from the Brecon Beacons in the north, to the outskirts of Cardiff in the south. It comprises a mixture of urban, semi-suburban and rural communities, situated in mountains and lowland farmland.

The County Borough has Principal Towns and Key settlement as designated by the LDP. The Principal towns are: Pontypridd, Aberdare and Llantrisant (including Talbot Green). These towns are important hubs for social and economic activity by acting as gateways for new investment, innovation and sustainable development. The position of each of the towns in respect of the strategic transportation network means that these settlements are important to the promotion of regeneration in Rhondda Cynon Taf and economic growth in the wider region. Each of the Principal Towns has been identified as a 'Hub Settlement' in the Wales Spatial Plan.

Key Settlements are geographically smaller and less strategically significant than the Principal Towns. Nevertheless these settlements provide important services and act as centres for commercial and community activity. For the purpose of the LDP Key Settlements are defined as Tonypany, Tonyrefail, Treorchy, Mountain Ash, Porth, Ferndale, Llanharan and Hirwaun. These key settlements act as focal points for growth in Rhondda Cynon Taf in the LDP. Whilst Llanharan and Hirwaun currently play a different role in their local areas from that of other Key Settlements, both settlements are in excellent strategic locations and are capable of accommodating significant additional residential and commercial development.

- **Population change and influence on LDP/forthcoming revisions.**

The County Borough has a population of 234,410 (2011), this is an increase of 1.1% since the 2001 census. The 2011 Census showed that population growth was actually higher than previously projected, although household growth was lower than projected for the years up to 2011. The latest population projections suggest that the need for new homes in the County Borough is considerably less than the 14,385 originally targeted in the Local Development Plan.

PLANNING SERVICE

This section should in the main be drawn from sections prepared and approved for department's internal service report.

- Setting within wider organisation, including organisation chart. How is the department structured? What is the reporting line to the Chief Executive? Are the development management and forward planning team co-located? Are they headed by a single separate head of service? If not, do they report along the same lines?

Regeneration and Planning sits within the Chief Executive's Division, and provides a wide range of statutory and non statutory, predominantly frontline services. The clear focus of these services is balanced and sustainable regeneration to support the economy.

It is important to note that this Service recognises its role in facilitating regeneration and economic development. Certain specific schemes may be directly delivered, but the focus of these and the other service activities is about helping others deliver to support economic growth.(see team structures below)

The planning service includes both the strategic planning and development management functions. Key is the continuing development and monitoring of the Council's planning policy and related initiatives.

The Development Management service considers applications under the Planning Act and Building Regulations applying and enforcing the requirements of the Building Act to ensure the health and safety of people in and around buildings. The Service also undertakes activities such as urban design, enforcement, planning obligations, the conservation/protection of historic environments and dangerous structures.

- Wider organisational activities impacting on the service – how has the department responded to financial constraints imposed during budget setting? What cross departmental activities has the department been involved in or been affected by, e.g. closer joint working in advance of Williams implementation, IT changes, real estate rationalisation?

The Service is responding to the Council's drive to shape and transform its delivery of services in the light of continuing reductions in external funding and pressures in demand. The commercialism workstream challenges service areas to highlight opportunities where the development and expansion of discretionary and chargeable services may be possible, both to existing and new clients, and thus contribute to the Council's overall budget position.

The service has developed services such as pre-submission validation checks, a fast track upgrades option for householder applications, formalising and actively promoting the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs), introducing an enhanced chargeable pre-application advice service and offering a development completion service.

There is also increasing engagement in a more strategic approach to planning on a regional basis with officers working closely with colleagues across the region in developing a consistent and coherent approach to evidence collecting that will ultimately support a regional approach to strategic planning. Further preparatory work for the proposed implementation of a Strategic Development Plan has also continued during the year.

The Service is taking the lead on the City Deal Housing work-stream and at Director level heads a group of housing and planning officers from across the region and Welsh Government. The group is looking to develop potential areas of intervention through the City Deal and wider regional initiatives that will help unlock stalled sites, promote the expansion of the SME sector and encourage an increase in self and custom build homes in the region all with the overall aim of increasing housing supply and promoting economic prosperity.

Finally, the Service is in the process of upgrading its planning back office system. Whilst this is set out in greater detail later in the report, it has the overall objective of making the planning process more efficient, establishing a sound platform for agile working and allowing an enhanced digital service to our customers.

- Operating budget – including budget trend over 3 years, and fee income. Does the planning department retain fee income? Is this used to calculate its operating budget? Has a discrepancy between expected fee income and actuals affected the forward planning or operational activity of the department?

Year	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Operating Budget	£604,770	£752,223	£815,882

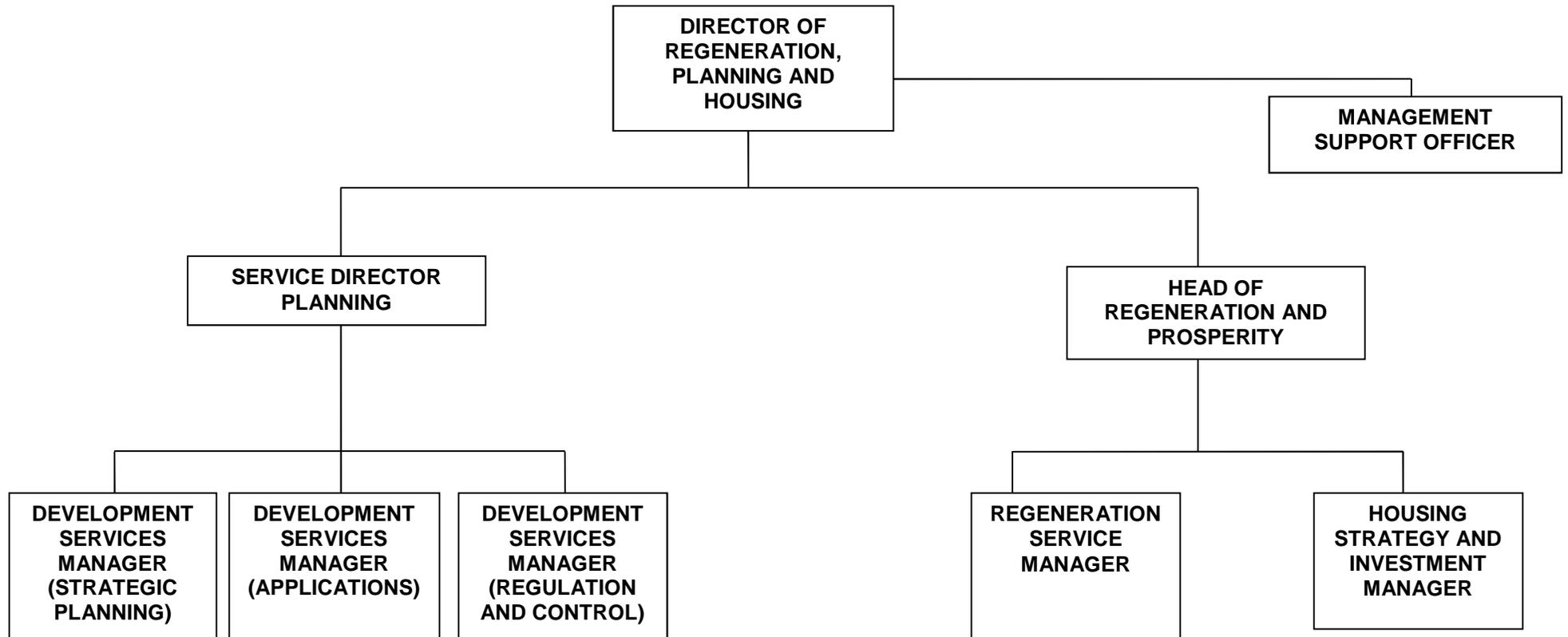
Planning application fee income against budget

Year	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Income received	£716,366	£720,549	£914,992
Budgeted income	£913,500	£913,500	£913,500

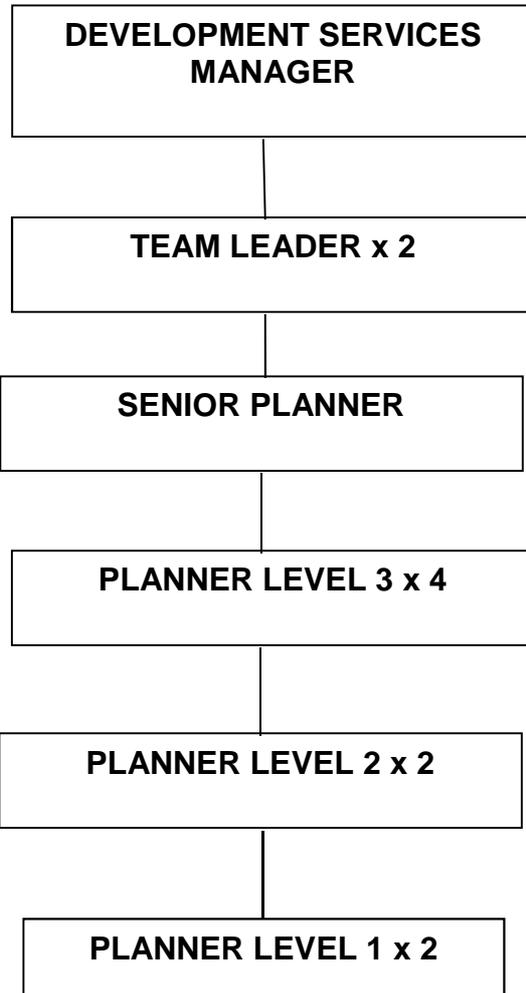
Fee income for 2017/18 was slightly down on the 2016/17 total and significantly under (approx. £200k) the target income figure of £913,500. It is anticipated that the target fee income figure will be reduced for 2018/19.

- Staff issues – what is the current staffing level of the department? What are the current plans for staff skills development and succession planning? Are any vacancies being carried? Has the service had to manage with redundancies (with reference to budget section above)? Has a loss of skills through sickness absence or other reasons, adversely affected the department? What are the coping mechanisms for this?

**REGENERATION, PLANNING AND HOUSING
SENIOR MANAGEMENT**



**REGENERATION & PLANNING
PLANNING APPLICATIONS**



**REGENERATION & PLANNING
STRATEGIC PLANNING**

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER

Housing Delivery

TEAM LEADER

SENIOR PLANNER x2

Planning Policy

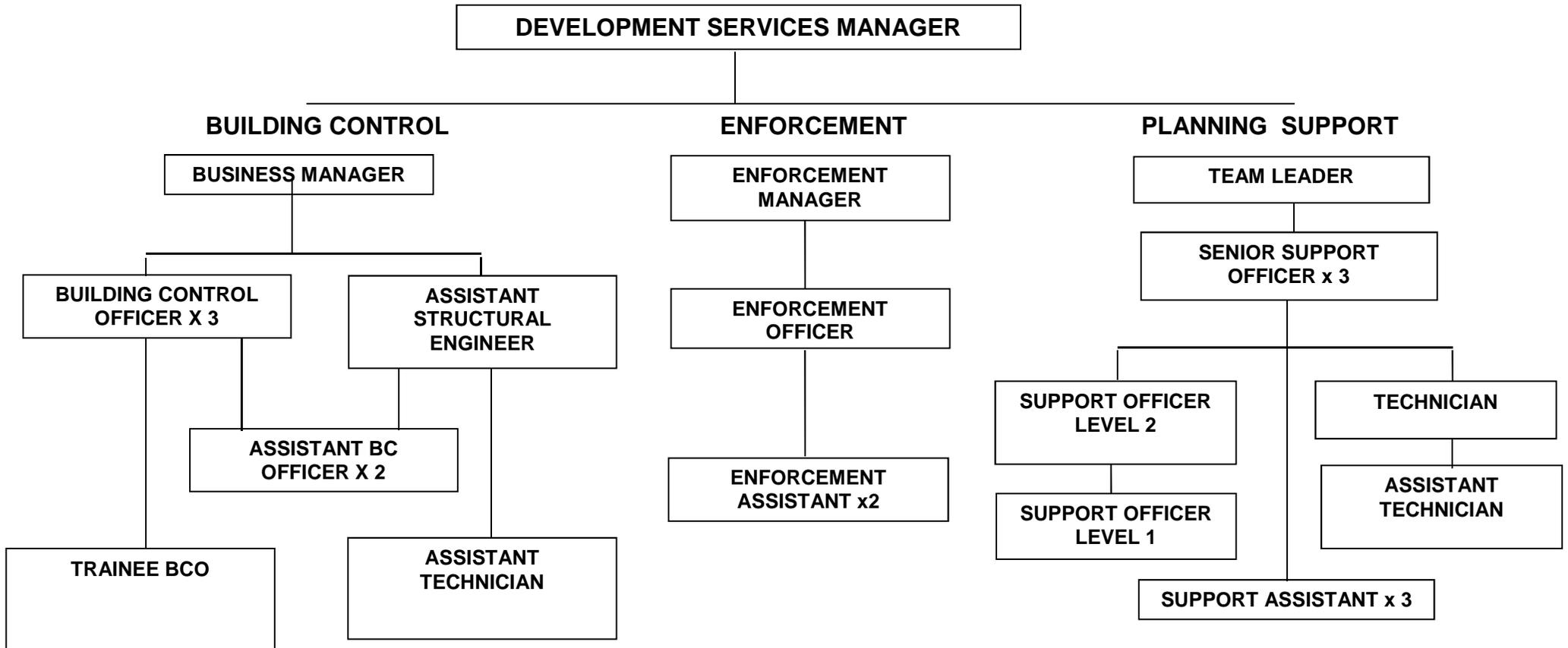
TEAM LEADER

**SENIOR PLANNER X
3**

PLANNER LEVEL 1

TECHNICIAN

**REGENERATION AND PLANNING
REGULATION & CONTROL**



The structures of the Planning Applications, Enforcement, Housing Delivery, Planning Policy and Planning Process Teams are shown on the shown above charts.

During the year the Service has operated within the context of the financial constraints faced by local authorities and the need to absorb the changes to the operation of the planning system in Wales. Accordingly, and as in the previous year it was challenging to maintain and improve levels of service and performance.

The current staffing levels of the Planning service are as shown in the structure charts above.

The Regeneration, Planning and Housing Service has a structured training programme and budget supported by team meetings and 1:2:1s. Training for the staff in the Planning teams in the period included:

- BCO Apprenticeship course.
- BCOs Changes in Legislation and Updated Codes of Practice on Fire Regulations
- PACE (for interviews under caution resulting from unauthorised works)
- In-house Management Development Programme
- Bilingual online services
- NDF Engagement Event
- Planning Inspectorate Wales Stakeholder Event
- Implications of the Wales Planning Bill
- ILM Level 5 Coaching & Mentoring Overview
- Wales Enforcement Conference 2017
- Wales Planning Conference 2017
- Planning Law Seminar for Local Planning Authorities
- Inclusive Design in the Built Environment
- The Structural Repair of Windows in Listed and Historic Buildings
- In house training on back office systems
- Business and Administration Level 2 Course
- Planning Support Officers have been shadowing officers on householder/minor applications and site visits
- MBA (for lawyers)
- Aspire and Mercury Management Development Programme

YOUR LOCAL STORY

- **Workload. What are the current planning pressures the service is facing? What is the status of the LDP? Is development/monitoring/revision proceeding as planned? What is the impact on support of development management services, e.g. for master planning? What is the DM workload per officer?**

Local Development Plan

The Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 2nd March 2011. The LDP provides a land use framework which forms the basis on which decisions about future development in the County Borough are based. The Council will submit its seventh Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) in October 2018. The findings of the AMR show that housing delivery continues to be significant, albeit with 552 new homes completed

in RCT in 2016/17, being slightly below the 716 of the previous year. The AMR shows overall encouraging signs in terms of economic activity and strong performance against sustainable development indicators.

Community Infrastructure Levy

Following a Public Examination and subsequent Inspectors report the Council implemented the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on the 31st December 2014. The Charging Schedule contains 3 charging zones for residential development in Rhondda Cynon Taf. A 'high' viability area (Zone 3) in the South (£85 per square metre), a 'low' viability area (Zone 1) in the North (no charge at all) and a 'medium' viability area (Zone 2) across the 'middle' of RCT covering Tonyrefail and Pontypridd (£40 per square metre). The schedule also includes a flat charge across RCT for retail (A1) development (£100 per square metre). All other development types is £0.

The total CIL income received for financial years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2016/17 was £364,198.28

Total CIL income in 2017/18 was £127,813.32

CIL income is required to be allocated as follows:

Up to 5% of CIL can be applied towards implementation and ongoing administration.

15% of CIL is passed to Community/Town Council (referred to as local CIL)

80% of CIL is to be applied to strategic infrastructure to support growth of the CIL charging Authority's area (referred to as strategic CIL)

Local CIL income in 2017/18 was £18,472.25

Administrative CIL Income in 2017/18 was £6,390.68

Strategic CIL Income in 2017/18 was £102,950.39

Strategic income carried forward from 2016/17 was £291,828.84

Balance of Strategic CIL income £394,779.23

No 'Strategic' CIL has been spent to date.

- **Reference to the Annual Monitoring Report (as an attachment). In the absence of an AMR, the authority should report on its progress towards adoption of the LDP, and any key issues arising in the year.**

KEY FINDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

The LDP sets out an ambitious program for sustainable economic growth and regeneration in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The approach taken in the Plan looks even more ambitious when set against the backdrop of the global economic recession. Inevitably the results of the monitoring exercise indicate certain areas have fared better than others. Some of the headline figures are as follows:

- 552 new dwellings were built in the County Borough during 2017-2018. This represents a 22.9% decrease on the number of new dwellings constructed during

2016-2017 (716 dwellings). However, the figure for 2016-2017 of 716 was the highest number of completions since the adoption of the LDP. This year's results are higher than the figures witnessed in 2010-2014 and comparable with 2014-2015 and 2015-2016.

- 198 of the above dwellings were new affordable dwellings which were built in the County Borough during 2017-2018. Again, this is slightly below the figure for 2016/17, although are the second highest witnessed during the LDP period, up 100 dwellings on the 2015-2016 figure of 98 completions.
- The Council approved proposals for 1,153 new dwellings during 2017-2018. This compares with 569 dwellings approved in 2016-2017; and
- The overall vacancy rate for Principal Town and Key Settlement retail centres is 11.5% (2017-2018), which is a small, positive decrease on the previous year's rates of 12.5%. This is 2.2% above the UK average vacancy rate, which stood at 9.3% as of October 2017 but is just below the Welsh average of 11.7% for the same period.

Since the adoption of the LDP in 2011, it is considered that the following elements of the Plan are making good progress in delivering the targets set out in the LDP. These include:

House Building

During 2017/2018, a total of 552 new dwellings were constructed in Rhondda Cynon Taf including 198 new affordable homes. This takes the total number of new dwellings constructed in the County Borough since 2006, (the technical start of the plan period), to 5,931. Applications for a further 1,153 dwellings were permitted through this past year, contributing to a total of 8,742 dwellings permitted since the adoption of the LDP in 2011.

Although these substantial figures indicate a continued positive growth in the house building industry in Rhondda Cynon Taf since the adoption of the LDP, the build rates do not meet those identified in the LDP. As indicated in our Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2018) we have a reduced housing land supply of 1.4 years based on the residual method of calculation.

Considering recent and longer standing permissions, the housing targets are not an issue of immediate concern. It is however acknowledged in the LDP AMR that housing allocations, particularly in the Northern Strategy Area are not quite coming forward at the rate they were anticipated. The Council has been proactive in seeking methods of intervention to boost the delivery of housing in RCT. This includes the unique Developer Forum, Strategy for Enabling Housing Development and further work to identify the viability of our allocated sites and then identify methods of financial leveraging to enable their development.

Strategic Sites

During 2017-2018, the development of a new college campus for the Cynon Valley, on the Robertstown Strategic Site, was completed. The ongoing refurbishment of the former

Aberdare Station as a function suite for the college also come forward. Additionally, the Council announced in February 2018 that £2.58m of European funding has been secured towards a package of £3.93m to create modern business units on the Robertstown Strategic Site. Significant park and ride facilities have also been developed on the site. Planning permission was granted for a supermarket on the Robertstown Strategic Site during 2015-2016. All this will provide significant numbers of new jobs for those working in the college whilst also contributing to the training and development of the local population.

The opencast extraction operations have ceased on the employment element of the Hirwaun Strategic Site. Ongoing backfilling of the mine has taken place and it is anticipated that the development of plateaux for future commercial development will be in place by the end of the year. There has also been an approval of an outline application for 2,000m² of retail development within the local centre element of the site. It is anticipated the development of the Strategic Site will be aided by the dualling of the A465 to Hirwaun. The Cardiff Capital Region 'City Deal' provides further investment opportunities for the Heads of Valleys area, including transport schemes such as the electrification of the rail line as part of the South East Wales Metro and the extension of the passenger rail service to Hirwaun.

There has previously been an approval for the construction of wind turbines on Maerdy Colliery. Section 106 planning obligations attached to the development will provide a significant contribution to the road network and leisure elements of the strategic site.

Discussions are ongoing with the landowners of the former Phurnacite plant in Abercwmbol with a view to bringing the site forward for development.

The 2014-2015 AMR also noted the approval of an outline application on the Cwm Coking Works site for the demolition of the existing structures, (retention of listed towers), site remediation, land restoration and development to provide a mix of uses including 851 residential units (use class C3), a primary school and open space. Discussions are ongoing to seek options in how to unlock the development potential of the site, considering the considerable clearance and remediation costs associated with the site.

Work has been completed on the infrastructure (including new access) to facilitate the 10,976m² gross floorspace superstore on the Mwyndy-Talbot Green Strategic Site (along with the wider infrastructure), which was permitted during the 2014-2015 monitoring period. The wider Town Centre was approved for approximately 34,000m² of retail and further significant leisure, office and hotel. This wider town centre has consent comprising A1 retail space, A2 financial and professional service space, A3 food and drink space, B1 office space, a cinema, hotel, car parking and related infrastructure. An outline application has also been approved during the year for 460 dwellings on the Cefn yr Hendy site, Mwyndy in 2017-2018. This significant progress of the site is likely to see a following reserved matters application.

There is a comprehensive 'hybrid' planning permission (full and outline) comprising of up to 1,850 dwellings and a neighbourhood centre, on the Llanilid Strategic Site, (including community & leisure facilities, primary school, retail and commercial floorspace). Other elements in the proposal include highways infrastructure, strategic landscape areas and public open space. A reserved matters application has subsequently been received for the 220 dwellings (Phase One), with a phasing masterplan for the remainder of the site.

Retail Development

The LDP allocates land for the development of between 34,400sqm and 36,400sqm of new retail floorspace.

In 2017-2018 permission was granted for 4,282.4m² of convenience/comparison retail floorspace. The applications include a large retail unit on the ground floor of the former Black Lion Hotel in Aberdare; 2 units on Magden Park, Llantrisant for Class A2/A3; 568m² of A3 space at the former Taff Vale Precinct Site; a new discount food store (Class A1) at Dinas Enterprise Park just beyond Porth town centre; and a change of use to 1,305m² of A1 food retail for a Co-operative Supermarket in Cwmbach.

As stated above, work has been completed on the infrastructure (including new access) to facilitate the 10,976m² gross floorspace superstore on the Mwyndy-Talbot Green Strategic Site (along with the wider infrastructure), which was permitted during the 2014-2015 monitoring period. The wider Town Centre was approved for approximately 34,000m² of retail and significant leisure, office and hotel floorspace.

The permission at the Llanilid Strategic Site will also see the creation of the local centre there, with some retail element. During the previous monitoring period a S106 agreement was signed granting planning permission for a supermarket including access improvements on the Strategic Site in Hirwaun.

In 2016-2017 permission was granted for 885m² of convenience/comparison retail floorspace. The applications include a large retail unit on the ground floor of the former Boot Hotel, which is along the primary shopping frontage within Aberdare town centre and a convenience store as part of a mixed-use application for retail and residential at the former Hirwaun Nursery site, Aberdare.

Since the adoption of the LDP, a further 7,717m² of new retail floorspace has been built at Pontypridd Retail Park. It is recognised there has been considerable development interest within the retail sector in the County Borough over the last few years.

Employment Led Development and the Economy

The LDP allocates 98 hectares of land for employment purposes.

Following on from the outline permission granted at the Taff Vale Precinct Site, Pontypridd in 2016-2017; the Council submitted a full planning application in 2017-2018 with an increase in floorspace from the original 12,675m². Consequently, the element of B1 office space approved by the full application now stands at 8,488m². The other elements of the scheme include 1,064m² of D1; 1,038m² of D2; 568m² of A3 and 3,525m² for basement/circulation/plant/servicing etc.; the proposal will be split across three buildings.

Ground clearance commenced on the site in 2017, with building works underway in 2018. The employment allocation SSA 14.1 at Coed Ely, Tonyrefail has also recently had a reserved matters application approved to extend the existing road to the top of the allocation and service the individual plateaus. Additionally, all necessary infrastructure and drainage details were been submitted in the hope of implementing the original consent, first submitted in 2009.

The 4.17ha allocation at Hirwaun Industrial Estate (NSA 14.2) has continued to implement its consent for a sustainable waste resource recovery and energy production plant at Fifth and Ninth Avenues, with two buildings erected to date and significant ground works undertaken.

The Council granted a number of permissions during 2017-2018 for industrial development. The 19,064.9m² of gross industrial space permitted comprises a number of changes of use, extensions and new development. Permission was granted for new units, including an

innovation centre (B1 office space) consisting of 359m² at Ely Valley Business Park, Pontyclun; 248m² of new B1 office space at Magden Park, Llantrisant; 952m² of new industrial B1/B2/B8 space comprising 7 starter units at Pontcynon Industrial Estate; and the erection of three units for B1/B2/B8 comprising 1,329m² on Gelli Industrial Estate in the Rhondda.

As discussed above, the Council announced in February 2018 that £2.58m of European funding has been secured towards a package of £3.93m to create modern business units on the Robertstown Strategic Site.

The year also saw the advancement of development on the previous years' permissions on the major former Sogefi site and to the north of Llantrisant Business Park.

As with the housing sector, the global economic recession has had an effect on commercial and industrial development and accordingly it is understood why significant allocated employment sites have not come forward. That being said, there have been many examples of considerable investment in the sector during the plan period, in addition to those mentioned above.

It should also be noted that there is continued development and redevelopment of our existing 102 employment sites, which contain approximately 1,690 units. The monitoring process indicates that there is a very encouraging average vacancy rate of just 7.95% (down from 9.0% in 2016-2017 and 13.8% in 2015-2016) across the employment units of these operational sites.

The Council will continue to review its options to improve the delivery of its employment sites and achieve its target in terms of the implementation of the LDP.

In terms of overall prosperity, the number of individuals in professional occupations particularly has increased significantly within the Borough since 2013-2014 data. There has also been a significant rise in the number of individuals employed in the associate, professional and technical occupations within Rhondda Cynon Taf since 2011. Indeed the 2017-2018 percentage for this associate, professional and technical category in Rhondda Cynon Taf has overtaken the overall percentage for Wales, being 2.4% higher, which is quite considerable in terms of actual numbers.

The data for Rhondda Cynon Taf gives the total number of people employed in the nine specified occupation categories as being 105,700 individuals as of December 2016, this is significantly above those figures witnessed in 2014 (97,325) and 2011 (93,600) respectively.

Additionally the number of businesses births within RCT has increased significantly compared with previous years. Data is released approximately 11 months after the reference period, as such, the latest available data relates to the 2016 calendar year when the business birth rate in Rhondda Cynon Taf was 1,240 which is a continued very positive increase from previous years 925 (2015), 790 (2014), 785 (2013) and 505 (2012). This trend is reflected in the lower number of economically inactive people during this monitoring period also. These statistics are testament to the recovering economy and the willingness of companies to invest in RCT.

Furthermore, as the economy recovers, opportunities to secure meaningful employment related inward investment in Rhondda Cynon Taf will hopefully increase. The City Deal and the major investment associated with it will hopefully see greater commercial development across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Sustainability Appraisal Monitoring

The findings of the Sustainability Appraisal monitoring element of the LDP, indicates that overall, the plan is travelling in a positive direction for almost all of the aspects of sustainability; these being the indicators for Employment, Health, Transport, Built Environment, Landscape, Water, Climate Change, Energy, Land/Soils, Air Quality, Culture and Heritage and Waste. Indicators for Communities are seeing some elements being met whilst others are not currently being achieved. The delivery of Housing is not wholly being met in line with the specific requirements of the Indicator, although as mentioned throughout this report, significant housing is being delivered.

Sustainability Appraisal Monitoring

- **Current projects. Any specific items of research, best practice development or other initiatives being undertaken within the planning service. Examples could include a “development team” approach to major applications, work on a Local Development Order or process reviews.**

The Service is clear that its activity is focussed on creating opportunities for businesses to invest and locate in RCT and people to live and work in the County Borough. We seek to secure *outcomes* including housing, employment and business, regeneration projects, and town centre regeneration, for which the realisation of the full economic benefits will be long term. The Service is, in line with the Council’s priorities, successfully delivering a wide range of outcomes, and securing funding to deliver further outcomes, with reducing resources.

The Service also recognises the importance of the above priorities in the context of the Cardiff Capital Region ‘City Deal’ and the need to work in a collaborative manner with its neighbouring strategic partners in order to maximise beneficial outcomes for all across South East Wales.

Over the year the Service has sought to focus on the following:

Facilitating Housing

In line with the Council’s priorities, the range and choice of quality housing is being improved as housebuilding figures are continually high, and developments are being delivered by the private sector in both the northern and southern parts of the County Borough. The Service, through its Developer Forum, with the major/volume houses builders is seeking to develop innovative strategies to further encourage house building in those more marginal areas, where issues of viability continue to deter building in any great numbers.

The Council’s continues to operate and involve this Developer Forum , where the Council brings together the private sector to collectively reduce the planning hurdles for residential development including progress towards a new and innovative system to reduce the number of planning conditions and develop a ‘live’ decision notice model that can be accessed by both the applicant/agent and the LPA.

The service continues to lead on large scale projects aimed at stimulating further housing investment across the County Borough. The Council recognises that housing construction can have significant economic benefits for the County Borough through the provision of

large numbers of constructions jobs and further job creation and protection through the supply chain process and increased spending in the surrounding area. This is in addition to the regenerative impacts new housing developments can bring to our communities and at a basic level, the provision of decent homes across all tenures.

As well as leading on the City Deal Housing Theme, officers have also been working with colleagues in the Council's Strategic Housing, Corporate Estates and Finance teams with a view to identifying innovative ways to facilitate housing delivery. These ideas include new ways of using Council land, finances and borrowing/lending powers to assist the private sector in bringing forward development where there is currently market failure.

During 2017-18, the Council further agreed a Facilitating Housing programme, to allow the loan or grant of funds to help facilitate the delivery of certain undeveloped LDP allocations. Further detailed analysis of the sites was undertaken, partly developed on the 'GVA Billfinger' valuation assessments, but also evaluating them against necessary strategic criteria; to identify the most suitable sites for development and funding. Owners and agents for the shortlist of sites were duly contacted through the spring and summer of 2018, with pre-application discussions undertaken on many. This has raised interest and progressed several sites forward, and planning applications are starting to be submitted.

Officers have also progressed significantly with the pilot 'Plot Shop' concept. This is essentially a 'one stop shop' approach where local people can become a potential self builder and purchase Council owned land at a pre valued price. These sites would also benefit from outline planning permissions or Local Development Orders prior to purchase. Officers have worked with Cardiff University's School of Architecture to develop a pattern book of a house types that can be used in conjunction with the prearranged Planning permissions or LDOs so that the self builder does not need to engage an architect. Officers have been working closely with colleagues in Welsh Government and Development Bank of Wales to develop a funding product that will assist Councils with site preparation and allow the self builder to access loan funding to cover the site acquisition and construction costs. It is likely that there be a formal announcement on this product and the plot shop more generally before Christmas.

Strategic Opportunity Areas

The Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2020 "The Way Ahead" has building a strong economy as a priority. The Regeneration and Planning Service is leading on considerable work being progressed within the Council and with partners which supports this priority right across RCT.

At this time, in the context of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the Valley Taskforce, it is critical that the Council works towards the delivery of economic growth in those regionally important areas where there is significant potential to create jobs and prosperity both across RCT and for the wider region.

The Service has taken the Local Development Plan (LDP) as a starting point, and considering recent economic activity, the potential for regional significant growth, the ability of the private sector and other partners to deliver, together with the scale of opportunity and significance regionally, a number of Strategic Opportunity Areas have been developed.

The areas are:

- Cynon Gateway – Energizing the Region

- The Wider Pontypridd, Treforest – Edge of the City, Heart of the Region
- Pontypridd Town – Pivotal in the Region
- A4119 Corridor: Regional Rhondda Gateway
- Llanilid on the M4: Driving the Regional Economy

These areas are supported by outline strategies include a wide range of activity which is both short and long term for delivery by a range of partners. What links them is the ability for them to deliver significant economic growth and jobs within Rhondda Cynon Taf and the region.

To make sure that the Council maximises the benefits which could come from this the Service is working with partners to develop and deliver the strategies.

Importantly the Council will work appropriately, meaning that some of the projects are currently being delivered, others could potentially be progressed with the right partners and funding, whilst others need feasibility work.

The outline strategies include some potential opportunities which are much longer term, or which following feasibility, may not be deliverable for a variety of reasons.

Finally, whilst the Strategic Opportunity Areas are based around the strategy of the LDP, the full extent of all the areas does not necessarily coincide with the allocations currently within the LDP. As noted, the areas have been identified on the basis of potential for economic growth, in some cases in the long term.

It is recognised that these Outline Strategies do not give the areas outside current LDP allocations any planning status. In developing future planning policy, either locally, regionally or nationally, consideration is being given to how these areas could contribute to economic growth and therefore review them for potential inclusion.

Taff Vale Site

The Taff Vale redevelopment project to create a high quality mixed use development consisting of offices, café / restaurant units, leisure and library facilities with new public realm, pedestrian streets and a riverside walkway has continued to make significant progress during 2017/2018 with a number of important milestones achieved.

The main construction contractor was appointed in June 2017 to undertake the next stage of the design process and construction planning stage as part of early contractor involvement.

Full planning permission for this landmark development was subsequently approved in September 2017 and a package of enabling works commenced on site in January 2018 followed by the commencement of main construction works in March 2018.

Detailed design work has commenced on a new footbridge connecting the Taff Vale redevelopment site and Ynysangharad War Memorial Park. This will significantly improve the connectivity between the town centre and the growing attraction of the park while also improving the use of the River Taff as an asset to the town and its growth potential.

VVP Programme Management and Delivery

The Service has continued to take a key role in the delivery of the VVP programme. The initial three year programme of regeneration investment supported by Welsh Government was completed at the end of March 2017 although some of the supported projects are continuing to be delivered using other sources of investment and match funding. The VVP investment has allowed the Council and its partners in the private, public and third sectors to successfully deliver a range of regeneration projects. This approach has developed momentum for further investment and improvement which will be an immediate focus for the Service.

The VVP Programme has delivered investment of £9.4 million to date supported by Welsh Government support of more than £6.5 million. The match funding levered in will also significantly increase by the time the projects are complete. The VVP Programme has achieved significant outcomes across the projects supported including – more than 100 jobs created / accommodated, 10 business premises improved with 1934 m2 of business floorspace created / refurbished, 31 housing units created / brought back into use, 310 households with improved energy performance following installation of energy efficiency measures. These outcomes will significantly increase when the VVP Programme projects are complete. The projects are:

- From Vacant to Viable – Creating Homes Above Retail Premises
- Homestep Plus – Homing in on the Empties
- Heat and Save Ponty
- Pontypridd Hub / YMCA
- Lady Windsor Colliery Site
- Pontypridd Townscape Enhancement Programme
- Taff Vale Redevelopment

Houses in Multiple Occupation – Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

Last year's APR outlined in detail the concerns over the proliferation of Houses of Multiple Ownership (HMO's) in the Treforest ward over the past 25 years, in direct correlation with the expansion of the University of South Wales (previously University of Glamorgan).

A research project was also undertaken by officers to gain an understanding of the extent and depth of the problems associated with HMO's across Rhondda Cynon Taf and in particular the disproportionate concentration of HMO's in the Treforest ward. This was followed up by further research into the reasoning behind, and the content of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG's) that have been prepared to address the issues associated with HMO's across Wales and UK.

The outcome of these concluded the need to prepare an HMO SPG in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This was duly drafted in the autumn and winter of 2017, with formal public consultation through the spring of 2018. The SPG was then adopted in May 2018, following formal Cabinet approval. This SPG has already played a significant role in assessing applications for planning permission in relation to HMO's and informing the decisions on them. The SPG also provides valuable clarity for applicants, objectors and occupiers associated with HMO applications and properties.

Treforest Industrial Estate and Parc Nantgarw Local Development Order 2017 (LDO)

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is working with partners to improve the structure and identity of Treforest Industrial Estate which is a regionally significant site, creating key employment and innovation opportunities. This opportunity area is in a regionally strategic location just north of Junction 32 of the M4, at the funnel point of the rail and road network which link the densely populated valley areas to the rest of the region. The A470 provides links to the South Wales Valleys as well as the Midlands and beyond via the M4. The Estate has major potential to deliver economic benefit for the region due to its prime location, composition, transport links, Further and Higher Education presence, and location of anchor companies.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has introduced a Local Development Order (LDO) for Treforest Industrial Estate and the neighbouring Parc Nantgarw with the aim of encouraging further development within this area and help deliver the above aims.

The LDO in effect grants planning permission for the developments specified by the LDO and therefore removes the need for formal planning applications for certain developments.

ICT Back-Office System upgrade

In a continuing drive to improve the service and to streamline processes, the department, along with our ICT colleagues, undertook a review of the current planning system.

The current system, although a “supported” product will over time become antiquated and cumbersome, highlighting the need to move to a more scalable and enterprise driven system with closer integration with its EDRMS and LLPG capabilities. This will mean that the Council’s ability to exploit Digital opportunities around system integration, workflow and more Agile Working maybe exploited.

The Service is undergoing a wholesale upgrade of the Idox system which is in the system set upstage with a view to going live in 2019.

The commitment of the Council and the Service to invest in a system upgrade shows clear intention to continue to improve and develop the service whilst realising long-term benefits in term of integration and automation, efficiencies and mobile/agile working.

Local pressures. Major applications or other planning issues having a disproportionate impact on the efficiency of the service. Could include specific development pressures, enforcement issues such as major site restoration issues, monitoring compliance of conditions with non-devolved consents (e.g. wind energy applications) or applications of national significance (e.g. LNG storage site).

Within the year the Service has considered a number of major significant planning applications, with some reaching the point of formal determination and some still in the system awaiting determination.

These application schemes represent significant financial investments within the county borough, both from the private and public sector. The considered schemes

include a number of school site re-developments and new schools, as part of the Council's 21st century schools programme; the redevelopment of the former Taff Vale Shopping Precinct site in Pontypridd town centre; significant sized (400+ units) residential schemes (Cefn yr Hendy, Miskin)

The processing and consideration of such applications are often very time intensive in terms of officer resource and are usually relatively high profile thereby requiring timely actions and careful management through the development management process.

Service improvement. What were the recommendations of the previous service improvement plan? In future years, this will also refer to actions identified in the previous Annual Performance Report (ideally they will share actions). For each of these:

Last year's APR identified three specific areas for improvement. These were:

Recognising that the Council does not have a 5 year land supply prioritising the housing delivery objectives initiative to maximise the amount of new homes coming forward in the County

Prioritised improvement in the handling of major applications to find further gains in dealing with them in the timeliest manner.

The delivery of a back office system that will allow us to exploit mobile and agile working to its greatest extent and identify efficiencies in the way that applications are processed. This will include making sure public access to information is as wide as possible and in a bilingual form.

In terms of housing, (and as discussed elsewhere in the report) there were very encouraging returns in the volume of completions in the year and work on initiatives such as the plot shop and the use of Council resources is at an advanced stage.

In terms of major applications we determined 32 major planning applications in 2017/18, none of which were subject to an EIA. Each application took, on average, 138 days to determine.

The percentage of major applications approved in time has also improved from 59% to 66%. However, given the significance of major applications, improving performance on these large proposals will still remain a priority.

In terms of the back office system, The Service has now committed to a wholesale upgrade of the Idox system which will be undertaken in late 2017, early 2018 , with a view to making the planning process more efficient, establishing a sound platform for agile working and allowing an enhanced digital service to our customers.

Performance Framework. What are the identified areas for improvement set out in Annex A? What steps will the authority take to address these? How will they be resourced? How will success be measured?

During the year 2017/18 the Service played a leading role in promoting and bringing forward the Strategic Opportunity Areas described earlier in the report which will deliver regional employment and housing delivery opportunities in the wider context of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. This continues to be a high priority for the Service in 2018/19 and beyond.

In the coming year we Service will continue to prioritise major applications and look to find further gains in dealing with them in the timeliest manner. It is anticipated that continued dialogue with developers and bodies, such as the Developer Forum, will lead to a greater use of initiatives such as a live decision notice drop-box. When dealing with major applications the service has sought to engage with applicants/agents throughout the planning consideration process in order to have dialogue on matters, such as the early identification of potential conditions, so that any issues can be highlighted and subsequent actions in addressing those issues be monitored and recorded by stakeholders.

The Service will look to address its performance in respect of success in defending planning appeals. It recognises that this year, whilst performance has improved its performance remains below the Welsh average. To an extent this is largely explained by a particular issue in respect of the consideration of change of use from class C3 dwellings to Class C4 HMO's in a single Ward (Treforest) within RCT. The Service has throughout 2017/18 actively been working towards the adoption of an SPG document which will give detailed guidance in this area. This SPG has now been adopted (in 2018/19). The service will continue to provide a programme of Member Training on relevant planning issues.

WHAT SERVICE USERS THINK

In 2017-18 we conducted a customer satisfaction survey aimed at assessing the views of people that had received a planning application decision during the year. The service rated higher than the national average on all questions asked.

The survey was sent to 372 people, 15% of whom submitted a whole or partial response. The majority of responses (55%) were from local agents. 34% were from members of the public. 5% of respondents had their most recent planning application refused.

We asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the planning service. They were given the following answer options:

- Strongly agree;
- Tend to agree;
- Neither agree nor disagree;
- Tend to disagree; and
- Strongly disagree.

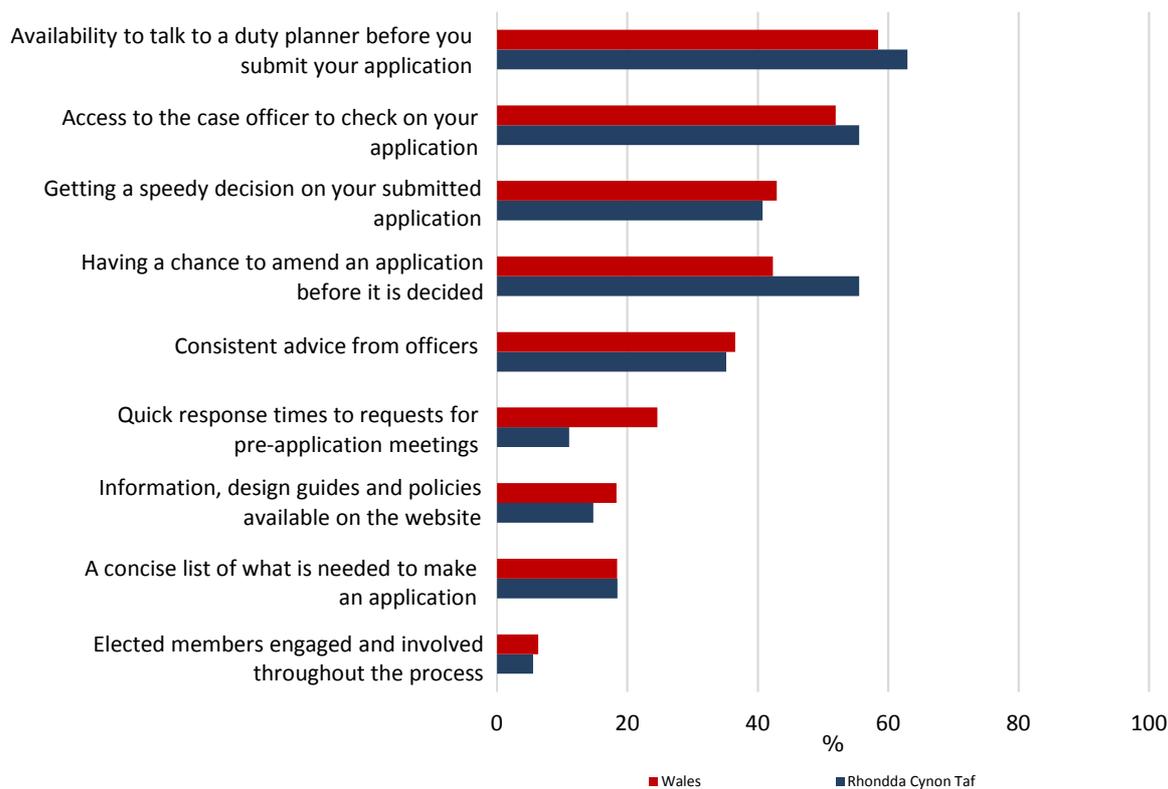
Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents that selected either 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' for each statement for both our planning authority and Wales.

Table 1: Percentage of respondents who agreed with each statement, 2017-18

Respondents who agreed that:	Rhondd a Cynon Taf LPA %	Wales %
The LPA applies its planning rules fairly and consistently	68	55
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	72	60
The LPA gives help throughout, including with conditions	55	52
The LPA responded promptly when they had questions	77	62
They were listened to about their application	69	60
They were kept informed about their application	53	52
They were satisfied overall with how the LPA handled their application	70	63

We also asked respondents to select three planning service characteristics from a list that they thought would most help them achieve successful developments. Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents that chose each characteristic as one of their three selections. For us, 'the availability to talk to a duty planner before submitting an application' was the most popular choice.

Figure 1: Characteristics of a good planning service, 2017-18



Comments received include:

- “Offers a very professional and proactive service.”
- “A very easy and speedy service for me so very happy.”
- "Generally the service was excellent, except for a delay when my email was accidentally binned. I think it essential that the public still have access to written application and paper forms and instruction regarding planning application.”

OUR PERFORMANCE 2017-18

This section details our performance in 2017-18. It considers both the Planning Performance Framework indicators and other available data to help paint a comprehensive picture of performance. Where appropriate we make comparisons between our performance and the all Wales picture.

Performance is analysed across the five key aspects of planning service delivery as set out in the Planning Performance Framework:

- Plan making;
- Efficiency;
- Quality;
- Engagement; and
- Enforcement.

Plan making

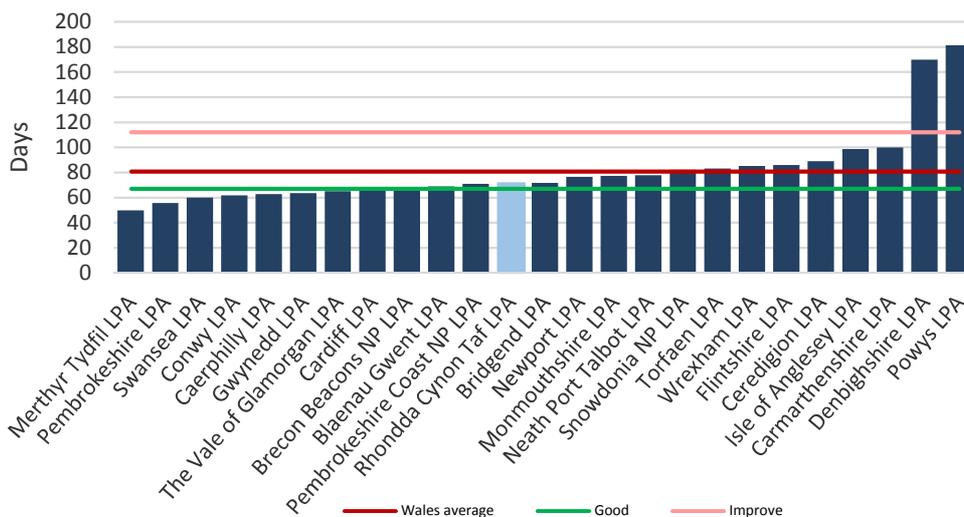
As at 31 March 2018, we were one of 22 LPAs that had a current development plan in place. We are required to, and will submit an Annual Monitoring Report in October 2018.

During the APR period we had 1.4 years of housing land supply identified, making us one of 18 Welsh LPAs without the required 5 years supply.

Efficiency

In 2017-18 we determined 1,145 planning applications, each taking, on average, 72 days (10 weeks) to determine. This compares to an average of 81 days (12 weeks) across Wales. Figure 2 shows the average time taken by each LPA to determine an application during the year.

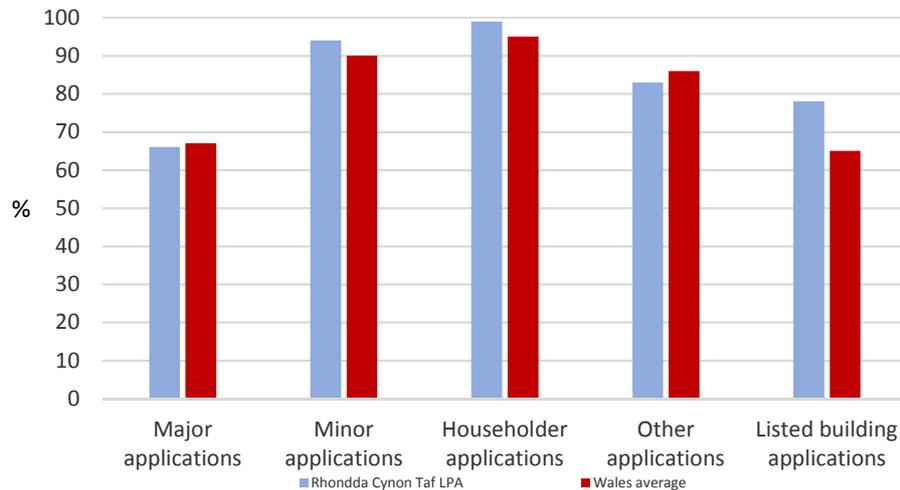
Figure 2: Average time taken (days) to determine applications, 2017-18



90% of all planning applications were determined within the required timescales. This compared to 89% across Wales and we were one of 22 LPAs that had reached the 80% target.

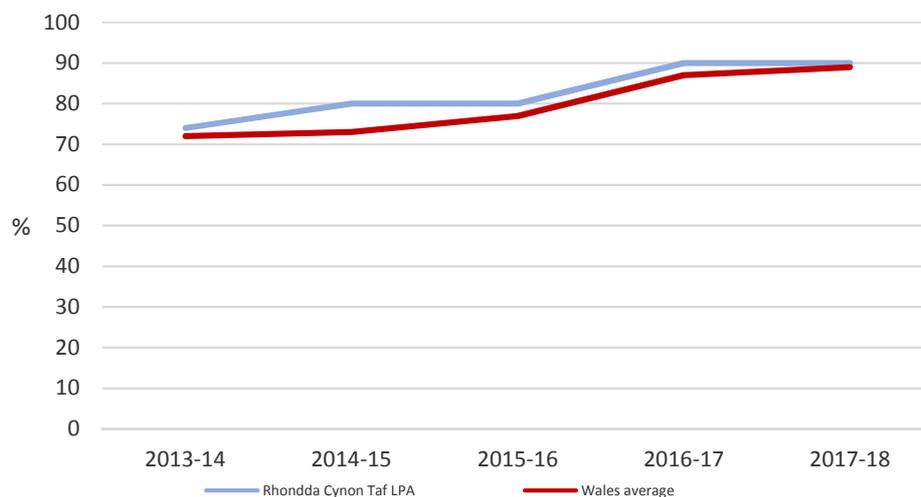
Figure 3 shows the percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales across the main types of application for our LPA and Wales. It shows that we determined 99% of householder applications within the required timescales. We also determined 78% of Listed Building Consent applications within the required timescales.

Figure 3: Percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales, by type, 2017-18



Between 2016-17 and 2017-18, as Figure 4 shows, the percentage of planning applications we determined within the required timescales stayed the same at 90%. Wales saw an increase this year.

Figure 4: Percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales



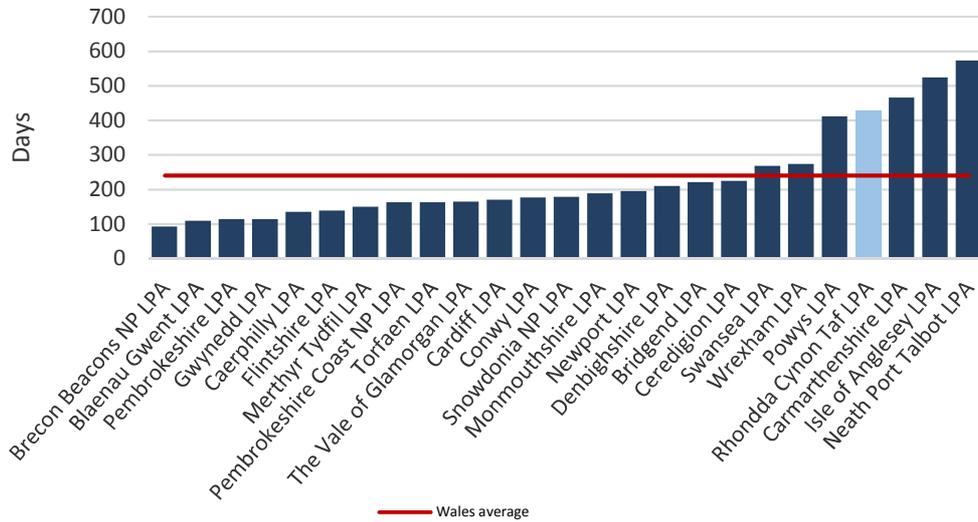
Over the same period:

- The number of applications we received increased;
- The number of applications we determined decreased; and
- The number of applications we approved decreased.

Major applications

We determined 32 major planning applications in 2017-18, none of which were subject to an EIA. Each application took, on average, 138 days (19 weeks) to determine. As Figure 5 shows, this was the fourth longest average time taken of all Welsh LPAs

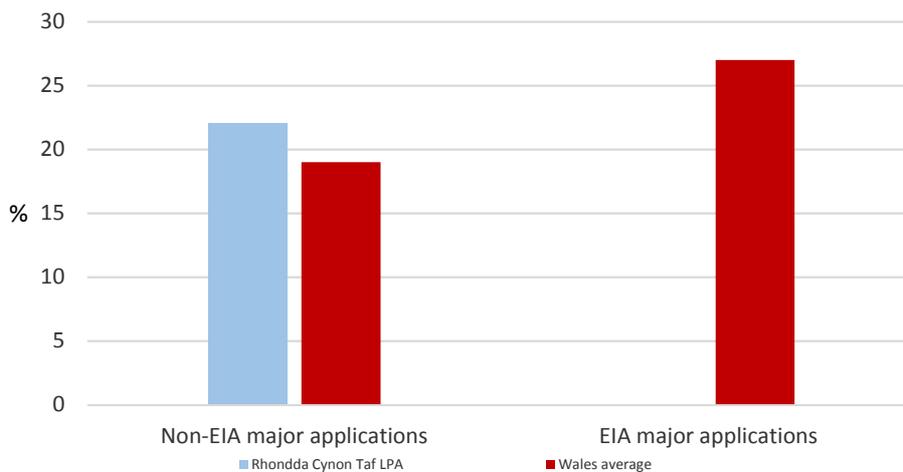
Figure 5: Average time (days) taken to determine a major application, 2017-18



66% of these major applications were determined within the required timescales, compared to 69% across Wales.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales by the type of major application. 22% of our 'standard' major applications i.e. those not requiring an EIA, were determined within the required timescales during the year.

Figure 6: Percentage of Major applications determined within the required timescales during the year, by type, 2017-18

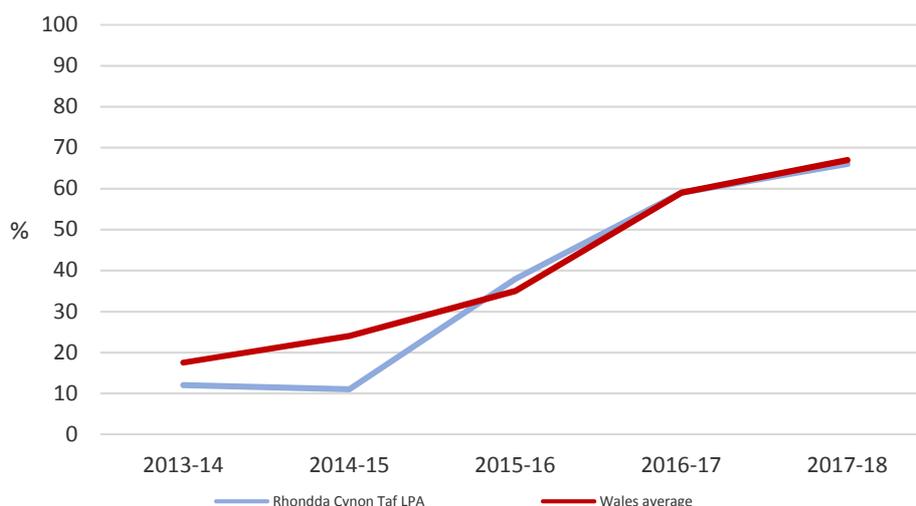


In addition we determined 14 major applications that were subject to a PPA in the required timescales during the year.

Since 2016-17 the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales had increased from 59%. Similarly, the number of major applications determined increased while the number of applications subject to an EIA determined during the year stayed the same.

Figure 7 shows the trend in the percentage of major planning applications determined within the required timescales in recent years and how this compares to Wales.

Figure 7: Percentage of major planning applications determined within the required timescales



Over the same period:

- The percentage of minor applications determined within the required timescales stayed the same at 94%;
- The percentage of householder applications determined within the required timescales stayed the same at 99%; and
- The percentage of other applications determined within required timescales increased from 81% to 83%.

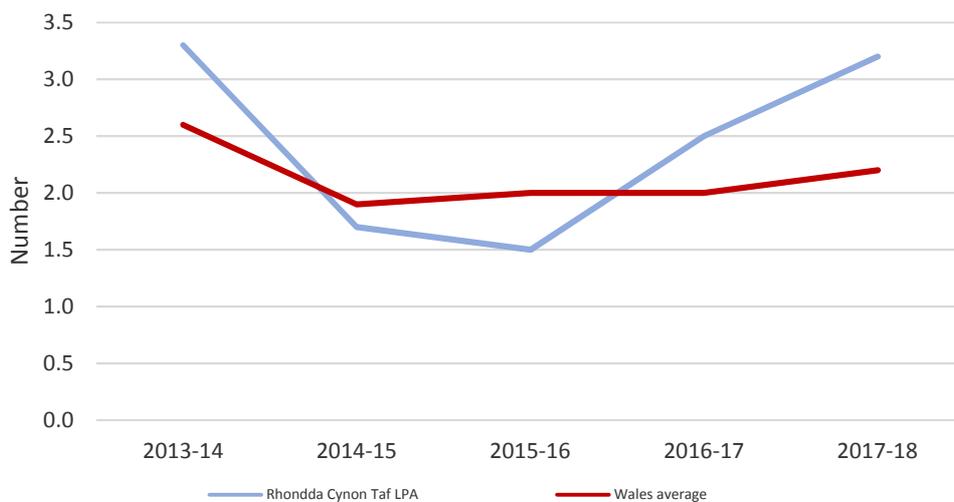
Quality

In 2017-18, our Planning Committee made 111 planning application decisions during the year, which equated to 10% of all planning applications determined. Across Wales 7% of all planning application decisions were made by planning committee.

9% of these member-made decisions went against officer advice. This compared to 9% of member-made decisions across Wales. This equated to 0.9% of all planning application decisions going against officer advice; 0.6% across Wales.

In 2017-18 we received 42 appeals against our planning decisions, which equated to 3.2 appeals for every 100 applications received. This was the fifth highest ratio of appeals to applications in Wales. Figure 8 shows how the volume of appeals received has changed since 2016-17 and how this compares to Wales.

Figure 8: Number of appeals received per 100 planning applications

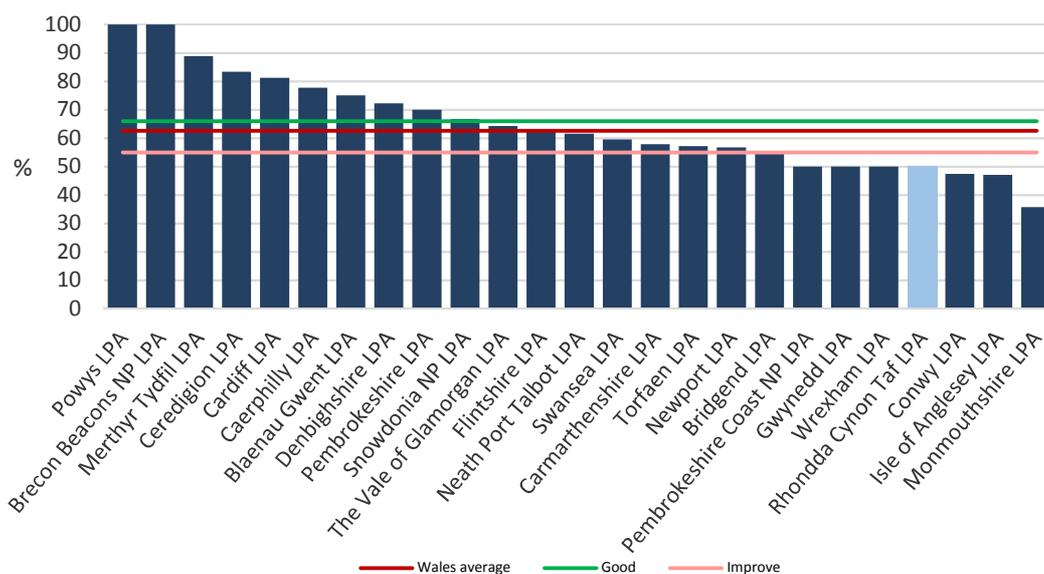


Over the same period the percentage of planning applications approved decreased from 81% to 79%.

(The Council does not consider the above percentage accurately represents the position in respect of the percentage of all applications approved and refused. The LPA's figures (as returned to Welsh Government) confirm that from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 1,145 applications were determined, with 93 of these being refused. This represents an approval rate of 92%).

Of the 34 appeals that were decided during the year, 50% were dismissed. As Figure 9 shows, this was lower than the percentage of appeals dismissed across Wales as a whole and was below the 55% threshold.

Figure 9: Percentage of appeals dismissed, 2017-18



During 2017-18 we had 2 applications for costs at a section 78 appeal upheld, making us one of the 8 LPAs to have at least one such application upheld in the year.

Engagement

We are:

- one of 24 LPAs that allowed members of the public to address the Planning Committee; and
- one of 21 LPAs that had an online register of planning applications.

As Table 2 shows, 72% of respondents to our 2017-18 customer survey agreed that the LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application.

Table 2: Feedback from our 2017-18 customer survey

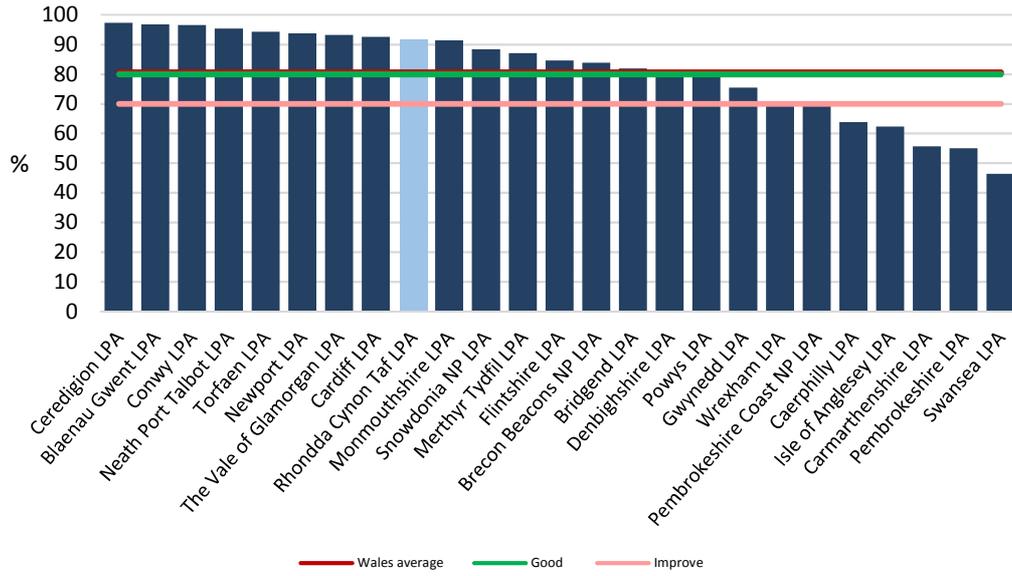
Respondents who agreed that:	Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA %	Wales %
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	72	60
They were listened to about their application	69	60

Enforcement

In 2017-18 we investigated 300 enforcement cases, which equated to 1.3 per 1,000 population. This was the fifth lowest rate in Wales.

We investigated 92% of these enforcement cases within 84 days. Across Wales 81% were investigated within 84 days. Figure 10 shows the percentage of enforcement cases that were investigated within 84 days across all Welsh LPAs.

Figure 10: Percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 84 days, 2017-18



The average time taken to pursue positive enforcement action was 67 days.

ANNEX A - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE	WALES AVERAGE	Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA LAST YEAR	Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA THIS YEAR
Plan making						
Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+	67	N/A	N/A
Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption <small>DONT UNDERSTAND WHY THIS IS RED</small>	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	>5		<5	7 of 25	1.3	1.4
Efficiency						
Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	>60	50-59.9	<50	67.4	59	66
Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days	Not set	Not set	Not set	240.1	170	138
Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	>80	70-79.9	<70	88.5	90	90
Average time taken to determine all applications in days	<67	67-111	112+	80.7	71	72
Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required	Not set	Not set	Not set	65.4	-	78
Quality						
Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	5-9	9+	8.6	11	9
Percentage of appeals dismissed	>66	55-65.9	<55	62.6	43	50
Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2+	0	3	2

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
Engagement			
Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	Yes		No
Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	Yes		No
Does the local planning authority's web site have an online register of planning applications, which members of the public can access, track their progress (and view their content)?	Yes	Partial	No
Enforcement			
Percentage of enforcement cases investigated (determined whether a breach of planning control has occurred and, if so, resolved whether or not enforcement action is expedient) within 84 days	>80	70-79.9	<70
Average time taken to take positive enforcement action	Not set	Not set	Not set

WALES AVERAGE	Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA LAST YEAR	Rhondda Cynon Taf LPA THIS YEAR
Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes
80.6	88	92
184.6	121	67

SECTION 1 – PLAN MAKING

Indicator	01. Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
A development plan (LDP or UDP) is in place and within the plan period	N/A	No development plan is in place (including where the plan has expired)

Authority’s performance	Yes
There is an adopted plan in place which is actively monitored against its performance and delivery and kept under constant review. The form of any review or replacement development plan is contingent on the future of Strategic Planning at a regional level.	

Indicator	02. LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
The LDP is being progressed within 12 months of the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement	The LDP is being progressed within between 12 and 18 months of the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement	The LDP is being progressed more than 18 months later than the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement

Authority’s performance	N/A
No further comment	

Indicator	03. Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	
“Good”		“Improvement needed”

An AMR is due, and has been prepared	An AMR is due, and has not been prepared
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Authority's performance	Yes
<p>The Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP was adopted on 2 March 2011. The Council is about to submit to Welsh Government the seventh AMR since the LDP was adopted.</p>	

Indicator	04. The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	
"Good"		"Improvement needed"
The authority has a housing land supply of more than 5 years		The authority has a housing land supply of less than 5 years

Authority's performance	1.3
<p>During 2016-2017, a total of 552 new dwellings were constructed in Rhondda Cynon Taf including 198 new affordable homes. This takes the total number of new dwellings constructed in the County Borough since 2006, (the technical start of the plan period), to 5,931. Applications for a further 569 dwellings were permitted through this past year, contributing to a total of 7,589 dwellings permitted since the adoption of the LDP in 2011.</p> <p>Although these substantial figures indicate a continued positive growth in the house building industry in Rhondda Cynon Taf since the adoption of the LDP, the build rates do not meet those identified in the LDP. As indicated in our Joint Housing Land Availability Study (2018) we have a reduced housing land supply of 1.4 years based on the residual method of calculation.</p> <p>Considering recent and longer standing permissions, the housing targets are not an issue of immediate concern. It is however acknowledged in the LDP AMR that housing allocations, particularly in the Northern Strategy Area are not quite coming forward at the rate they were anticipated when the LDP was first adopted. The Council has been proactive in seeking methods of intervention to boost the delivery of housing in RCT. This includes the unique Developer Forum, Strategy for Enabling Housing Development and further work to identify the viability of our allocated sites and then identify methods of financial leveraging to enable their development.</p>	

SECTION 2 - EFFICIENCY

Indicator	05. Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
More than 60% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Between 50% and 60% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Less than 50% of applications are determined within the statutory time period

Authority's performance	66
<p>This indicator was targeted last year for improvement and performance improved from 59% to 66%. However, given the significance of major applications, improving performance on these large proposals will still remain a priority.</p>	

Indicator	06. Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	138
<p>The APR document statistics provided by WG indicated the Service performance against this indicator as being 428 days (the LPA has noted, however, that this includes an application which was the subject of a S.106 Agreement resolution a significant time period ago. Therefore when this application is correctly included the performance figure falls significantly to 138 days).</p> <p>The performance of 138 days is now significantly better than the Welsh average of 240 days.</p>	

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Indicator	07. Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
More than 80% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Between 70% and 80% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Less than 70% of applications are determined within the statutory time period

Authority’s performance	90
Performance has remained the same and the LPA continues to perform above the Welsh average of 88.5% against this indicator	

Indicator	08. Average time taken to determine all applications in days	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
Less than 67 days	Between 67 and 111 days	112 days or more

Authority’s performance	72
Performance against this indicator has remained stable (down from 71 days last year). It is hoped that with some changes implemented in the Planning Applications team structure that this indicator will improve to ‘Good’ next year.	

Indicator	08a. Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked
Authority’s performance	78	
No further comment		

SECTION 3 - QUALITY

Indicator	09. Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
Less than 5% of decisions	Between 5% and 9% of decisions	9% or more of decisions

Authority’s performance	9	
<p>Performance against this indicator is stable at 9%. However, it is hoped with a new Planning Committee in place (now called Planning & Development Committee) and a focused programme of Member Training in place this performance will improve over the coming year..</p>		

Indicator	10. Percentage of appeals dismissed	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
More than 66% (two thirds) of planning decisions are successfully defended at appeal	Between 55% and 66% of planning decisions are successfully defended at appeal	Less than 55% of planning decisions are successfully defended at appeal

Authority’s performance	50	
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Whilst performance in respect of this indicator has slightly improved it is recognised that significant improvement is needed.

The performance can be largely explained by the fact that of the 17 allowed appeals 8 were as a consequence of either Member decisions against officer advice. Further, 6 appeals that were Allowed involved officer delegated decisions to refuse applications for a COU from C3 dwellings to C4 (HMO) in the Treforest Ward of RCT. As a consequence of the poor record of being able to defend such appeals the Council has now adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on the matter which it is hoped will provide a more robust defence for taking such decisions in the future and improve the Council's appeal performance overall.

In addition there will be targeted Member training regarding appeals which it is hoped will reduce the number of cases in which Members take a decision contrary to officer advice.

Indicator	11. Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
The authority has not had costs awarded against it at appeal	The authority has had costs awarded against it in one appeal case	The authority has had costs awarded against it in two or more appeal cases

Authority's performance	2
<p>Applications for an award of costs against the LPA were upheld on two occasions.</p> <p>In one case the appeal resulted from a decision taken by Committee to refuse permission contrary to officer recommendation. At the subsequent appeal the appointed Inspector considered that the LPA had not produced sufficient evidence to support the concerns raised by Members and accordingly was of the view that the LPA had acted unreasonably, thereby justifying an award of costs against the LPA.</p> <p>It is hoped that on-going Member training will enhance the LPA's ability to produce robust evidence in support of concerns/objections they may have, when refusing applications for planning permission.</p> <p>In the second case costs were awarded against the LPA as a consequence of an administrative error which meant that the correct letters of notification were not sent out, resulting in an abortive appeal hearing, which had to be re-arranged.</p>	

Following this the Council has reviewed its administrative process for appeals.

SECTION 4 – ENGAGEMENT

Indicator	12. Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	
“Good”		“Improvement needed”
Members of the public are able to address the Planning Committee		Members of the public are not able to address the Planning Committee

Authority’s performance	Yes
The Council allows each speaker 5 minutes to address the Committee and there is no limit on the number of speakers.	

Indicator	13. Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	
“Good”		“Improvement needed”
Members of the public can seek advice from a duty planning officer		There is no duty planning officer available

Authority’s performance	Yes
There is an officer on hand to provide face to face and telephone advice to customers between the hours of 9 and 4:30	

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Indicator	14. Does the local planning authority’s web site have an online register of planning applications, which members of the public can access track their progress (and view their content)?	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
All documents are available online	Only the planning application details are available online, and access to other documents must be sought directly	No planning application information is published online

Authority’s performance	Yes
<p>The website has full public access enabling members of the public to view the planning application details, plans, supporting documents and consultation responses online during the course of the application.</p> <p>Applications are updated during the course of the application ensuring the application is accurate and on issuing the decision notice the Conditions of Approval/Reasons for Refusal are uploaded to the website to further inform the public of the decision details.</p> <p>In addition, the public can register an interest in an application via the website to track an application and can submit comments online.</p>	

SECTION 5 – ENFORCEMENT

Indicator	15. Percentage of enforcement cases investigated (determined whether a breach of planning control has occurred and, if so, resolved whether or not enforcement action is expedient) within 84 days	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
More than 80% of enforcement cases are investigated in 84 days	Between 70% and 80% of enforcement cases are investigated in 84 days	Less than 70% of enforcement cases are investigated in 84 days

Authority’s performance	92
An increase from 92% last year, this is an achievement as there has been an enforcement post vacancy during this period.	

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Indicator	16. Average time taken to take positive enforcement action	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority’s performance	67
<p>A decrease compared to 74 days reported in last year’s data. The figure is always going to be dependent on the complexities of cases e.g. where they relate to appeals and prosecutions, as the time period involved are outside our control.</p> <p>The team have also been operating at 75% since there has been an enforcement post vacancy during this period.</p>	

SECTION 6 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

The purpose of the Sustainable Development Indicators is to measure the contribution the planning system makes to sustainable development in Wales.

The Sustainable Development Indicators will be used to measure the progress against national planning sustainability objectives, set out in Planning Policy Wales, and can be used to demonstrate to our stakeholders the role and scope of the planning system in delivering wider objectives. The information will also be useful to local planning authorities to understand more about the outcomes of the planning system and help inform future decisions.

Authority's returns	Summary of Sustainable Development Indicators data here (i.e. full returns, partial returns or no data provided)
<p>For authorities who have not provided data, or only partial returns, include further details here. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data is missing? • For what quarters are data missing? • What are the reasons for missing data? • What actions are being taken to provide full returns? • When will complete data returns be provided? 	

Indicator	SD1. The floorspace (square metres) granted and refused planning permission for new economic development on allocated employment sites during the year.
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Granted (square metres)	
Authority's data	0

Refused (square metres)	
Authority's data	0

Following on from the outline permission granted at the Taff Vale Precinct Site, Pontypridd in 2016-2017; the Council submitted a full planning application in 2017-2018 with an increase in floorspace from the original 12,675m². Consequently, the element of B1 office space approved by the full application now stands at 8,488m². The other elements of the scheme include 1,064m² of D1; 1,038m² of D2; 568m² of A3 and 3,525m² for basement/circulation/plant/servicing etc.; the proposal will be split across three buildings. Ground clearance commenced on the site in 2017, with building works underway in 2018.

The employment allocation SSA 14.1 at Coed Ely, Tonyrefail has also recently had a reserved matters application approved to extend the existing road to the top of the allocation and service the individual plateaus. Additionally, all necessary infrastructure and drainage details were been submitted in the hope of implementing the original consent, first submitted in 2009.

The 4.17ha allocation at Hirwaun Industrial Estate (NSA 14.2) has continued to implement its consent for a sustainable waste resource recovery and energy production plant at Fifth and Ninth Avenues, with two buildings erected to date and significant ground works undertaken.

The Council granted a number of permissions during 2017-2018 for industrial development. The 19,064.9m² of gross industrial space permitted comprises a number of changes of use, extensions and new development. Permission was granted for new units, including an innovation centre (B1 office space) consisting of 359m² at Ely Valley Business Park, Pontyclun; 248m² of new B1 office space at Magden Park, Llantrisant; 952m² of new industrial B1/B2/B8 space comprising 7 starter units at Pontcynon Industrial Estate; and the erection of three units for B1/B2/B8 comprising 1,329m² on Gelli Industrial Estate in the Rhondda.

As discussed above, the Council announced in February 2018 that £2.58m of European funding has been secured towards a package of £3.93m to create modern business units on the Robertstown Strategic Site.

The year also saw the advancement of development on the previous years' permissions on the major former Sogefi site and to the north of Llantrisant Business Park.

Indicator	SD2. Planning permission granted for renewable and low carbon energy development during the year.
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Granted permission (number of applications)	
Authority's data	3

Granted permission (MW energy generation)	
Authority's data	9

No further renewable energy developments were installed within the Strategic Search Area F boundary during 2017-2018. The Council did however approve three applications for wind turbines outside SSA F with a total generation capacity of 9MW.

Indicator	SD3. The number of dwellings granted planning permission during the year.
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Market housing (number of units)	
Authority's data	1,003

Affordable housing (number of units)	
Authority's data	150

Final analysis of data for the Annual Monitoring Report of the Local Development Plan highlighted further housing permissions than the Sustainable Development indicators previously returned. This included 1,003 market houses and 150 affordable houses granted planning permission during 2017-2018. Therefore, the total number of dwellings approved for the 2017-2018 monitoring period is 1,153.

Indicator	SD4. Planning permission granted and refused for development in C1 and C2 floodplain areas during the year.
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Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) which were GRANTED permission	
Authority's data	54

Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) which were REFUSED permission on flood risk grounds	
Authority's data	3

No planning permission was granted for development in a C1 or C2 flood risk zone that did not meet all TAN 15 tests. During 2017-2018, 54 dwellings were permitted within a C1 or C2 flood risk zone however in all cases the flood consequences assessments were agreed by Natural Resources Wales.

Indicator	SD5. The area of land (ha) granted planning permission for new development on previously developed land and greenfield land during the year.
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Previously developed land (hectares)	
Authority's data	28

Greenfield land (hectares)	
Authority's data	29

During 2017-2018, 27 hectares of development permitted, was on previously developed land or within existing buildings. During 2017-2018, planning permission was granted for the development of 29 hectares of greenfield land and open space. Only 9 hectares of this was not already allocated. which is not allocated in the LDP.

Indicator	SD6. The area of public open space (ha) that would be lost and gained as a result of development granted planning permission during the quarter.
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Open space lost (hectares)	
Authority's data	2

Open space gained (hectares)	
Authority's data	0

The Council lost a total of 1.94 hectares of open space during the 2016-2017 monitoring year.

Indicator	SD7. The total financial contributions (£) agreed from new development granted planning permission during the financial year for the provision of community infrastructure.
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Gained via Section 106 agreements (£)	
Authority's data	200,000

Gained via Community Infrastructure Levy (£)	
Authority's data	134,758.14

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) figure provided is the Demand Notices issued – that is, the ‘agreed’ figures (not money received)) within the financial year. The Demand Notice may be paid in line with the Council’s Instalments policy or potentially may not be paid and CIL enforcement required etc. and will therefore not tie-in the CIL amount received figure.

In terms of S106 triggers these are as requested the ‘agreed’ figures (S106’s signed during the period). For clarification S106 triggers such as provision of affordable units on site, ecological mitigation, such as, management plans; employment skills plans; provision of a LEAP/POS etc have no monetary value and are therefore not recorded in the above figures. The figures also do not include triggers such as xx contribution of x amount per dwelling if the number of dwellings is not known, that is, the S106 is signed at outline stage and the number of dwellings often is not known.